The Portfolio

The portfolio, as the syllabus already indicates, can be considered one of our main assessment practices. Teaching, learning, and assessment are inseparable and integral practices; for a portfolio to be considered a good means of assessment, the students and the instructors have to actively participate in the selection of the portfolio components and reflect on this selection process (these reflections have to be included in the portfolio). The evaluation has to be transparent and contain elements of peer and self-assessment. The portfolio ultimately belongs to the learner who is not required to use any specific, pre-determined format. However, choices and selections made should be explained and evaluated, and the portfolio content should be presented in ways agreed upon by all learners. We are striving for fairness (taking into account the perspectives of all learners; offering contextualized and respectful feedback); authenticity (Is the voice of the portfolio’s author audible/legible?; Do the materials present personal investment, independent thinking, and awareness?; Are others’ perspectives considered and understood?) and validity (Do content and self-assessment motivate changes and/or next steps in the learning and teaching process?; Does the portfolio foster the development of meta-cognitive skills?, e.g.).

- Goals
  to provide clear evidence of the competences the learner has achieved
  to foster critical reflection on German language and culture
  to evaluate one’s learning strategies, goals, and progress, resulting in greater personal investment in the learning process
  to develop critical and creative thinking skills (when, for example, interpreting the textbook and course materials and creatively applying them to one’s own experience and circumstance), resulting in a greater willingness to take risks
  to heighten awareness of the ethics of learning and communication, resulting in high levels of interpersonal competence and sociolinguistic appropriateness
  to develop writing and speaking skills in the German language as well as intercultural skills across languages
  to encourage all learners to take responsibility for their own learning
  to develop competence in self-assessment and peer-assessment

- Structure
  The portfolio could* contain the following parts:
  a) all course materials (copies of documents, handouts, etc.) distributed over the course of the semester
  b) a personal reflection/statement that introduces the portfolio and allows the reader to understand how and why the portfolio materials were selected and what the author has learned during the work with the portfolio
  c) a selection of written and spoken materials that are evidence of the author’s learning process and its results. All texts (written materials) for the portfolio should be typed and double-spaced. A draft of a text is to be handed in after each ‘Lektion’. Your instructor will offer some initial feedback; you can then decide whether you want to include an edited and expanded version of this text in your final portfolio. The selection of texts has to reflect a wide enough range
of genres, linguistic and stylistic features (and can include translations or summaries of papers you wrote for other courses). Each text should be accompanied by a commentary on the reasons for its inclusion and the value it might have for the author’s learning and the final evaluation. Spoken materials can include recordings of a text that you read aloud, an interview you conducted, or a presentation you gave (mp3, imovie, or comparable formats – to be discussed with your instructor).

d) a self-assessment checklist (the ‘language portfolio’) that illustrates the learning process (and progress). Each student will keep a copy of this document (as a hard copy and as an electronic file) that will be edited throughout the semester.

e) a one-page reflection on the portfolio and on the author’s course work

f) feedback to and from peers

g) feedback by an instructor (which will be discussed during the portfolio conference and before the final portfolio is due on the last day of the course)

* to be decided through discussion

- Assessment Criteria

We will establish these criteria together. Most basically, we will adapt the criteria put forth by Profile and adopted to meet the needs and interests of Cornell students. By the end of the semester, you will be able to do the following (at various and varying levels):

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Niveaustufen)</th>
<th>A1</th>
<th>A2</th>
<th>(B1)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening (Rezeption mündlich)</td>
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<td>Reading (Rezeption schriftlich)</td>
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<td>Spoken Production (Produktion mündlich)</td>
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<td>Writing (Produktion schriftlich)</td>
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<td>Spoken Interaction (Interaktion mündlich)</td>
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B1 *Independent User (global scale)*
Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst traveling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

A2 *Basic User (global scale)*
Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.