Sample Assignments

The following pages provide sample assignment options for instructors to use in their classes. These assignments are open to revision by any instructors.

Skills: Research, Summary Writing

Genre: Memo

ENGL 417 Trade Journal Response Memo

[Assignment courtesy of Danielle Tarner]

There is a very good chance you will continue to use the skill of summarizing when writing at work. Formal proposals and reports, for example, contain abstracts summarizing the documents. This assignment will provide you with further experience in writing summaries while also giving you the chance to learn more about and respond to a current issue in your field.

For this assignment, you will identify a feature article from a reliable trade publication in your field. Ideally, this article will also relate to communicating in the workplace. Make sure the article you chose is current, credible, and well developed. Read the article carefully, print a copy, and take notes (these notes may be collected, so be sure to save them). You will then write a brief summary and response to the article. When planning and crafting your memo, keep the following in mind:

- Provide the article's author, title, and brief background information regarding the magazine/journal in which it appeared.
- Include a brief summary of the article's focus (approx. 250 words), as well as its target audience.
- Include at least one idea you found especially interesting or useful (ideally, to communicating in the workplace).
- Include a brief summary of how others in your field might find the article useful. You might also want to photocopy a few pages for classmates in your field.

Additional notes:

- Use the memo format to complete this assignment.
- Use complete sentences and paragraphs, rather than bulleted texts, to address all the requirements.
- If you include any quotes or paraphrase any of the author'(s) ideas, include proper in-text citations
- At the end of the memo, skip a line, switch to italicized text, and write a complete citation for the article using MLA.

Skills: Reflection, Critical Thinking

Genre: Memo

ENGL 417: Performance Review Assignment

[Assignment courtesy of Danielle Tarner]

One common genre of argumentation you will use in the future is personal self-reflection and evaluation. Most likely, you will use this type of argument during workplace performance reviews, when you ask for a raise or a benefit, or any time your employer or others need to have written evidence of accountability for your progress.

As a way to practice this type of workplace writing, your last assignment of the semester will be to review your performance in terms of the course objectives. In order to write a successful Performance Review, you will need to use the following strategies:

- Review the objectives of the course.
    - *What do you feel you have achieved?*
    - *Can you find concrete evidence of this through your work? Looking back at both your self-evaluations, as well as the responses your group composed for the two collaborative projects, may prove helpful.*
    - *Demonstrate how your efforts this semester have been aligned with the course objectives*

- Review the stages you went through to create documents for the course.
    - *Compare older drafts to newer drafts. What did you learn from peer review comments? What did you learn from the revision process? Feel free to quote or paraphrase examples from your work.*
    - *Was your time used wisely? How might your improve for future workplace writing projects?*

- A performance review should remain upbeat. However, overly positive reviews show a lack of reflection and potential delusion on the part of the writer.
    - *What did you struggle with in learning to write for the workplace?*
    - *How have you overcome these difficulties? What evidence of overcoming these difficulties can you show from your work?*
    - *What areas of writing or collaboration do you still need to work on? Evidence?*

- Keep audience-based reasoning in mind.
    - *What does your teacher or "supervisor" value and care about?*
    - *What arguments should you stay away from because they are not audience-based?*

You should format your performance review as a memo addressed to your instructor.

Organization for a Performance Review should be logical and consistent. You may choose either topical or chronological organization.

Length depends on how introspective you become and what topics you choose. A single-spaced, TNR, 1-inch margins, 1-2 page memo is usually sufficient room to develop 2-3 main ideas.

Skills: Collaborative Writing, Research, Critical Thinking and Analysis, Summary Writing

Genres: Proposal, Brief or Routine Report, Memo

Collaborative Project

[Assignment courtesy of Anna Goins, adapted from Cheryl Rauh]

To continue strengthening our critical thinking and writing skills, and to develop the types of collaborative writing strategies that most industries require, you will complete the following project in teams of four or five.

What will you do?

As a team, choose one of the following options:

A. Identify an area of communication in the professional workplace that is a part of a significant conversation about contemporary business practices, learn more about it and how it could relate to you as young professionals, and present your findings in a brief comparison report that looks at two different types of workplaces (i.e. an accounting firm and a chain hotel). Two is the minimum for comparison and you're encouraged to do more.

Perhaps you'd like to know more about multicultural awareness, or are interested in the ongoing discussions around gendered communication styles, for example, or are interested in learning more about the effects social media on small businesses. As long as the topic is related to communication in the workplace, and is one that your team agrees to pursue, the choices are wide open!

B.   Identify a problem common to the industries you're in, i.e. high employee turnover in the customer service industry, conduct research as to the potential causes and their impacts, and write a brief feasibility report (if your team finds a potential solution the problem), or a cause report that seeks to clarify the situation and prepare for leadership's decision.

For either option, you'll want to narrow your topic to one that's manageable for a brief report.

Step One: The Project Proposal

Once your team reaches a decision about Option A or B, it will write and submit a 2-page project proposal to me in order that I may approve your choice. This proposal will be in single-spaced memo format and should be sent as an attachment via email no later than 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 16. Your purpose for writing is to convince me that your group has a solid plan for a well-formed, relevant topic as well as to provide you with experience in writing proposals. This assignment will also help your group understand what you need to do in order to write your research findings report on time and with quality. Be sure to organize your proposal according to the guidelines established in our class handbook and discussions.

Additionally, it can be very useful to include a section where you make explicit your research questions and goals, and discuss your research methods/process. Well-developed projects will likely include both

primary and secondary research, and at least 5 sources that are cited both in-text and in a standard Works Cited or References page (not included in the final page count).

Step Two: Research Findings Report

Once your topic is approved, follow the research where it takes you and write a brief, 4-6 page, single-spaced report in memo format that both summarizes your findings and offers analysis and justification of them. I am the primary reader for the report – imagine me as the supervisor who could take your findings to the next level. The exact nature of the report will vary according to your option and the research results, but should continue to follow the guidelines established in our class handbook and discussions. This report is due to KSOL by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 26.

Skills: Collaborative Writing, Research, Critical Thinking and Analysis, Document Design with Visuals, Writing for a Public Audience

Genre: Brochure

Collaborative Assignment

[Assignment courtesy of Dan Von Holten]

Relevant Course Objectives: 1, 2, 5, 7 (see additional below)

You and your team will research an unpopular food source or product (e.g. guinea pig) and create a tri-fold brochure promoting that food source or product to local grocery stores and their customers. You will need to find a reason beyond flavor to sell the product on. You could take an angle that the food is a healthy alternative to another food or perhaps it is more sustainable. Whatever the argument, you will need to do some research to back it up.

In determining if a product or food source is popular consider that if it is popular enough to be at the local grocery stores in Manhattan, it is probably popular enough that it isn't an eligible topic.

Learning Objectives

Completing this project will help you hone your skills in working with a group on a creative project. You will also develop your abilities to integrate visuals, text, and document design using collaborative design tools. As brochures have limited space, you will also continue to practice concise writing.

Relevant Course Objectives

In addition to course objectives 1, 2, 5, and 7, this assignment will have the following objective:

- Actively participate in the planning, maintenance, and execution of a collaborative project.

Product

You and your team will create a color tri-fold brochure that uses a combination of design elements to promote an unpopular or underutilized food source or product to US consumers. *You will create the brochure using Lucidpress and save the final document as a PDF file.*

Process

While the assignment of creating a brochure is rather straightforward, you are also working on this as a team. *You will need to document your work and progress.* The steps below should give you an idea on how to go about documenting and completing your project.

> Step 1: Discuss team function and divide responsibilities (Choose a project manager or split the duties.)
> Step 2: Schedule meeting times (take meeting minutes)
> Step 3: Choose your topic
> Step 4: Research
> Step 5: Determine the purpose and audience for your brochure
> Step 6: Create the brochure using Lucid Press
> Step 7: Individually write a self-evaluation (reflection) on the project

Task Schedule

Refer to the Wolfe readings and page 3 of this assignment for details on creating the Task Schedule.

Keep in mind that the Task Schedule will need to be updated regularly. **Store the Task Schedule on a cloud service that allows all team members access to the document.** This way, you can make modifications from any computer during meetings.

Choosing a Topic and Doing Research

After developing a team charter, you may want to discuss possible products or foods. You may want to start with discussing popular foods from your home region compared to here in Manhattan. Ideas on foods can vary even over short geographical distances. (e.g. Rocky Mountain Oysters).The food can be plant or animal based. There are some grains, like Amaranth, not typically available in the US. Your research may include typical internet searches, but you may also want to try the library databases. If possible, consider taking a few minutes to contact or talk to someone in biology or ecology for ideas.

Once you have a topic, you need to determine the purpose of your brochure. Are you promoting a source of food or a product that uses that food source? (For example barley or barley tea.) Once you know your product, you need to determine its selling points.

You will need to have something more than the flavor of the product to sell it on. For example, a food may be a sustainable alternative to another common product or it may have a more robust nutritional profile. Once you know more about the product, you can develop the message for your brochure. Give some thought to the needs or concerns of the consumers and decide if you want to focus on a particular group such as health conscious, thrill-seeking, or vegan.

You will probably need to do a little research to determine the needs and concerns of your audience. You may want to create a brief summary of your audience for future reference. Then, you can move on to actually creating the brochure.

Creating the Brochure

You will create your brochure using a cloud service called Lucid Press. You can use the basic features of the software for free, but you will need to create an account. Go to https://www.lucidpress.com/ to see a brief tutorial video and to create your account. The service has several built-in collaborative tools and allows several people to work on the same document simultaneously.

The service has several templates for tri-fold brochures. You will likely need to remove or change elements from the templates if you don't start from a blank page.

Additional Assignment Components

As this is an exercise in working together as a group as well as learning design elements, your group will turn in the following documents in addition to the completed brochure:

Component	Value	Group or Individual	Due
Documentation Portfolio	30 pts	Group	
Brochure	30 pts	Group	

Self-Evaluation	40 pts	Individual	
Total	100 pts		

Team Formation And Task Schedule

Before anything else, meet with your teammates and discuss how you will function as a team. You will be given an agenda for your first meeting that will take you through topics similar to what appears in a team charter from your readings. As a result, your first set of meeting minutes should outline how your group will work together, individual goals for each team member. It will also explain what the team will do when an individual is unable or unwilling to complete his or her share of the work.

You may want to refer to Wolfe Excerpt 2 (sample on pg 38) for an example of how another team approached these issues. *Your first set of meeting minutes should also include a tentative task schedule* dividing work between team members. Model your tentative task schedule after the one found in Wolfe Excerpt 3 (sample on pg 46). Make sure you *include contribution values* and totals for each team member.

The schedule should outline specific tasks necessary to complete the project. It should also list which team member(s) are responsible for each task and give a deadline for those tasks. Keep in mind that administrative tasks like creating or updating the task schedule, taking meeting minutes, or sending reminders would all be tasks that could be included on the schedule.

As a team, assign each task a value from 1-5 to represent the amount of work involved with each task. Your goal is to distribute the work as evenly as you can.

Treat the task schedule as a working or "living" document. Expect to update and modify it regularly. At the end of the project, you will submit a completed task schedule. Gross differences in levels of contribution (20% or more) will result in an adjustment to an individual's score on the brochure.

SET YOUR DEADLINES A LITTLE EARLIER THAN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY IN CASE PROBLEMS COME UP.

Documentation Portfolio

Part of collaboration in the workplace is documenting your work. Meeting minutes are a very common form of documentation, but any correspondence to your teammates on a project is also documentation of your work and contributions.

At the end of the project, your team will put together an electronic documentation portfolio. It should include (in order)

Completed Task Schedule – It should give the full name and contribution total for each member.

All Meeting Minutes/Agendas—In chronological order.

All Correspondence—This can include emails, text messages, or scribbled notes passed between team members.

You are encouraged to have meetings (virtually or physically) outside of class. We will dedicate Wednesdays to group work and your teams can count on those dates as a time to meet. You will need to take meeting notes at your meetings. *Bring your laptop to class on those days.* I will check in on your group on Wednesdays and ask to see some of your documentation and give you feedback on it.

The person responsible for taking the minutes needs to distribute the minutes to the team within 24 hours of the meeting. This should be easy enough to see in the documentation part of the portfolio. Make sure your subject lines are clear. You can find an example of meeting minutes in Wolfe excerpt 1 on page 18 of the text.

The meeting minutes should include the following information:

- Date and location
- Action Items (things individuals will have complete before the next meeting)
- Important Decisions/Topics of Discussion
- Next Steps (questions or actions for the next meeting)

Self-Evaluation—Reflection

While the other components are considered group documents, each team member will write his or her own reflection on the project in the form of a self-evaluation. It may come as a surprise to some that reflective writing plays a role in the workplace. Many workplaces will ask employees to write a self-evaluation as part of an annual review process.

Frequently a portion of that evaluation will require the employee to reflect on his or her achievements, challenges, and sometimes shortcomings. In other cases, a self-evaluation might be part of your argument for a change in your responsibilities at work or in making a case for a raise. In any of those cases, solid reflective writing will show that you are able to learn from past experiences and apply those lessons to the future.

The self-evaluation should be 400-600 words long. It can take the form of a letter or memo addressed to the instructor. You will be given a prompt to direct your reflection when the assignment is available for submission.

Skills: Research, Critical Thinking and Analysis, Collaborative Writing

Genres: Proposal, Brief or Routine Report, Oral Presentation

Collaborative Presentation Project

[Assignment courtesy of Cheryl Rauh]

The goal of this 3-part assignment is simple: I would like your group to propose, research, and present to the class on a topic related to written communications for the workplace. What follows is a description of the collaborative project's 3 major components and how these documents will be evaluated.

The Project Proposal

This assignment is the first in a series of sequenced assignments for the collaborative presentation project. For this assignment, your group is being asked to write a 2-3 page,(excluding the bibliography) single spaced memo outlining your group's research interest. I will be the audience for this proposal. Your purpose for writing is to convince me that your group has a solid plan for a well-formed, relevant topic as well as to provide you with experience in writing proposals. This assignment will also help your group understand what you need to do in order to write your research findings report on time and with quality. Be sure to include the following boldfaced headings to organize the sections of your proposal:

Introduction: What is the purpose of this memo? Introduce the proposal itself, identify your group's purpose, and give a brief overview of the content of the proposal.

Project Description: What topic is your group proposing to research and present to our class? Provide an overview of what your group will cover with in your project; be specific. Justify why this topic is relevant and important for your group to research and present to your peers. This should be the longest section and needs to include your preliminary research on the topic (and properly cite both in-text and in the bibliography) and discuss how this initial research fits into our course's focus on writing in the workplace. Be persuasive in demonstrating the relevance of your topic to our course objectives.

Important note: when choosing your topic, avoid general or broad topics such as "technology in the workplace." Instead, narrow your focus to a more specific aspect of technology related directly to written communications; for example, "Writing for Web: Rhetorical Principles for a Diverse Medium."

Proposed Research Questions: Here you get more specific in terms of what questions your group's findings memo intends to investigate (and ultimately answer) and what your group's presentation will deliver. Here, you will list the 4-6 research questions your project plans to answer—with each question, be sure to also include a justification explaining why each question is important to your presentation's audience. Why are they important questions to address? Keep your presentation audience in mind as you consider these answers. What is your purpose?

Methods: Describe what your group needs to do in order to produce a quality findings report and ultimately design and deliver your group presentation. What will your group do first? Search professional writing websites? What will your group do second? Interview people? What will your group do third? Be specific and thorough. I expect to see all your research questions/report contents be accounted for here, i.e., if you stated that your group was going to answer a certain question or include

a certain section in the report, I expect to see relevant research done/planned for regarding that question/section.

Bibliography: List the 3-5 sources your group consulted in your preliminary research, following either the APA or MLA style guide. In this initial stage, it perfectly fine to only consult credible websites.

Research Findings Report

This short report is the second in a series of sequenced assignments for the collaborative presentation project. For this assignment, you are being asked to write a short 5-6 page, single spaced report summarizing your research findings (excluding the bibliography). Your classmates and I will be the audience for this report. Your group's purpose for writing is to inform the audience about what your group learned about your topic as well as to provide you with experience in writing short reports. This assignment will also help your group plan how to organize and create your professional presentation on time and with quality. Your report should include the following sections:

Introduction: What is the purpose of this report? Introduce the research itself, identify your group's purpose, and give a brief overview of the content of the report.

Research Findings: (You group should create specific headings for the body of the report to reflect the content): Here you provide an organized summary of what your group uncovered; be specific. Justify why this research is relevant and important to your peers. Here you provide specific answers to your proposed research questions. Your group's goal in this section is to explain the following:

- What your group hoped to find and what your group learned (i.e. the answers to your research questions). Here you will be demonstrating the ability to effectively write summaries of your sources. (Also, if any of your questions changed over the course of the project, you can discuss that here as well.

- Why your research findings matter to your audience. How does your group's research findings relate to our course's focus and objectives?

Conclusion: Recap the major findings here and how they relate to written communications in the workplace. Indicate the areas for further research on this topic. What are questions would you investigate if this were a larger project?

Bibliography: List the 4-6 sources your group consulted while compiling your findings report, following either the APA or MLA style guide. Be sure your sources are credible, current, and avoid relying on ".com" websites.

Formal Presentation

The semester will close with your group presenting your research findings to the class. Essentially, I would like each group to present the aspect of workplace communications you proposed and discussed in your research findings report. For this 20 minute presentation, your group should plan to use presentation software (usually in the form of a Power Point or Prezi presentation). It might be helpful to begin by presenting background material and indicating your group's research questions and your reasons for examining these questions. Focus on certain key points that demonstrate the value of your topic to your audience. I am happy to review presentation outlines beforehand.

The presentation audience is your fellow classmates, whose majors represent a range of professional areas, and who may already have some knowledge of your topic. You are also encouraged to create and distribute a handout to supplement and enrich your presentation's content. Be sure you include a citations as well as a bibliography slide (APA or MLA style please) indicating where you found your information. It is important that you clearly and fully document all information from other sources. You need to dress formally for the presentation. Please be prepared for questions— a 3-5 minute Q&A session will follow your presentation. If you've researched your topic, you will be able to answer many questions. Still, the most important advice I can give you in this regard is that it is perfectly acceptable to say you do not know the answer to a question.

I will be grading you based on the tips and guidelines discussed in our readings in regard to designing and delivering a presentation (Refer to KSOL readings as well as the Truth about PowerPoint). The PowerPoint and any handouts you intend to distribute in class must be uploaded to the KSOL drop box on the due date. It will help you to practice your presentation a few times. You may use note cards, but avoid relying too heavily on these notes.

As a final note, remember that you will also be receiving an attendance & participation grade for listening attentively to others' presentations and ask thought-provoking questions of the presenters. As a result, your grade will be lowered if you do not attend, arrive late to class, "zone out," or find yourself otherwise engaged with your cell phone during your classmates' presentations.

Skills: Collaborative Writing, Document Design with Visuals, Research, Critical Thinking and Analysis

Genre: Memo

Team Graphic Memo

[Assignment courtesy of Anna Goins]

Collaborative Writing (15%)

Using magazines, journal articles, and other printed sources, gather information about how visuals are used in your and your team members' fields. In a memo to me, show examples of those visuals (you are also encouraged to make/design your own visuals) and explain why you think they are common (that is, why they are useful).

- Opening – identify subject, establish purpose and explain relevancy to the audience
- Body – provide examples and explain how they are useful in each respective field
- Closing – routine statement (no action required from audience)

Be sure to format your memo and document all sources correctly – both in-text and on a Works Cited or Reference page. Refer to the handbook for guidance on collaborative writing strategies, research help, and information on integration of visuals; specifically, review and apply the general principles of business communication generally discussed in other chapters.

Individual Reflection (5%)

In a separate, confidential memo to me, respond to the following questions:

- How can I summarize what I learned about visuals and their use in written documents?
- How will my increased knowledge of visuals benefit me in the workplace?
- What did I learn (specifically and generally) about the collaborative writing process? What went well? What did I, or we, struggle with?

Assessment

Your collaborative document will be evaluated upon its clarity in focus and purpose, development of ideas, logic of organization, integration of visuals, consistency in tone/style/editing/voice, and overall document design and proofreading.

Your individual memo will be evaluated upon its clarity in focus and purpose, development of ideas, logic of organization, consistency in tone/style, and overall document design and proofreading.

Skills: Collaborative Writing, Research, Critical Thinking and Analysis, Writing for Public Audiences, Document Design

Genres: Brief Report, Website, Memo, Video

Group Recommendation Report or Website Design Project

[Assignment courtesy of Seely McCarthy]

Objectives

- Identify the audience or audiences of a writing task and analyze their needs, attitudes, expectations, and the rhetorical purpose of the writing task in order to present information accurately and persuasively.
- Produce documents typically required of workplace professionals that meet reader's informational needs and genre expectations (e.g., they are well organized, acknowledge realistic constraints, credible, current, comprehensive, and accurate).
- Integrate visuals, text, and basic principles of document design using appropriate digital technologies
- Revise and proofread documents for readability, accessibility, ethical presentation, style, tone, and usage.

Choose One of the Following Options

1. Website Design Project

In this scenario, you have been asked to create a website for a company that is exploring the option of managing their own website instead of contracting it out. You need to create a 4 page website using one of the free web design site platforms for a business of your choosing. The website will have at least 4 sections/ pages:

- Homepage
- About Us (mission statement, contact info, and information about your organization etc)
- Services/Products
- One page designed to be updated regularly, such as Sales or a Blog or Current Events

Then write a 2 page memo that explains the rationale behind the design decisions made to the boss of the company. The memo should contain a summary, introduction, explanation, and conclusion.

2. Website Recommendation Report

In this scenario, you are employees of a company of your choosing that desires to update their website. You need to write a 5-7 page report that analyzes the current website's usability and recommends changes that should be made. The report should include visuals and textual descriptions and recommendations. Your recommendations can include but are not limited to:

- Design and Layout Concerns
- Accessibility Issues
- Mobile Access Concerns

- Social Media and Marketing Opportunities

The recommendation should be focused and realistic. The final report should include an executive summary, introduction, usability analysis, recommendation, and conclusion.

3. Video Recommendation

In this scenario, you are working for a company that manages websites for clients and you have been tasked with recommending updates to a client. You need to produce a 10 minute video that highlights for the client your company's areas of concern and recommends how those areas could be updated by your company.

Your recommendations can include but are not limited to:

- Design and Layout Concerns
- Accessibility Issues
- Mobile Access Concerns
- Social Media and Marketing Opportunities

The written component of this option includes a detailed transcript of the video and a letter of transmittal that introduces the recommendation video to the client.

Skills: Research, Summary Writing, Critical Thinking and Analysis

Genre: Records and Documentation

Research Log

[Assignment courtesy of Cheryl Rauh]

Record your research progress for your own notes as well as for a supervisor who is keeping tabs on your progress. This should be an informal log with dated entries appearing in chronological order. Briefly summarize all research reviewed, reflect on its function in your project, and evaluate its credibility. You should include research you don't ultimately end up using in the report because it still shows work that was done.

Objectives

- Gather research from a variety of sources, including print, electronic, and primary sources.
- Summarize source materials accurately with ethical source documentation.
- Evaluate research credibility, considering currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose.
- Analyze research and extract relevant information for synthesis into a new purpose.
- Plan to develop content with accurate and ethical source documentation.

Description of Elements for Each Entry

- **Date:** Indicate when research was found to record progress and show continuous work over a time span.
- **Citation:** Record necessary source information so that the source material could be found by another person. Note, a link is not a citation; a citation should give enough information to provide credit even if the source ceases to be available.
- **Summary:** Accurately capture the major points and conclusions of a source for your own record and for an another person to understand its meaning without having read it.
- **Evaluation:** Quickly demonstrate that you've considered the credibility of the source, and acknowledge its weaknesses. Factors to consider include currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose. Be wary of claiming a source has no weaknesses.
- **Discussion of Usefulness:** Record any thoughts you have on how the source will be useful for your project. Most especially, record any specific points, quotes, page numbers for relevant information that you might use in your report. In the workplace, this sort of notation might allow someone else to pick up where you left off.

Submission

For daily work and library day credit, you'll continuously submit this document with updates (at least 2 new entries per submission). The final submission should include a minimum of 8 entries. More entries are great and encouraged.

Sample Log Entries

Date	Citation	Summary	Function	Evaluation
10-Apr-14	"Bluebeam Case Study | Berry Paperless Construction Project." *Bluebeam Case Study | Berry - Paperless Construction Project*. Bluebeam, n.d. Web. 10 Apr. 2014. <https://www.bluebeam.com/us/solutions/case-studies/berry.asp>.	In this article, employees from both Perkins and will (the architectural firm) and berry (the contractor) discuss how they used Bluebeam Revu to accomplish most all of the submittals on the Overlook center project. This eliminated 42000 sheets of paper and streamlined the submittal process.	This article proves that it can and has been done by contractors and design professionals working together.	This article is biased toward Bluebeam Revu software but provides a valuable case study on how going paperless was accomplished.

April 22, 2014

Johnson, Lauren. "Top 10 Mobile Loyalty Programs from First Three Quarters." *Mobile Commerce Daily RSS.* Mcommerce Daily, 16 Oct. 2013. Web. 22 Apr. 2014.

In the Mobile Commerce Daily newsletter, they have an article that mentions the "Top 10 mobile loyalty programs from first three quarters." This article mentions specifics companies and how they are retaining customer loyalty through mobile applications. As of 2013, some of the leading companies to develop these kinds of apps are Best Buy, Jamba Juice, Kroger, and Walgreens. The article gives a quick brief summary about each of the applications and how the relate to their store. For instance, Jamba Juice used an application through Spendo, where customers would enter the store and would receive a message if they had accumulated enough points to claim a reward. Simple things like this that generates customer loyalty.

The main weakness of this article is how there is no statistical reference to what makes these applications important. I understand that they are feasible and well developed, but there is no indication of facts about the applications and their coincided company.

My purpose for seeking the article was to find comparison to what bigger companies are doing with applications, and how they implement their apps. Also to see how customer loyalty interacts with mobile applications.

April 10, 2014

"BPM Case Studies.". Interfacing Technology Corporation, *Unisys.* 07 12 2004. Web. 10 Apr 2014. <http://www.interfacing.com/uploads/File/unisys.pdf>.

Summary: Unisys, a worldwide IT services and solutions company sought to develop a unique system of process   mapping which allowed them to improve efficiency, customer satisfaction, and share information with global   branches through a link. The firm researched BPM solutions, selected an enterprise-wide software, Enterprise   Process Center,(EPS), installed and implemented the system within one year.

Function: This case-study provides an example of a firm in the IT service industry who uses and specializes in desktops, servers, networks, telephone and wireless technology but still saw the need for a system that could track,   map, and simplify business processes in an attempt to increase productivity. Included in this document are specific   examples, steps to implementation, and results. "The simplicity that EPC brought to the task made our job much easier and enabled a quick, albeit partial, rollout of our methodology" - Unisys Director of Global Implementation

Evaluation: The company that produced the case-study, Interfacing Technology Corporation, appears to be credible. Established in 1983, claim software is "award-winning" but can't find what award for the life of me. Also,   ITC made the case-study so there is bias. Their software is used by many significant firms and organizations including the National Autonomous University of Mexico - Mexico's largest educational institution. Detracting   from the credibility is that it is a decade old.

April 15, 2014

Ziosk.com (This is the tablet that Chili's plans to install and is the official website)

Summary: This is the official website of the company that Chili's plans to use for their tablets. It gives specific statistics and plans for use including paying at the table, connecting with guests, and the menu and ordering functions of the tablet.

Plan of Use: This source will be important because it gives the exact functions of the planned tablets and also gives the estimated cost of the tablets. I plan to use it as base information for my feasibility analysis and to get   facts and figures. It is not an article, but rather a list of facts and capabilities for the tablet.

Actual Use: I actually used this source to get specific facts such as the potential return on Investment, numbers   of customer response surveys or numbers of people that enroll in loyalty programs. I also used two of the visuals in order to better prove my point.

Evaluation: This source is most likely biased since the company is trying to get companies to adopt its tablet.   I'm going to have to be careful and make sure it is the best option for Buffalo Wild Wings or look at other   options to see if one of those would be more efficient.

Conclusion: After doing further research on other potential tablets, I found that Ziosk seems to be the best fit   for Buffalo Wild Wings.

Skills: Research, Summary Writing, Critical Thinking and Analysis

Genres: Email, Memo, Letter [routine correspondence]

CASE STUDY: THE SPACE SHUTTLE CHALLENGER

[Assignment courtesy of Devin Patten]

This unit will revolve around a case study of the 1986 Space Shuttle Challenger disaster. Your deliverables will be two emails and two internal memos (and your research). There is a bit of a discrepancy between the nature of "routine correspondence" (quicker and less formal) and the serious matter of the Challenger disaster, and with this in mind, we will address this case study in two ways: first, we will write a series of correspondence to plan a larger project addressing the Challenger disaster. Second, we will (in a later unit) work in groups to create an online database of your group's response to the Challenger research.

To summarize, we will use this unit to *plan* a research-based group project on the communication and ethical failures surrounding the Challenger launch. You will submit correspondence to your group which will contain your recommendations on which Challenger-related issues to address in the Collaborative Writing Project. Your correspondence will show the research items you believe your group should use to formulate its position and to make recommendations or arguments.

On the determined due date, deliver the following items:

> A memo detailing the ethical failures that occurred in the days preceding the Challenger launch. Include at least one source in your memo, demonstrating what that source says, and where the information comes from.

> An email demonstrating the timeline of ethical failures surrounding the failed launch, touching on specific, key events that cover a broad range of time. Again, include at least one source in your email, demonstrate what that source says, and where the information comes from.

> A memo detailing the communication failures that took occurred in the days preceding the Challenger launch. Include at least one source in your email, demonstrating what that source says, and where the information comes from.

> An email demonstrating the timeline of communication failures surrounding the failed launch, touching on specific, key events that cover a broad range of time. Again, include at least one source in your email, demonstrate what that source says, and where the information comes from.

> Submit to Canvas at least five sources (if they are articles, submit the full article) that you will use when writing your longer report on the ethical and communication flaws surrounding the Challenger launch.

Skills: Research, Summary Writing, Critical Thinking and Analysis, Writing for Public Audiences

Genres: Writing for the Web - Blog Post

ETHICS CASE STUDY

[Assignment courtesy of Devin Patten]

This unit will revolve around a case study of your choosing. Your deliverables will be one blog post of 1000 words.

Your post should be written as a contribution to a corporate blog about business ethics. The blog is used as a forum to explore ethical dilemmas and failures, and each post explores a new case study. Your case study should be factual (historical) and business oriented. The curator of the blog offers flexibility in your style and approach, but asks for a few specific items:

Posts should be no more than 1100 words and no less than 900. (Bibliographic information, i.e., your Works Cited page, do not factor into the word count.)

Posts should be research oriented, and should include at least three sources from academic publications or respected national media outlets.

Posts should very briefly explore necessary contextual information (historical implications, organizational background, etc.) to establish context and enable understanding.

Posts should very clearly demonstrate:

    a. Wherein is the *dilemma*; who had the chance to alter this outcome, and why did they not? What competing forces led to this being a case study in ethics? (Note: this means a straight-forward criminal violation is not an appropriate case study.)

    b. What type of ethical breakdown occurred?

    c. What lessons can a business-minded audience take away from this case study?

    d. Finalize by articulating three specific, open-ended discussion questions a manager could use to discuss this case study in a meeting. Skills: Research, Critical Thinking and Analysis, Persuasive Writing, Document Design

Genre: Proposal, Memo, Brief Report

Proposal Assignment

Relevant Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 7

[Assignment courtesy of Dan Von Holten]

Written Proposal (500-800 words)

At their core, proposals are arguments meant to convince the primary audience to do something. This may be to grant you or your group permission, funding, or materials. Proposals may also be used to offer services or products to potential customers, sometimes in response to a potential customer issuing a call for proposals (or bids). Even if you don't find you have an immediate need to write a proposal in your career, the ability to create a well-supported written argument is a valuable skill.

Objective

Create a proposal for a research project. This should be a project that you can maintain a keen interest in for many weeks. Based on the strength of the proposal, your instructor will approve or reject your project. **If rejected, you will need to either revise or start over.**

There are a variety of topics you can propose, but the end product of the project (what you are proposing) will include a formal, written document (a report, a feasibility study, a second proposal, etc.) and an oral presentation. Whatever your chosen project, it should be related to your chosen workplace. Better yet, it should be related to a particular aspect of your field of study.

Scenario

For this project, we are assuming you are currently working for an organization. This could be one of the organizations you used in your job packet or brochure assignments, or a current employer.

Identify a topic that is relevant to the workplace you've chosen. This could be something about trends or new information in the field or something related to the work environment.

> Some sample topics include: the feasibility of shifting the office to all open-source software, exploring new markets for business, or the costs and benefits of installing convertible standing/sitting desks in employee workspaces.

Product Format

Your proposal will be an informal proposal written in the form of a memo or informal report (reference your handbook). The written proposal should be **500-800 words in length** (not including appendixes, if used).

Use CMS endnote documentation. (pgs 152-61 in your handbook)

Use an appropriate font and keep one inch margins on all sides. (See pg 317-9 "Typography" in your handbook.)

Sections

Your proposal should include the following sections/headings

- Introduction (does not need a heading)

- Problem or Opportunity
  - Establish the need for your research project
- Background (optional)
- Research Objectives/Topics of Investigation
  - Explain what specific information you will gather for your research project
- Methods or Procedure
  - Explain how you will gather your information. Will you primarily rely on published work? Will you do any primary research of your own, such as a survey or observation?
- Work Schedule

Writing the Proposal

The proposal will do the following:

- Explain your final research project and the need for the research
  - What problem or opportunity are you exploring, and what will the final product be?
  - Why is this important?
- Identify what specific information your proposed project will collect
- Explain how you will complete the project (this includes explaining what kind of research you will do and why)
  - What kind of research will you do? What specific publications will you reference?
  - Why is this method the best approach for your research objectives?
- Prove that you have the resources, ability, and time to complete the project

  - Show that you can do it in the time we have.

- Give a schedule that shows how your project will be completed
  - This can be a task schedule, calendar, or Gantt Chart, but should detail the tasks involved in your project.

Assessment Criteria

The proposal will be assessed on the following criteria. You must meet all criteria in order to get a passing grade.

Purpose/Focus
- The proposal is clearly addressed to a specific person and focuses on the reader's needs.
- The proposal clearly and convincingly establishes the need for the research to the target audience (supervisor).
- Research Objectives are clear and specific.

Development

- The proposed research objectives will provide a thorough investigation of the proposed project
- The research methods establish an effective means of meeting the research objectives.
- The proposed work schedule is reasonable and specific.

Organization

- The proposal contains all requested sections (with headings).
- Information within sections is grouped or arranged in a way that aids the reader and the message.
- The writing makes effective use of organizational markers (headings, lists, etc.) to increase readability.

Tone

- The language of the proposal is clear, concise, and easy to follow.
- The language develops and maintains an image of the writer as a competent professional.
- Proposal is respectful of the reader without sounding stilted or overly passive or aggressive.

Style/Design

- The proposal follows formatting guidelines outlined in the assignment (including length and layout)

Editing/Proofreading

- There are few mechanical errors in the writing.

C-Level Proposals will make a genuine attempt at meeting the intended purpose of the assignment, but have weakness in areas such as focus, development, organization, and tone.

B-Level Proposals will meet expectations in most of the evaluation categories; particularly Purpose/Focus and Development. The content will be organized and show consideration for the reader's needs and perspective throughout the document.

A-Level Proposals will exceed expectations in several categories, one of which must be Purpose/Focus or Development. In addition to requirements for B-Level work, the writing will show the writer has anticipated the reader's needs and displays one or more of the following features: sophistication in thought, exemplary clarity and accuracy in language, fluidity of prose, control in aspects of design and organization, or presentation of a strong professional persona.

Skills: Research, Critical Thinking and Analysis, Writing for a Formal Audience

Genre: Formal Report

Formal Report

Relevant Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

[Assignment courtesy of Dan Von Holten]

A large project will often culminate in a formal document (often some type of report or proposal) that shares your conclusions and/or recommendations while providing sufficient background information.

Objective

Create a formal report based on the research outlined in your proposal. Your report will need to include front and back matter in addition to the main text. Your writing should take into account the needs of your audiences which will at the least include your English 417 instructor and your classmates as an auxiliary audience. The document should be detailed yet concise and the information from your sources should be balanced with your own analysis of the information. This project touches on most of the learning objectives for the course.

Product

You will produce a formal report based on your proposed research project.

- The report should show application of design methods covered earlier in the course and make use of visual aspects such as graphs, charts, or images.
- The report should maintain an objective tone, even if it is making recommendations.
- Formal documents can vary in length depending on the topic and the information presented. It will, however, need to use an acceptable 12pt font for the body text.

Writing the Report

Detailed information on formatting the report will be available later; however, the report will be in formal style as detailed in the course readings below. It will include front and back matter and your sources will be documented using the *Chicago Manual of Style* notes and bibliography approach.

Remember the connection between document design and accessibility: what choices can you make as the writer to ensure your reader can easily find key points, examples, etc.?

Assessment

Because this document is the culmination of your research project, it is expected to be highly polished and professional. As in previous assignments, I will be looking for evidence of your writing process—planning, drafting, revising, and proofreading—as well as for clear organization and effective document design.

The report will be assessed on the following criteria. You must meet all of the criteria in order to get a passing grade.

C-Level Reports will overall communicate a message related to the purpose of the report, but may have issues in areas such as focus, development, organization, or tone. This level will get the job done, but may require some extra work on the reader's part to understand one or more key points.

B-Level Reports will meet most of the expectations listed in the assessment criteria, particularly in higher order categories like Purpose/Focus and Development. The content will show consideration for the readers' needs and respective perspectives throughout the document. In general, this level will be acceptable for a workplace environment and demonstrate competence on the part of the writer.

A-Level Reports will exceed expectations in several categories, particularly higher order categories. In addition to requirements for B-Level, the writing will show anticipation of the reader's needs and displays one or more of the following features: sophistication in thought, exemplary clarity and accuracy in language, fluidity of prose, and control in aspects of design and organization, or presentation of a strong professional persona.

Purpose/Focus
- Each part of the front and back matter effectively achieves its purpose within the document.
- The main text is accessible to primary and secondary audiences.
- Research is used to effectively support claims.
- Conclusions (and recommendations if used) are logical and clearly drawn from evidence and claims presented in the report.
- Visuals are placed appropriately in the text and clearly relate to the discussion in the text.

Development
- A minimum of two visuals are appropriately, effectively, and ethically used to support the document.
- Visuals are accompanied with a descriptive title and caption.
- Research, whether primary or secondary, is credible and relevant.
- Information from research is integrated into the text cleanly, only using quotation when necessary and relying primarily on paraphrase and summary to maintain the flow of the writing.

Organization
- Letter/Memo of transmittal is before the title page.
- Front and back matter is organized appropriately around main text.
- All parts/sections in the main text are logically organized. Headings are used consistently and relate to the content.
- Where appropriate, the report makes use of organizational markers to improve readability.

Tone
- The report maintains a professional and objective tone.

Style/Design
- The report includes all parts/sections as discussed in course materials and class sessions.

- Writing is in an appropriate font and size.
- Pages and text are formatted using block paragraphs and continuation headings.
- Research is documented using both endnotes and a bibliography.
- Sources are cited according to CMS guidelines.

Editing/Proofreading
- Document is free of errors.

Skills: Research, Critical Thinking and Analysis, Writing for a Public Audience, Document Design with Visuals

Genres: Email, Brochure or Newsletter

The Email and Brochure or Newsletter Project

[Assignment courtesy of Anna Goins, adapted from Robin Mosher]

We know from class discussions that projects in the workplace can span any number of timelines, from small projects with quick turn-around-deadlines to large projects with years-long goals. Therefore, you must be able to adapt your planning skills to each scenario by understanding rhetorical context and workplace constraints. Because this project has a clear and direct goal – to deepen our awareness of workplace writing – and a simple approach to gathering evidence – professional email –you will have just two weeks to complete your work.

Let's be flexible on the mechanics of this project: if you'd like to work in teams of 2 or 3, you may, and if you'd like to work individually, you may. If you choose to work with classmates, please know that you're implicitly agreeing to have your work graded collectively and that you will be required to complete a team charter.

What will you do?
The two steps to completing this assignment are the familiar essentials of writing in the workplace: gathering information and presenting your findings.

Gathering information
Identify 10-15 people you know who have worked fulltime in a professional field for at least two years. Draft, revise, and send a professional email to each of them asking the assignment's central questions:

- What kind of writing do you do for your job?
- How important is writing in your profession?
- What kind of judgments do you find yourself making about what you read from colleagues and/or clients?

Because we want to be able to draw general conclusions, your ultimate goal is to have information from at least seven respondents. Please print a copy of every email you send and receive, and plan to turn those copies in along with your brochure or newsletter.

Presenting your findings
Create a brochure or newsletter that summarizes your findings and offers insight into how the content relates to your target audience: college students who have not yet completed a professional internship or worked in a professional environment. Be sure to follow our class handbook's guidelines on effective organization and document design, to include any relevant visuals/graphics, and to be mindful of color choices.

How will the work be assessed?
Both the email and the final document, brochure or newsletter, will each be assessed upon its clarity in focus and purpose – as determined by the rhetorical context of each; development of ideas; logic of organization; integration of visuals; consistency in tone/style/editing/voice; and, overall document design and proofreading.

Skills: Reflection, Critical Thinking and Analysis, Persuasive Writing, Document Design

Genre: Portfolio Compilation

Professional Portfolio

Relevant Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9

[Assignment courtesy of Dan Von Holten, based on Theresa Merrick's Portfolio Assignment]

The Portfolio demonstrates the student's strengths, areas of progress, and areas for future development as an engineer. The Portfolio should be a compendium of professional activities that demonstrate both the best work of the student and the range of their skills. The Portfolio should also show how those skills have developed over time (for example by including material from past and current courses, extracurricular activities, etc.).

The final submission of the Portfolio must include an introduction that frames the Portfolio for prospective viewers. Much like the cover letter that accompanies a résumé, **the introduction helps the viewer to understand both the overall skills of the student and the significance of the various elements included in the Portfolio.**

Audiences

Prospective Employers or Collaborators

Students may choose to make their portfolio public or accessible to prospective employers or collaborators – indeed you are encouraged to do so. Such viewers are interested in assessing not only your engineering skills and abilities, but also the compatibility of your philosophy and approach to engineering with theirs. Moreover, they want to see a range of challenges overcome and a range of strategies both in engineering and research, to demonstrate your ability to draw from what exists and to develop new ideas.

Instructor

Your instructor wants to see evidence of your ability to practice engineering and express that practice in clear and meaningful ways with substantial evidence to support your claims.

Required Components

Introduction to the Portfolio (Professional Statement)

This document is similar to a cover letter but can be used more generally. The professional statement offers a key entry point into your portfolio that summarizes your identity as a professional, areas of focus and strength, and areas for future development. In addition, it should provide initial guidance for navigating the portfolio. The portfolio introduction should be no more than 500 words in length.

> *You can pull from the professional summary and statement of qualifications you wrote earlier in the semester as starting points, but the material will need to be re-purposed and modified to function as your introduction. You should also look at your Week 1 Discussion Board (personal goals).*

Philosophy Statement

A philosophy statement is a common feature in a portfolio. Some prospective employers may request a philosophy statement of some kind as part of your application. While the philosophy statement is usually related to your chosen career path, its primary purpose is to give the reader a sense of how you approach work and what drives you to do well on the job. This can take the form of a list of values or principles or, if your work is more problem-oriented, a process for solving problems.

Résumé

One page—using the various strategies that we have discussed in class.

> *We've already placed a résumé on the portfolio site and you've since adapted it for your proposal too. Re-evaluate your résumé in its current form (and function) in the portfolio.*

Artifacts (minimum 3) with annotations

The artifacts form the primary evidence in your portfolio as they provide tangible evidence of past engineering activities. Artifacts should include a wide variety of resources, possibly including drawings, sketches, solid models, photographs of prototypes, research documents, etc.

> *Have the annotation along with part or all of the artifact visible on the webpage rather than giving readers a link to a file download. The latter isn't likely to engage the viewer.*

Format and Structure

You may structure and format your portfolio as you feel works best for your platform and intended audience; however, each component of the portfolio should be connected to the others. (See Fig 1 below).

> Readers should be able to easily navigate your portfolio and its contents.

Figure 1: Portfolio Visualization
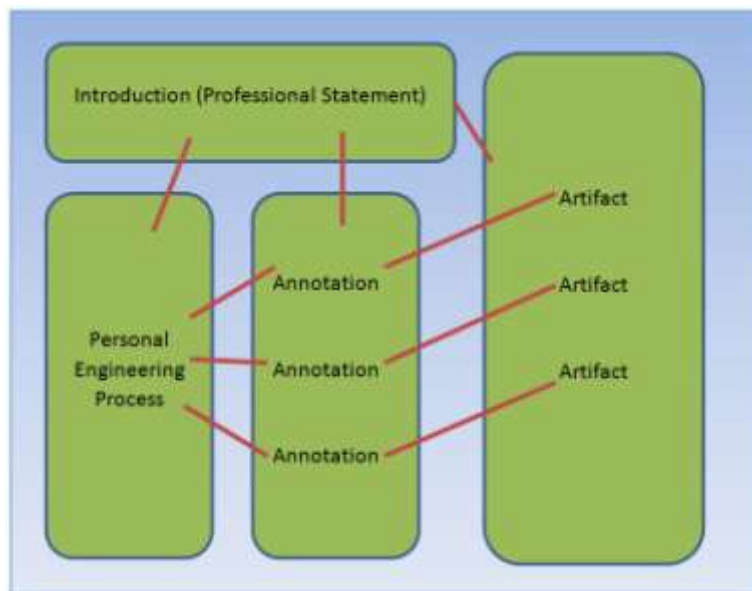
This diagram visualizes the portfolio content. Content in each section should connect with concepts in neighboring sections. Note the ways in which each component is connected to others and forms a comprehensive and cohesive portfolio.

Submitting the Portfolio

You will submit a link to your completed portfolio on Canvas

Assessment Criteria

The portfolio is a collection of documents (artifacts, annotations, etc.) that must all contribute to the same overall purpose to be effective.

C-Level portfolios will meet most of the criteria below (particularly Purpose/Focus and Development). Portfolios at this level will convey your message, but may not fully engage your reader or leave readers with some confusion.

B-Level portfolios will touch on all of the criteria listed below. Readers will easily gain a clear understanding of you as a professional.

A-Level portfolios will also meet all of the criteria listed below, but also show one of more of the following qualities: Richness and cohesiveness in thought, clarity and precision in language, fluid prose, or evidence of a strong professional persona.

Purpose/Focus
- The portfolio (introduction and philosophy in particular) presents the author as an emerging professional aware of his or her strengths and aware of areas for further development.

Development
- Claims are clear and specific (avoiding generalizations) and supported by evidence (including artifacts and annotations).
- The portfolio presents a breadth of evidence (artifacts, research, etc.) to support claims about the author.
- Portfolio conveys thoughtfulness in reflection (e.g. discussion of personal growth, quality, strengths, areas of progress, and areas of future development).

Organization
- Portfolio is easy to navigate.
- Portfolio makes use of organization strategies for clear communication discussed in English 417

Tone
- Language is clear and concise.
- Language conveys a formal, professional persona throughout portfolio.

Style/Design
- Portfolio makes use of design choices (such as color and font styles) that assist reader in navigation and reading.

Editing/Proofreading
- Writing is free of errors such as spelling and grammar.