CE 590 Assignment Instructions: Concept Paper

Purpose: The goal of this assignment is for you to develop a 2-page concept paper that describes a specific project, product, or engineering phenomenon in an accessible way. You want the audience to be able to understand the concept you have chosen to describe.

Audience: Your audience for concept paper is a diverse public audience, i.e., there is a wide range of background understanding, educational preparation, and interests.

Length: Your concept paper should be 2 full pages, plus a third page which serves as your References page to document your sources.

Topic: An engineering project, product, or phenomenon of your choice. Choose something that you have a strong understanding of, as you must know something well to explain it to others. For example, you could provide an overview of a bridge replacement project so that the public understands the timeline and project goal. Or, you could explain how a piece of technology works so a consumer could desire to purchase and know how to use it.

Description: The summative assessment for Unit 1: Principles of Effective Writing requires that you synthesize the principles we learned in this unit. The concept paper is a short project (2 pages) that explains an engineering project, product, or phenomenon of your choice to a public audience. This concept paper should thoughtfully combine words, visuals and document design to explain the concept. Because there are fewer words than in a report or proposal, you will need to choose each one carefully, thinking through sentence structure, word choice, and formatting. Recall, for example, our lessons on adapting complex information for a public audience and choosing the clear word over the complex one.

To design a strong concept paper, you'll want to think about what information your audience needs, how to most effectively convey it, how to design the layout of the two pages, which visuals work best, and more. You may borrow images openly available (citing appropriately, of course) or design your own images. This is a project where you can be creative and develop your ability to communicate your work in an accessible way.

Document Format: The first two pages of the document should be your concept paper. The third page should list References used for the project. Use the standard citation style in your discipline. Your assignment should be submitted as a PDF to ensure formatting consistency. Name the file: LastNameConceptPaper.

Learning Objectives: This assignment addresses Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3, and 6 for the course. You are creating a document to help a diverse audience understand an engineering project/product/phenomenon, using document and visual design to achieve your goal, participating in the complete range of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising), and adapting complex technical information for a diverse audience.

Grading: The concept paper is worth 20% of your final grade. It will be graded based on the communication choices as covered in class and not on the technical (engineering) content. Please see the rubric on Moodle for additional grading information.

Final Advice: Though this project is "short" (in terms of page length requirements), do not underestimate how much time it takes to compose a document using both visuals and text effectively. Start early to do your best!