Date: 3 October 2016

To: Mgmt 333 Students

From: Dr. Vlajcic

**Subject: Instructions for Cover Letter Assignment**

Please write a one-page cover letter for a job application. This can be for a position that you really want to apply for, or the letter can just be an exercise. In either case, please pick a *real* job for which you will be qualified after you graduate. You can choose something advertised in a newspaper, find a job listing on sites like Monster.com, look at company websites, or perhaps find openings through NIU’s placement center.

Your letter will be due on Wednesday, 2 November, and will be worth 50 points. Please bring these instructions to class on Wednesday, 5 October, for discussion. Please also bring the packet of employment communication samples, which is posted on Blackboard right below the assignment instructions. We’ll look at those samples to illustrate organization, the kinds of details to include, and what to avoid.

*Purpose*

This assignment is designed to help you in your future job search, and also to give you an understanding of the hiring process as *employers* approach it. *Nota bene:* this paper is also a writing exercise of the most exacting kind; your use of English—including grammar, spelling, diction, and style—could mean the difference between success and failure. The letter really has to be perfect, or the employer may discard it and you will have *no* chance of getting an interview.

And please note that the main purpose of this letter is to *get you an interview,* not to ask for the job itself. You have to convince the employer that you are a good candidate—in other words, someone who is likely to be right for the job and therefore worth interviewing. Overall, the letter has two main objectives: 1) to get the employer to look at your résumé (which would normally accompany the application letter), and 2) to motivate the employer to call you in for an interview.

A résumé is not part of the assignment, but you may submit one with your letter if you would like some feedback from me.

To maximize your letter’s chances of success, use the correct letter format (which we will discuss in class), and follow the outline on the next page of these instructions.

*Outline of Job Application Cover Letter*

Part 1:

State the position you want, and say where and when you saw the job listing. Get their attention! Tell them why you are a great candidate.

Part 2:

Build interest in yourself. Reveal what you *can* do by explaining what you *have* done.

Focus on your accomplishments. Use lots of verbs. Tell them what you did, not what you were responsible for doing.

Part 3:

Call attention to your résumé (which would be included with the letter). No résumé is required for this assignment, but you can submit one if you would like me to review it.

Finally, ask the employer to call you to schedule an interview.

Try to find a job posting that looks right for you, do as many rough drafts as time permits, and have a clean final copy to turn in on 2 November.

In the meantime, please remember to bring these instructions with you to class on Wednesday, 5 October.