English 202D: Business Writing

Fall 2018   Instructor: Phillip Zapkin
Section 048   Office Location: Burrowes G17
TR 1:35-2:50PM   Office Hours: T 12-1 PM; W 1-3 PM
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Course Description

English 202D introduces students to the conventions, genres, and strategies of business communication. In particular, it focuses on skills in critical analysis, document design, reader-centered writing, and professional discourse.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to

- recognize and employ the conventions and genres of business communication;
- use visual and written rhetoric to accommodate different audiences and purposes; and
- produce accessible, persuasive, and usable documents.

Course Objectives

Students can expect to:

- discover and understand the discourse features that distinguish their disciplinary and institutional communities from others;
- develop a range of writing processes appropriate to various writing tasks;
- reveal the organization of their communications by using forecasting and transitional statements, headings, and effective page design;
- observe appropriate generic conventions and formats for letters, resumes, memoranda, and a variety of informal and formal reports;
- design and use tables, graphs, and business illustrations; and
- collaborate effectively with peers in a community of writers who provide feedback on each other's work.

Required Text

Business Communication Essentials, by Courtland L. Bovee and John V. Thill. 8th edition. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education, 2019.

Course Requirements and Grading

You will complete 6 major writing projects for this course, participate in weekly class discussions, and complete weekly writing workshops.

Project	Grade Weight
Topic-Approval Proposal	10%
Business Correspondence	15%
Job Application Documents	15%
Progress Report	10%
Social Media Profile	20%
Formal Analytical Report	20%

Participation	10%
Total	**100%**

Grading Scale

The grades of A, B, C, D, and F indicate the following qualities of academic performance:

A = (Excellent/Superior) Indicates exceptional achievement
B = (Good/Very Good) Indicates extensive achievement
C = (Satisfactory) Indicates acceptable achievement
D = (Poor) Indicates only minimal achievement
F = (Failure) Indicates inadequate achievement necessitating a repetition of the course in order to secure credit

Major Projects

This course will hold you to the professional standards of business communication. Each of your formal writing projects is expected to look professional and polished. At work, even a single error in spelling, grammar, or proofreading can jeopardize the effectiveness of some communications (depending on the rhetorical situation). Whether it is a resume, memo, or report, your communication should exhibit complete and appropriate format. Grading will reflect the seriousness with which these matters are frequently viewed in the working world. You must hand in all major projects to pass the course.
There are six major projects:

1. The Topic-Approval Proposal
For this assignment you are to write a formal request letter seeking my approval for your chosen topic and permission to proceed with the research necessary to complete the final assignment--your formal analytical report. The topic-approval proposal is the first document in a sequence leading up to the final assignment. This sequence includes the topic-approval proposal (Project 1), the progress report (Project 3), and the formal analytical report (Project 5).

2. Business Correspondence
For this project you will demonstrate your ability to apply a variety of writing strategies to specific situations by writing responses to the situations provided. You will also include a cover memo with these documents that outlines the challenges you faced and strategies you used in completing the project.

3. Job Application Documents
For this assignment you will perform a rhetorical analysis of a company and job advertisement, then compose and design a resume and application letter that are fully targeted to that specific position. You will also submit a cover memo that describes how you have targeted your resume and application letter, a copy of the job ad and a copy of your "generic" resume.

4. The Progress Report
You apprise your instructor of the progress that you are making on your final project and ask for any help you might need.

5. The Social Media Profile

A profile website and online articles will be written and designed according to the guidelines for online writing and effective visual rhetoric. The profile website and online articles will illustrate your personal professional brand.

6. The Formal Analytical Report

Complete the formal analytical report that you described in your topic-approval proposal letter. The report must do the following:

- define a problem;
- analyze the criteria for a satisfactory solution;
- propose one or more alternative solutions; and
- argue for the solution that satisfies the criteria best.

Policies

Attendance

You are allowed to miss two classes with *no penalty* to your grade. *Each class missed beyond those two will cost ⅓ of your overall course grade.*

Excused absences do not count against your grade. In order for an absence to be excused you must discuss it with me as early as possible beforehand (at least 24 hours). Reasons for excused absences may include: religious holidays, military service, university required activities (i.e., participation in a university sports team), or severe illness or injury.

If you miss class, *it is your responsibility to make up the missed material.* You should ask a classmate to take notes for you, come to office hours, and/or email me as soon as possible, preferably before the missed class period.

Late Policy

Submitting a project after the specified deadline will result in the loss of one full letter grade per late day.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a shared commitment to reject unethical intellectual practices like plagiarism and cheating. This is a foundation of academic work. The guidelines for US academic integrity standards are laid out in the University's Code of Conduct (see our Canvas page).

Consistent with this expectation, the Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through their efforts.

Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception.

Accessibility: Disability Accommodation

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, contact the appropriate

disability services office on campus, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation (equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/applying-for-services). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, the disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with me as early as possible so we can discuss accommodations.

The Student Disability Resources Web site provides contact information for every Penn State campus (equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/disability-coordinator). For further information, please visit the Student Disability Resources website at equity.psu.edu/sdr.

Education Equity: Bias Reporting
Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the Report Bias webpage (equity.psu.edu/reportbias/).

Counseling and Psychological Services
Penn State offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 814-863-0395, studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/
- Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400
- Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

Standards of Classroom Behavior
Classroom behavior should always reflect the essential Penn State values of civility, integrity, and respect for the dignity and rights of others. As such, the classroom space should be safe, orderly, and positive—free from disruptions, disorderly conduct, and harassment as defined in the University Code of Conduct, Section IV, B.

As instructor, I have the authority to request that any disruptive student(s) leave class for the class period. If disruptive behavior continues in subsequent class periods, a complaint may be filed with the Office of Student Conduct, which may result in the student being dismissed from class until University procedures have been completed.

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change by me. I will notify you ahead of time in class and/or by email of any changes.

Class	Date	Topic	Due
1	8/21 Tues.	Course Introductions The Rhetorical Situation	
2	8/23 Thurs.	Introducing Projects 1, 5 and 6 Planning Business Messages – Choosing Your Approach	Reading: BCE Chapters 1 and 3
3	8/28 Tues.	Writing and Completing Business Messages	Reading: BCE Chapters 4 and 5
4	8/30 Thurs.	Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication and Business Etiquette	Reading: BCE Chapter 2
5	9/4 Tues.	Writing Proposals Writing with Clarity and Conciseness.	
6	9/6 Thurs.	Introducing Project 2: Business Correspondence. Peer Review	Writing: Rough drafts of Project 1: Topic Approval Proposal
7	9/11 Tues.	Writing Routine and Positive Messages	Reading: BCE Chapter 7 Writing: Project 1: Topic Approval Proposal
8	9/13 Thurs.	Writing Negative Messages	Reading: BCE Chapter 8
9	9/18 Tues.	Writing Persuasive Messages	Reading: BCE Chapter 9
10	9/20 Thurs.	Peer Review	Writing: Rough Drafts of Business Correspondence.
11	9/25 Tues.	Introducing Project 3: Job Application Documents Writing Resumes	Reading: BCE Chapter 13 Writing: Project 2: Business Correspondence

Class	Date	Topic	Due
12	9/27 Thurs.	Writing Resumes, continued	Bring Job Ad(s)
13	10/2 Tues.	Application Letters Sign up for Oral Progress Reports	Reading: BCE Chapter 14
14	10/4 Thurs.	Follow-up documents, Interviewing Peer Review	Writing: Rough Drafts of Project 3
15	10/9 Tues.	Review Project 4: Oral Progress Report and Project 6: Formal Analytical Report Report Organization	Writing Due: Project 3 Job Application Documents Reading Due: BCE Chapter 10
16	10/11 Thurs.	Oral Progress Reports	Writing: Tentative Outline Of Formal Analytical Report and Presentation Visuals
17	10/16 Tues.	Oral Progress Reports	Reading: BCE Chapter 10 Writing: Tentative Outline Of Formal Analytical Report and Presentation Visuals
18	10/18 Thurs.	Oral Progress Reports	Writing: Tentative Outline Of Formal Analytical Report and Presentation Visuals
19	10/23 Tues.	Introducing Project 5: Social Media Profile Writing Bios Workshop: Setting Up Websites	Reading Due: BCE Chapter 6 Watch: A Winning Photo And Your Brand Identity, A Well-Branded Social Media Profile, and LinkedIn For Personal Branding.
20	10/25 Thurs.	Personal Branding Workshop: Setting Up Websites	Viewing: Personal Branding Basics, Lynda.psu.edu. (all videos).
21	10/30 Tues.	Writing For the Web	Viewing: Writing For The Web, Lynda.psu.edu. (all videos). (Exercises recommended, but not required)
22	11/1 Thurs.	Copyright and Your Website Bio Peer Review	Writing: Rough drafts of your social media bio
23	11/6 Tues.	Peer Review	Writing: Rough drafts of 3 online articles, plus rough drafts of your bio (long form) and your personal website

Class	Date	Topic	Due
24	11/8 Thurs.	Review Project 6: Formal Analytical Report Understanding and Planning Reports and Proposals	Review: BCE Chapter 10 Writing: Project 5 Social Media Profile
25	11/13 Tues.	Writing and Completing Reports and Proposals; Organization, Emphasis, Tone	Reading: BCE Chapter 11 Writing Due: Project 5: Social Media Profile
26	11/15 Thurs.	Writing and Completing Reports and Proposals; Parts, Cohesion, Mechanics	
		11/19-11/23 Fall Break	
27	11/27 Tues.	Graphics and Report Design	
28	11/29 Thurs.	Peer Review	Writing: Rough drafts of introduction, body and conclusion, including visuals.
29	12/4 Tues.	Peer Review	Writing: Rough drafts of cover, title, transmittal, exec sum, bibliography, appendix.
30	12/6 Thurs.	Peer Review	Writing: Rough Drafts of Entire Report, including Prefatory and Supplemental Parts Writing Due: Project 6: Formal Analytical Report (by 11:59 a.m. Monday, Dec. 10)

Topic-Approval Proposal

Overview

For this assignment you will write a formal proposal letter seeking my approval for the project that will become your formal report. The proposal is the first document in a series of assignments culminating in that final assignment.

Your audience for this letter is me, your instructor. Think of me as someone who wants to be sure that you choose a project from which you can learn a great deal and on which you can do a good job. I need to be convinced that this project is important to you and that you have the ability to complete it.

Your proposal should persuade me that a significant business challenge exists in a real organization and that you should be permitted to address it. You do not have to have the solution to the problem at this time; rather you are suggesting that the organization must invest its faith in you to research and devise a solution.

After you have convinced me of a need for your work, include a detailed description of your work plan. Will you go to the library and research the latest techniques in your field? Will you investigate the cost of new equipment? Will you talk to people who have solved the problem for other organizations? Will you research social media communication plans?

Some combination of these? Convince me that this plan for research is the right path leading to a solution and that the time exists in this semester to do the work well.

This work plan must also be plotted with time; you must indicate what work you will be doing during each of the weeks left in the semester. You should also have sections of your proposal detailing your qualifications to do this work.

While I am willing to consider a wide range of topics for your report, you must persuade me that you have chosen a worthwhile issue that you are capable of handling well. In reading your proposal letter, I will be looking for answers to the following questions:

- **What business challenge will your report address?** Have you clearly defined a conflict between a desired situation and the current situation?
- **Who is affected by the situation?** Who will be the audience for your final report?
- What is your position in relationship to the audience?
- **Why is this challenge significant for this final audience?** What is at stake?
- **Do you have a possible feasible solution for the problem?** Have you established what a good solution would require? Have you thought about alternative plausible solutions?
- **What makes you qualified to carry out the project?** How is the topic related to your major? Your career plans? I prefer projects that give you practice using the skills you will need in your career.
- **What will it take to gather the necessary information and complete your analysis?** Can you complete your report in the time left in this semester, using the resources readily available to you?

- **Do you have a work plan for your project**, a plan that shows specifically when certain activities must be completed this semester if you are to finish the project on time?

Details

Craft your proposal in the form of a *formal business letter* to me. Select your information and organize it in such a way that it is persuasive and accessible. Remember, this proposal is not merely informative: it is an *argument* for why your topic should be approved. Your proposal will most likely include the following sections:

- **An introduction** that tells me why you are writing.
- **A section on the business challenge**, including an explicit well-developed thesis statement. Your letter may include a separate section describing background information about the organization and/or information about the current situation before describing the problem, depending on how much information your instructor will need to fully understand the business challenge.
- **A section describing your research plans** for this project. Convince me that you know what kind of information you'll need and where to find it. Include an analysis of your readers and what information they'll need in order to adopt your solution.
- **A discussion of your credentials and motivation**. Convince me that you have the background and resources necessary to conduct your research. Be sure to also indicate your motivation for and/or connection to this particular project.
- **A schedule.** Convince me that you know what activities your research will require and that you can get them done on time.
- **A conclusion** that formally requests permission to proceed.

Evaluation Criteria

- **Persuasiveness and organization**. I will be looking to see that you are taking on an actual project related to your professional and academic expertise and that you can complete the project by the end of the semester. Make your proposal convincing; demonstrate that you have singled out a worthwhile problem to solve and that you are the researcher to solve it.
- **Style, clarity and arrangement.** Your proposal must be well written. The problem statement is clear and logically stated, sentences correct, concise and arranged so that the meaning is easily obtained and the prose is streamlined and effective for a general reader. Paragraphs are coherent, unified and relatively short (125 words or fewer).
- **Design and format.** Your design choices, including paragraph length, headings, subheadings, font choices, etc., increase document professionalism and accessibility. Business letter format is used consistently and appropriately.

Business Correspondence
Overview

In working with clients or colleagues, it's imperative to strike the right balance in tone, arrangement and content. In some ways, short correspondence and communication (letters and emails) is the most important on-the-job writing you will do. The correspondence portfolio is your opportunity to demonstrate effective business writing through examples of everyday business communication.

For this project you will demonstrate your ability to apply a variety of writing strategies to specific situations by writing three messages (two internal messages and one e-mail to an external contact) in response to the situations provided below. You will also include a cover memo with these documents that outlines the challenges you faced and strategies you used in completing the messages.

Because these documents are so brief and address such specific situations, student examples are not provided. However, BCE Chapters 7, 8 and 9 will provide useful models for format and tone.

Details

Follow the scenarios described below in composing your documents, but feel free to use your imagination to provide supporting details.

Scenario 1

You are the head of human resources at SimuTech, a company that produces software.

You have been assigned the unenviable task of informing employees of the company that expected holiday bonuses will not be distributed this year because of an unexpected downturn in company profits. This is the first time this has happened since the bonus program was created ten years ago.

This is a sensitive message because it will likely disappoint employees and may additionally cause them to lose confidence in the future of the company. Your challenge is to offset this initial reaction and reaffirm their commitment to SimuTech.

Scenario 2
You are still playing the role of the H.R. head at SimuTech, but this time you have been assigned to compose a memo describing a change in policy.

Last week one of SimuTech's employees, Craig Wilson, was terminated after support personnel discovered illegally downloaded content on his computer during a systems upgrade. Wilson was a well-regarded worker of SimuTech who had just recently been commended by the company for his high achievement. However, administrators at SimuTech terminated Wilson because they feel the use of office equipment for these purposes leaves the company vulnerable to legal action.

Your challenge in composing this memo is three-fold. Employees are curious and concerned about Wilson's dismissal, so part of the purpose of your memo is to calm fears and confusion about his termination.

Secondly, you have been instructed to remind employees that the use of office computers for personal and/or illegal purposes (such as illegally downloading copyrighted material) is against company policy and grounds for termination.

Finally, managers have decided to perform random searches on company computers to make sure this kind of activity is not taking place; you have to inform employees of these forthcoming searches and attempt to discourage negative reactions.

Scenario 3

You are a vice-president in charge of public relations for Warren Enterprises, a technical consulting firm.

You have recently been contacted via e-mail by an employee of the local Chamber of Commerce, Susan Monk, with a promotional opportunity. Ms. Monk would like Warren Enterprises to pay a one-time fee of $2,000 to have a metal sign with the company's logo and contact information hung on the fence that encloses the local baseball stadium.

You would like to take advantage of this opportunity, but you had a previous bad experience with the Chamber of Commerce. A float Warren Enterprises paid $1,000 to sponsor in the town's annual Patriot Days parade was poorly constructed and contained a misrepresentation of your company's logo. Your previous attempts to receive a refund because of these circumstances have been unanswered.

In this e-mail response, your challenge is to restate your complaint about this original event to Ms. Monk and request either a refund or a reduction in the necessary contribution to sponsor a sign at the local ball field.

Evaluation Criteria

- **Adaptation and Organization.** The responses demonstrate an understanding and effective application of genre conventions for everyday business communication. Organizational strategies are clear, effective and appropriate. The writer understands organizational strategies and is able to adapt them to specific rhetorical situations.
- **Content**. The writer includes specific, focused requests, explanations, goodwill, and/or instructions with appropriate use of buffer or context, when needed. Evidence to support requests or claims is clear, accessible and written from the reader's perspective.
- **Style, Tone and Design.** The messages are correct and concise. Tone is appropriate to the rhetorical situation but is in all ways professional, approachable, conversational and tailored to the specific audience. Design conventions are followed accurately.

Job Application Documents

Overview

Most of us obtain jobs through a multi-stage process. First you research the types of jobs you are qualified for and the types of employers you would like to work for. Then you try to convince specific employers to consider you for a job. Your first communication with your future employer is likely to be through a resume and application letter. These documents must persuade him or her to continue the conversation.

Details

Your resume and application letter must be adapted to reflect your specific skills for a specific position. Find a detailed job advertisement for which you are at least mostly qualified (or will be upon graduation). Target your resume and application letter for that position, then tell me about your choices in the cover memo.

Documents required: Cover memo, copy of job ad, generic resume, one targeted resume and one targeted application letter which have been adapted to the needs of the specific position and employer.

The cover memo will explain and/or list all the ways you adapted your resume and application letter to meet the specific needs of this job and employer. The cover memo can be short (a single page) and informal. The cover memo, job ad and generic resume will not be graded; however, if they are missing, your grade may be reduced.

Resumes

The purpose of the resume is to describe your qualifications for a type of job.

Content. The goal is to argue that you are qualified for a particular type of job and that you would be a capable, responsible, and personable employee who communicates effectively.

Format. Your format may be traditional or innovative as long as it is appropriate and as long as the information is highly accessible and is organized in a way that highlights the most important items – from the employer's perspective. Important: Follow the formatting and content guidelines as mentioned in BCE Chapter 13.

Style. Your style should be fairly formal. You need not use complete sentences, but you should use a concise, active style and show consistency in expression from section to section.

Application Letters

The purpose of the application letter is to persuade that specific employer to grant you an interview. Just as you appreciate being treated as an individual rather than as a statistic, so does an employer.

Content and Organization. The goal is to show the reader both that you know what that specific company needs and that you have what it takes. You may organize this section in various ways: Most business cover letters use AIDA (See BCE Chapter 14). Most application letters in engineering and science fields follow the Introduction/Education/Experience/Conclusion format. The letter should close by inviting a response. Important: BCE Chapter 14 provides excellent examples.

Style. Application letters are difficult to write because they aim at somewhat conflicting goals. On the one hand, you want to make a good first impression. So you want to sound polite and fairly formal. On the other hand, you want to stand out from the crowd – otherwise, why should the employer hire you rather than any of the other applicants? The best policy is probably to talk to your reader as directly and naturally as possible. Avoid hype.

Format. Use a **conventional business letter format** Be brief: if possible, stick to one page.

Evaluation Criteria

- **Adaptation and Organization**. The application letters and resumes demonstrate proficient application of genre conventions in response to different rhetorical situations.
- Organizational strategies are clear, effective and appropriate. The writer understands organizational strategies and is able to adapt them to specific job application situations.
- **Content.** The writer makes information choices dependent on resume and application letter conventions and audience needs. Content focuses on skills, results, and qualifications, quantified where appropriate.
- **Style, Tone and Design**. The documents are correct and concise. Tone is appropriate to the rhetorical situation but is in all ways professional, conversational and tailored to the specific audience. Design works to make the documents attractive and accessible.
- **Correctness:** Employers impose strict standards of correctness on application materials. Accordingly, I will mark this project on a somewhat stricter scale than usual.

Oral Progress Report

Overview

You and your group members will conduct an in-class oral progress report of about 15–20 minutes. The purpose of this assignment is to allow you to present the progress you have made toward your final report, include visuals into your presentation, to establish an outline of your final report and to solicit feedback on your final project from your fellow classmates and instructor.

Details

This is not a formal presentation. Instead, think of it like this: You and your team will lead part of a *business meeting*, where you will present the progress you have made and invite active participation from your fellow students and instructor to help you solve problems.

First and foremost, your presentation must provide evidence *(proof)* that you have made *substantial progress* towards completing your final report. To that end, present your actual results/findings in your presentation. Simply telling us you have completed work is not enough. Show us the work you've completed.

Here are some additional questions you may want to answer during your report. If you do not have final answers, you may ask your fellow students for help:

- What is your topic? What improvements are you trying to make/suggest? Has it changed from your original proposal? How? Why?
- What will be *the purpose* of your final report? Do you have a title for your final report?
- Who will be the audience for the final report? How receptive will your audience be to the recommendations you will make in your final report?
- What progress have you made so far? Mention data, interviews, surveys, etc. Provide a detailed summary/list of the research already accomplished towards completing your final report. You may present this in a visual (Powerpoint, table, chart or graph), or in a handout.
- Mention remaining tasks and your plans for completing them.
- Mention any problems you're experiencing. Are you finding the information you need? Have you fallen behind schedule – and if so, how will you get back on track? Do you need help?
- Mention (make a list?) of questions you may want to ask your fellow students and/or instructor during your report.

Your presentation will also include:

- *A visual or visuals.* Slide shows, websites, charts, graphs, photos and/or handouts all count.
- *A tentative outline of the final formal report.* See sample in Canvas. Plan to submit in

Canvas on the day you present.

Evaluation Criteria

- **Progress: Evidence is presented that indicates substantial progress has been made towards completing the final report.**
- **Content:** Presenters provide information about report topic, problem and purpose, and audience. Presenters indicate they know what needs to be completed and have a plan for doing it.
- **Interaction:** Presenters encourage the participation of the class in answering questions and/or solving problems.
- **Visual**: The report includes at least one visual (handout, Powerpoint, website, chart, graph, table, photo, etc.).
- **Outline:** The presenters hand in a tentative outline of the final report. The outline is substantial and appropriate.

The Social Media Profile
Overview

More and more employers are asking applicants if they have a website or other web presence that they can access easily. Managing your online image is crucial when [almost all recruiters perform](#) an online search of a candidate before setting up an interview. By creating a professional social media profile (and ruthlessly editing your web presence), you can develop a rich alternative for employers who want to see beyond your one-page resume.

A key component of a successful personal brand is establishing a sense of authorship on the web. Online article or blog writing tends to be more informal and immediate than most other forms of professional writing. The purpose of this project is to use that informality, as well as the capacity for linking to a variety of online media, to think reflectively about current trends and topics being discussed in the broader business world outside of class. You will engage more thoroughly with your own discipline and begin to establish your sense of authorship and expertise on the web.

Details

For this assignment, you will create an online profile (website) that illustrates your professional personal brand and includes at least three online articles.

The Profile Website
Your profile website should be a showcase demonstrating a well-thought-out personal brand - who you are and what you can do for future employers, clients, or careers. Just like you did with your resumes and cover letters, you will choose certain skills, values, artifacts, etc., based on what you want a professional audience to know about you. Remember, when you post online, you are creating a "digital tattoo" or impression of yourself.

The profile should include an appropriate headshot, a headline, a summary or bio and links to any social media that you have optimized for a professional audience. The website will also include or link to your three online articles.

Depending on your field, purpose and personal brand, you may also consider adding a resume (address removed), sample projects, internship information, etc. All content must be focused on the image you will share with a professional audience.

Important: The key here it is to create a simple profile website that is coherent, unified, and well-written. Simply adding more content, without strong cohesive and rhetorical purpose, may reduce the success of your profile.

Website Platforms: We recommend [Sites @ Penn State](#), a Wordpress-based website builder, free with your Penn State user id. Sites offers prompt support, extensive design choices, exceptional adaptability, easy export options, privacy settings and mobile- friendly functionality.

If you prefer, you may also use another website builder, like Wix or Weebly, or you may build your own.

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The Articles
As part of your profile, you will write at least three online articles or blog entries that follow the guidelines for writing for the web, including the capacity for linking to a variety of online media. The purpose here is to think reflectively about current trends and topics being discussed in the broader business world outside of class, to engage more thoroughly with your own discipline and to begin to establish your sense of authorship on the web.

Topics: Topics within your major or field work best, but they don't have to be – the purpose here is to show you are reading respected news sources and have intelligent things to say. The guiding principle will be this: Would you encourage potential employers, customers or clients to read your blog entries?

Mechanics: These online articles should follow the conventions for writing for the web and effective visual rhetoric, including
- Prominently-placed main points, logical and obvious organization and short paragraphs (25-35 words).
- Well-written, thoughtful discussion of at least one referenced (and linked) online text. (Value-added posts will include additional links to credible and relevant sources.) Each entry should be between 200-400 words.
- Conversational, but still professional, tone.
- Attractive and compelling design, including an informative, interesting title and at least two headings to increase readability and accessibility.
- At least one relevant image, appropriately captioned and/or explained (unless it is obviously decorative). Visuals should be linked to their original sources.

Evaluation Criteria

- **Content:** The profile presents a carefully-crafted, consistent and professional personal brand. The profile, including the articles, is well-designed and well-written. The profile is substantial and appropriate for the rhetorical situation(s). The profile establishes a sense of authorship and subject matter authority, including any relevant artifacts and links.
- **Effectiveness:** The profile demonstrates creative and sophisticated use of the internet and electronic medium, including social media. The profile presents a full and professional brand for the writer.
- **Design and Professionalism:** The profile is attractive and accessible. The profile reflects the writer's ability to apply design principles in a proficient way. The profile is easy to navigate.
- **Style and Tone**. The writing is correct and concise. Tone is appropriate to the rhetorical situation and genre conventions for online writing; meaning, in most cases, less formal and conversational, but still professional. All text follows the conventions established for writing on the web.

The Formal Analytical Report

Overview

Complete the formal analytical report that you described in Project 1 Proposal. The report must do the following:

- define a problem,
- analyze the criteria for a satisfactory solution,
  propose one or more alternative solutions, and
  argue for the solution that satisfies the criteria
  best.

The problem may involve an institutional, technical, or public policy issue that you are working on or have worked on in your other courses; or it may be something related to an organization to which you belong; or it may be related to a job that you've held or now hold; or it may be a new area that you are interested in.

The solution to the problem may involve coming up with an original design, choosing between available alternatives, or providing needed information. See this report as a place to demonstrate everything that you've learned so far about writing in this course.

Details

The Rhetorical Situation

For the purposes of this report, you should find a real situation in which you are writing the report to a primary reader who has the authority to reject or use your work. So the primary goal of your report is to convince this reader to adopt your recommended solution(s). The report may also have secondary audiences as well; for example, it may serve as a plan for the technical staff who will implement the solution and as an historical record of the decision-making process for future readers.

The problem situation should be real. A real situation is one that you have actually encountered: it might involve a current or former employer, a specific office or department within the University, or a service group to which you belong.

Audience and Style

Your report should be written directly to a person within your real situation who has the authority to decide whether to accept your recommendations. Your tone should be appropriate to the situation–in most cases it will be fairly formal.

Body of Report

All reports should introduce a problem, analyze criteria for a solution, evaluate several solutions against the criteria, and recommend the best solution(s).

Prefatory and Supplemental Elements

Your report should include the following:

- a letter or memo of transmittal
  a cover page
- a title page
- an executive summary a
  table of contents
- at least two visuals
  references
  appendices

Length

Your report should be as long as it needs to be, but will probably run about 8 pages (2,000 words), excluding the front and end matter. I would prefer that you keep it under 20 pages (5,000 words).

Evaluation Criteria

- **Content**. The report introduces a focused, significant problem, analyzes criteria for a solution, analyzes at least one solution and recommends the best course of action. The report contains all the research necessary for a persuasive argument. The analysis is logical and complete. The audience is clearly identified and appropriate.
- **Prefatory and Supplemental Parts.** The report contains all the required prefatory and supplemental parts. Each part is well-written, appropriate to the rhetorical situation and follows the guidelines recommended in the textbook and in class.
- **Organization.** The entire report is clearly, obviously and effectively organized according to the rhetorical situation.
- **Readability and Design**. The report is highly readable, utilizing effective headings, subheadings, lists, previews, reviews and other transition elements. The report is attractively and professionally designed.
- **Style and Tone.** The report is well written and more formal in tone. There are very few, if any, sentence-level or grammar errors. The report uses appropriate vocabulary. Each sentence is clear and effective. Paragraphs are short, unified and coherent.
- **Visuals.** The report contains visuals. The visuals are appropriate in content, type and emphasis. The visuals are incorporated correctly into the text, according to the guidelines set forth in the textbook and in class.