ENGLISH 210C
Report Writing
Spring 1998

Instructor: Mark Spielmacher
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Office hours: Wednesday 12:00 - 2:00, Thursday 12:00 - 1:00
Meeting times and place:  Lecture: Tuesday, 11:30 - 12:30 in EL 211
                              Tutorial 1: Tuesday, 1:30 - 3:30 in EL 211
                              Tutorial 2: Thursday, 1:30 - 3:30 in EL 211

Course Description: Designed to help students write effective reports, this course will examine various types of reports and their formats, report language and style, the collection and analysis of data, organization, editing and redrafting, collaboration, audience, and issues of sensitivity. Along with looking at existing reports to see what they can teach us, students will be assigned various short projects which will culminate in a long, formal report. This particular section of the course is unique in that your report will be about the course itself, making recommendations which will be presented to the English Department. This final report will combine research on potential course texts, student expectations about the course, students’ needs, evaluations of past designs of the course, suggestions about the workability of the course for various disciplines (carried out through interviews), and proposals for new and creative visions of how the course might be developed using available technology and resources. Along with fulfilling these requirements, the main goals of the course are to give students experience in research and data collection, to help students develop good analytical and organizational skills, to expose students to the social and rhetorical contexts (various institutional and business settings) in which reports are written and assessed, and to give students an opportunity to improve their writing and compositional skills.

Required Text:

Recommended:
McArthur, Murray, and Jane E. Aaron. The Little, Brown Compact Handbook (First Canadian Edition). All royalties derived from the sale of this text will be donated to the Department of English Scholarship fund.

Required Work:
Attendance and Participation in all lectures and tutorials  10
Completion of all assigned tutorial exercises (portfolio)  5
Memo Report/Informal Proposal (May 26)  5
Research Report  (due June 9)  15
Formal Proposal  (due June 23)  15
Progress Report  (due July 14)  10
Formal Report  (due July 31)  40
Assignment Policy: Your goal is to produce a report that may be considered seriously by the English faculty; for this reason you should consider your assignments as being submitted in a professional setting. Assignments must be printed and neatly assembled. Late Assignments will be penalized 5% per day. Assignments later than two days will not be accepted. See me well in advance for possible extensions. Essays not delivered into my hands must be dated and signed by an English Department secretary and placed in my mailbox.

All assignments must be done according to instructions. Grading will be affected also by errors in spelling, punctuation, diction and grammar. Pay careful attention to errors pointed out by your marker in early assignments and take steps to avoid recurrences of those errors.

All reports must be entirely your OWN work, with all citations properly referenced. Plagiarism, "the act of presenting the ideas, words, or other intellectual property of another as one's own" (Undergraduate Calendar 1:10), is a serious academic offense and will be dealt with according to the University of Waterloo's disciplinary code. I encourage you to come and see me, or contact me by e-mail, for any problem, concern, or comment you might have about the course, the text, and the assigned work.

Assignment instructions

Attendance and Participation: You are required to attend all classes and tutorials; a sign in sheet or roll-call will be implemented to monitor student attendance. Because this is a report writing class, persons missing a class or tutorial must submit an incident report detailing the valid reasons for the absence, along with supporting documentation (doctor’s note, etc.). Failure to submit a report by the end of the week following the missed class or tutorial will result in a 2% deduction from your attendance grade.

Portfolio (lab assignments): Each week, one or more exercises or assignment drafts, related to the lecture, will be completed in the tutorial. Completed work, along with all research notes and related material, will be kept in a folder or loose-leaf binder and brought to each tutorial. At the end of the term, submit your portfolio along with your final report. Your mark will be based on the completeness, and to some extent the professional appearance, of your portfolio.

Memo Report/Informal Proposal: This brief (1 page) assignment done in tutorial will follow the guidelines for memo writing, contain specific items of information (a preliminary articulation of your chosen research problem, the reason for addressing the issue, some ways you intend to go about collecting information, etc.), and be composed in an informal style.

Research Report: Report on what you have discovered in your library (and other) research and during your interviews etc. You may be selective in this report in order to keep it manageable. It will also contain an annotated bibliography of at least 4 items. 3-5 pages.

Formal Proposal: This will be addressed to some audience (your instructor, the English Department Chair, the English faculty, the LPW undergraduate advisor, your own department’s Chair, etc.). Provide a statement of the problem, and a statement of your report’s objectives and methodology. Explain how you plan to write your final report. How will information be
evaluated? What sorts of recommendations do you foresee making? Provide an outline and a work schedule. If collaborating, indicate how the work will be divided. 2-5 pages.

Progress Report: In the form of a letter, address the same audience you addressed in your Formal Proposal and detail the work completed to date, any problems that arose and how they were resolved, any changes made to the overall plan of the report, what needs to be accomplished, and your plan for completion. 1-2 pages.

Formal Report: A completion report containing all the elements of a formal report and written in a clear, readable, politically sensitive and engaging style. The report should include a letter of transmittal, should be presented in a professional manner, and should include all relevant attachments. Students must submit two copies of their final report. Report length will vary.

Lecture Schedule

May 5     Course introduction, the history of 210C, discussion of assignments
May 12    Reports and their contexts
May 19    Audience; ethical considerations; research process
May 26    Proposals; research design Memo Report (done in tutorial)
June 2    Interviews and Invention: research process
June 9    Working with and evaluating research findings Research Report due
June 16   Analysis
June 23   Drafting; writing collaboratively Formal Proposal due
June 30   Drafting; issues of sensitivity
July 7    Style and editing
July 14   Document design; presentation Progress Report due
July 21   Front and Back matter: letters of transmittal, appendices, etc.
July 28   Concluding remarks
July 31   Final Report due