

Dr. Anthony T. Atkins
Community Web/Service Learning Project
English 204: Technical Writing
UNC Wilmington
fall 2005

Part of the goal for this course is for you to experience the duties of a technical writer. All semester we have discussed writing as a “reader-centered” idea. In other words, all of your communication should put the reader first. The success of your communication is measured by your reader’s responses. For this final project, you will select a non-profit organization from the list provided to you (linked on our resources page), contact them, meet with them, gather information from them, and develop an informational web site for them. The web site is meant to give the organization a place to start their web presence. This is, in no way, supposed to be neither a finalized site nor, necessarily, an “interactive” web site. The site should be designed to give readers/viewers an overview of what the organization is about, what it does, and how readers/viewers can help and/or contact them. Each organization is different and will require different approaches, and will have different needs. Below, I offer a schedule of events that should take place. You and your team will have approximately one month to complete the project. Your team will also present the web site to the class.

Time Schedule

October 17: Receive official assignment and guidelines.

October 26: You should have made first contact and met with the organization (at least one group member must meet with the organization, explain what you plan to do for them, collect information from them, and tell them that the web files will be turned over to them on a disk and they will be free to use them at will). You will submit a memo that outlines the outcome of your first meeting. You will also submit a brief “client proposal” that outlines the course of action that you and your group will take to complete the project. What do you plan to do now that you have met with them? What is your group’s next course of action? You will also have the person you meet with sign a small contract that can be downloaded from the resources page. All of these documents are due via email by 5:00pm today.

November 4: You should have the web site started by now. Submit a memo that serves as a progress report. You will want to explain everything you have done up to this point, explain what is left to be done and state your remaining time frame (when will the project reach completion?). The progress report memo is due via email by 5:00pm today.

November 14: Each team will describe where they are with the project. This will be done in class. Nothing formal is due today.

November 18: The first presentations begin today (a schedule of presentations will be forthcoming as we near completion of projects). The day your group is scheduled to present the site to the course is the day your project is officially due. Your group will submit a memo that outlines all of your progress, meetings, what you all learned, the difficulties you encountered, and how you overcame those difficulties. You will submit a disk with all files.

November 21: Final day for presentations.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I contact the organization? Once you select 2-3 possible organizations, you should call the organization; explain who you are and what you are doing. In general, you might say, “My name is X and

I am taking a technical writing class at UNCW and we are doing a service learning project for class. We want to build an informational web site for your organization, and we were wondering if we could come by to meet with you for approximately 30 minutes to gather some information for our project.”

Where do I find the contract form and the official assignment sheet? These documents are linked on our resources page. They are in pdf format designed for printing.

How do we submit the memos, client proposal, and progress report? These documents should be submitted via email by 5:00pm on the due date. Be sure to include all group member names and group number.

How will we submit the actual web site? You will maintain all web files, images, etc. and then burn all files to two disks. One disk will be submitted to me, and the other to the organization. The web site will run without being published to the web, though I will show you how to do so for your benefit.

What happens if we have “inactive” group members? This can be touchy for everyone. You might consider having a “group intervention” where the other group members talk to the person to get them to pull their weight. If this seems impossible, all group members (with the exception of the group member in question) will make an appointment to see me, explain the problem/s, and I will chat with the person.

What happens if the organization is too demanding or oversteps their boundaries? If you seem to be having difficulty with the organization in any way, you should see me immediately. It is extremely important, however, that you always be professional, nice, and polite at all times. I do not care how “mean” someone is or how demanding he or she becomes. You are representing UNCW, the professional writing program, our class, YOURSELF and ME! So it is simply imperative that you be a kind understanding person at all times.

What happens if we lose files or accidentally delete material? This should not happen. All of you must maintain a copy of all files at all times. If you lose files, you will need to recreate them or find them. Again, maintain copies of all files in various places. But, always know where the most recent version of your project is housed.

What happens if . . .

I am here to help you. You will have several days of class time to work on this project. Bring to my attention any problems you are having. I will be illustrating web pages along the way and helping you to build the web site. I expect you to put forth a concerted effort for this project. Once you gather the information you need, the rest will come together. You will certainly be allowed to include this on your resume as web page experience and volunteer experience. However, if you do a poor job you may need to reconsider including it on a resume, so do this project as much for yourself as for the course.