

Hum 555: Writing for Project Management¹

Catalog description: This course introduces the basic writing tasks that are critical to project management as it is used across a wide variety of industries. Topics covered include: the language of work breakdown structures: addressing project requirements: the semantics of risk analysis: assessing scope: and designing and building a project plan. Students will review online project management tools. As a capstone experience, students will apply the techniques of writing for project management by creating a project plan to manage some aspect of an academic or extra-curricular activity.

Suggested Prerequisite: Foundations in Technical Communications.

Grading based on: Weekly response papers, participation, and final project plan.

Suggested Textbooks:

Hartman, Francis Thomas. *Don't Park Your Brain Outside: A Practical Guide to Improving Shareholder Value Through SMART Management*. Project Management Institute, 2000.

Web page: There will be a WebCT component to the course. It will include a course description, guidelines for successful writing, links to useful sites, and a bulletin board and student presentation area. Although the class meets only once a week, the instructor will be available throughout the week to answer questions. And students will be able to work collaboratively during the week.

Lewis, James P. *The Project Manager's Desk Reference*. 2nd Edition. McGraw-Hill Trade, 1999.

Faculty Coordinator: Deborah Sinnreich-Levi

Faculty to teach course: S. David Rosenberg

¹ Note that this course differs from Mgt 550, Intro to Project Management, in that the focus is on the writing skills working project managers need to hone, rather than the actual management skills introduced in Mgt 550.

Syllabus:

Week 1: What is a project? Why does it require management? What is a project plan and how is it constructed? What are the tools for writing project plans and managing projects? HW: Write summary of a complex academic or extra-curricular activity that would benefit from a project plan. Describe the elements that make project planning appropriate including the need to control the expenditure of resources, the necessity of coordinating the activities of a variety of actors at different stages of the project, the necessity of coordinating resources and activities in different locations.

Week 2: The Project Plan: Contents, structure, formatting, research, and documentation. HW: Provide a brief (10 minute) presentation on one aspect of the project plan. Base your presentation on the course texts and suggested links on project planning. Include visual aids and examples. Post your presentation on WebCT. Selected presentations will be given live.

Week 3: Writing about the scope of a project. How do you know what to include and what to leave out? Developing the scope, mission, and vision sections of a plan. HW: Turn in a draft of the scope of your proposed project. Include statements of mission and vision. (850 words)

Week 4: Analyzing project resources: Writing about money, time, and material for your project. Using graphs and charts. HW: Define a budget for your project and prepare a spreadsheet depicting expenditures and income (if relevant) over the course of your project.

Week 5: The language of work-breakdown structures. Defining the parts of the process and project. Writing and designing milestones. HW: State the problem that will be tackled by your project. Then describe the tasks through which the project will be accomplished. What are the major milestones? Set up a flow chart of activities that lead milestone to milestone.

Week 6: The project schedule: Schedule designs and tools for organizing and tracking milestones. HW: Add a timeline to your flowchart of activities from last week. Define critical junctures (points in the timeline that cannot be missed without jeopardizing the project). Use one of the schedule formats discussed in class to create your timeline.

Week 7: Writing about project accountability: Integrating who does what, when, and with what resources into your plan. Standards of task and process descriptions. HW: Describe the qualifications and skills required of the people who will be responsible for the major tasks in your project plan. What resources will these people require? Will they work in teams or individually?

Week 8: Writing about risk: Analyzing and discussing risk in your plan. HW: Write an 500 to 800 word assessment of areas of risk in your plan. What are the biggest threats that you will encounter? How can you minimize risk?

Week 9: Creating a project plan: Writing statements of mission, vision, goals, and objectives. HW: Prepare your statement of project scope. Include mission, vision, goals, and specific objectives. Statements will be presented in class for group input.

Week 10: Creating a project plan: Writing strategy and SWOT analysis.² Prepare a statement of project strategy and a SWOT analysis of project objectives and resources. Strategies and SWOT analyses will be presented in class for group input.

Week 11: Creating a project plan: Writing the implementation plan (creating a work breakdown plan). HW: Prepare you're the work breakdown plan for your project. Indicate major milestones. Include a flow chart of activities and a list of the people or teams responsible for accomplishing each one. Implementation plans will be presented in class for group input.

Week 12: Creating a project plan: Developing Resource tables and schedules. Using PERT charts and CPM in your plan.³ Defining time-critical and resource-critical issues. HW: Prepare a project schedule and a table of resources. Define time-critical activities. List resource-critical activities and schedule points. Complete your project plan. Include use of PERT charts and CPM as appropriate. Be prepared to present your plan in the final class.

Week 13: Project plan review: Final Project Plan due.

² SWOT analysis represents techniques for understanding Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. When writing a project plan, SWOT analysis is used to evaluate and determine what needs to be revised.

³ PERT stands for Program Evaluation Review Technique, developed by the Navy in the 1950s. It is the standard for developing process charts. CPM stands for Capital Project Management and is a set of standards for organizing the presentation of how capital is utilized over the course of a project.