Proposal with Presentation

Overview: The proposal with presentation is the second step in a series of three interrelated projects. You have already reported your assessment of your client’s needs for a new or revised business/technical document. Your current task is twofold: (1) propose a plan for meeting the client’s documentation needs and (2) pitch the plan to potential collaborators in our ENG 305 class.

Goals: The main goals for this project are for you to learn more about how to (1) write persuasive proposals and presentations, (2) repurpose content when writing a set of related documents, and (3) override the defaults in PowerPoint software to create effective presentation slides.

Audience: Your primary audiences include your classmates (who want to make informed decisions about whether to collaborate with you on the team project that follows) and me (as your project supervisor and evaluator). In the event that a collaborative team works with you on this documentation project, you will also share your proposal with your client. A version of your report may also be posted to your Web portfolio.

Procedures and Requirements:

1. Proposal. Write a formal proposal memo that pitches your project: persuade classmates to join you on the project, and persuade me that you have viable plans—that the document your propose to write will be a challenging and worthwhile project for all members of your collaborative writing team. Your classmates and I will want answers to the following questions:
   - What document(s) do you propose to work on? Who are the client and users, and why is this document necessary? Is this a new document or a revision? What client and user needs will have to be met in the new/revised document, and what methods did you use to assess these needs?
   - What will the new document be like in terms of content, structure, and style? What expertise, if any, will team members need in order to collaborate with you on writing the document? Where/how could team members find background information on the needs of the client and users?
   - What ideas do you have for dividing responsibilities? Given the timeframe of March 20-April 19 for the collaborative project, what is your anticipated schedule for drafting, soliciting feedback from the client and users, and revising?

Your proposal should be detailed enough that it makes sense to write in prose paragraphs. Apply principles for content organization and page design, and use visuals to the extent that they enhance your writing. Document any sources in accordance with the style guide that is most appropriate (e.g., APA, CMS, CSE).

You may “repurpose” content from your needs assessment report. Remember, though, that this proposal is written for a new purpose and audience. If you find yourself copying a great deal, investigate whether you need to do more summarizing and whether you have included enough detail to answer the new questions raised above.

Post your completed proposal to Courses@Dordt and turn in a hard copy to me when you make your presentation on March 8.

2. Presentation. Prepare a 2.5-3 minute presentation to be given to the class on Thursday, March 8. Present a super-condensed version of your written proposal. The main goal is to inform your classmates about the project in such a way that they will read the details in your written proposal and be persuaded to work with you on the project. Create PowerPoint slides to be incorporated into your presentation. Show that you can apply Michael Alley’s advice on integrating claims and visuals—and that you can avoid the pitfalls that Tufte and other critics identify. When you present to our class, give me a hard copy of your slide handout.

About workshop drafts: Meeting the due dates for the smaller assignments the workshop drafts is important for you and for your classmates who learn with you. Each time that you miss one of these deadlines or come unprepared for a workshop will result in a full-grade reduction from the score for the final draft of your project.

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1 These project instructions adapt and extend from similar assignments given by Dr. Kathryn Northcut (University of Missouri-Rolla) and Dr. Clay Spinuzzi (University of Texas at Austin).
Grading: The written proposal is worth 7.5% of your final grade, and the presentation is worth another 7.5% of your final grade. Together, a well-written proposal and presentation will persuade your classmates and me of the value and feasibility of your project.

Quality proposals and presentations will:

- Persuade your classmates and me of the value and feasibility of your project by presenting relevant background information and proposing smart plans for co-writing the new/revised document.
- Demonstrate that you have taken care to study the rhetorical audience, purpose, situation, and assignment instructions; to understand your role; and to research the written and visual genre conventions that are expected for your documents. These will be shown through effective, appropriate:
  - ideas, arguments, and evidence;
  - rhetorical appeals;
  - structure and organization;
  - style;
  - design, visuals, and formatting;
  - grammar, and usage; and
  - documentation for any sources whose ideas, words, visuals you use or adapt.
- Demonstrate an ethical approach to the writing process and products.
- Exhibit a developed and accurate understanding of the principles addressed in class, in the assigned readings and activities, and in my responses to your work.

In addition, quality presentations will:

- Incorporate PowerPoint slides that apply Michael Alley’s advice on integrating claims and visuals:
  - Sentence headlines succinctly state the purpose or assertion of the slide.
  - Details are presented visually rather than with bullets and can be grasped quickly.
  - Written and visual elements are interdependent with each other and the oral presentation; all are polished.
- Employ communication skills for presentations such as eye contact, enunciation, expression, and effective style.

During others’ presentations, you are expected to demonstrate good listening skills, including eye contact with the speaker, quiet attentiveness, and thoughtful response.