



INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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Summer 2013

T E C H N I C A L C O M M U N I C A T I O N

Summer 2013

Deliverables

dropbox.com

All assignments will be submitted through **dropbox.com**. You will need to create an account at **dropbox.com** in order to submit your assignments. This account is free.

I created a folder for each of you using your last name. Each of these folders will contain another folder called Ready for Grading. I will assume that any documents placed into the Ready for Grading folder are ready for grading. When responding to assignments, I will open a document and resave it with my initials with my comments and score. You are welcome to save any other documents in this space.

In order to ensure that all students have access to the course documents in dropbox, I have to share the entire folder with everyone, which means that everyone will have access to everyone else's folder. We will work on the honor system, which says that no one will go into anyone else's folder without permission.

Assignment Descriptions

Each assignment listed below is worth five points.

1. Response to the Syllabus (Individual)

I want to be sure each of you are clear about what is expected from you in this class and to give you opportunities for raising questions about what I have planned. I also want to challenge you now to start being creative (but coherent) with a document that might otherwise seem to you to have great potential for being flat. Read through the course website and look through the documents on Blackboard. Be sure to explore all aspects of both websites.

Write 250-500 words in response, using the following questions to guide you. (Please do not write your response as a sentence-by-sentence response to these questions; instead, please work & play to come up with a creative, but coherent way to respond. Exceptions: **Students must include a response to the About Grading information.**)

- What are the main skills I am hoping you will gain by the end of the semester?
- What do you think you need to learn or do to achieve those skills?
- How will we arrive at your grade for this class? Are you comfortable with how you imagine this process to work?
- What makes you most nervous about what I've written in the syllabus?
- What do you think will give you the most pleasure in this class?
- What are the skills you bring to class that you think will help you the most?
- Can you envision the shape of the semester from the Syllabus & Weekly Schedule?
- Does anything remain vague to you? Is there anything you can suggest now for improving what you see ahead?

Production and Presentation of Content

General scenario for assignments #2-4.

The year is 2026 and people are about to move into the enclosure. Because the environment and tools will be different from what people are familiar with, the technical writing division that you work for has been asked to provide various rhetorical elements (#2-4) to include in a central content management system (CMS). This system is accessible by anyone from anywhere in Oregon City.

2. Extended Definition (Individual)

For this assignment, I will ask you to write an extended definition for a term from the Glossary (see Appendix) or from your own imagination. The same term may not be used for more than one assignment element.

3. Encyclopedic Entry (Individual)

For this assignment, I will ask you to create a one page encyclopedic entry that describes a community of practice associated with *Terrarium* their enterprise, identity, meaning, and practice. You will need to create a new community within the context of the novel. This entry will be housed in Oregon City's CMS.

4. Process or Mechanical Description (Individual)

For this assignment, I will ask you will write a mechanical or process description for one of the Glossary terms (see Appendix). The same term may not be used for more than one assignment element.

Collaborative Production and Presentation of Content

General Scenarios for Assignment #5

1

The year is 2031 and people have been living in the Enclosures for about five years. You've been working at the Institute of Global Design at Oregon City for over a year in your particular discipline. The Human Resources executives are concerned about the

small number of applicants for positions like yours. Over the last five years, the applicant pool for your specialty has decreased by 50%. The executives are concerned that their recruiting efforts are not adequately drawing qualified applicants. They are especially concerned that their application procedures do not address the unique aspects of the application process in your specialized discipline; therefore, the applicant pool is low. When writing your report, you will need to “invent” reasons for this low applicant pool based on what you know about your particular field. This invention must be plausible within the context of *Terrarium*. Specifically, Drs. Passio and Franklin have asked you to write a report about the unique application processes in your discipline. This report **is not** a description of the general processes of applying for a job common to all disciplines (e.g., submitting a resume, interviewing, etc.). The purpose of this report is to **identify, describe, and analyze** a *unique aspect of the application process for your particular discipline*. This report should adopt a critical (reflective) perspective about this process in terms of the unique attributes professionals in your discipline look for in an application candidate: technical knowledge, professional and personal characteristics, and expectations for performance.

2

Although the enclosure system seems characteristically homogenous, many cultural differences developed within individual enclosures. With over 100 land and 30 water cities in the United States alone, single enclosures have evolved into individual cultures defined by their legacy customs. Over the years since the Enclosure Act of 2026, these communities have, not surprisingly, developed the historical traits characteristic of their geographical regions. Nebraska City, for example, has shown both the strong agricultural traditions when humanity lived and worked on the land and the more modern telecommunications industry that defined its place in the early part of the twenty-first century. Given the cultural differences, students participating in the academic exchange program, particularly those from Oregon City, will need guidance with the technical aspects of their room and board as well as the cultural customs specific to Nebraska City and the Midwest Enclosure University. The board is asking for a report about the technical, cultural, or social process associated with Nebraska City. Drawing from *Terrarium*, groups should extrapolate information about enclosure living from their knowledge of Oregon City and make it relevant to Nebraska City.

3

Because most documents since the Enclosure Act of 2026 were lost during the dismantling, researchers with the newly established Historical Research Society (HRS), which is part of the Institute of Global Design, your groups has been charged with chronicling the historical precedents to the Enclosure Act. As a research assistant in

Zuni Franklin's office, you've been asked to help with this research by exploring the various contexts affected by environmental actions: legislative, judicial, political, social, religious, cultural, or historical. The researchers are especially interested in ecological problems and how positions taken were interpreted and acted upon within these contexts. These research documents will be collected, cataloged, and presented at the unveiling of the new Environmental Awareness Exhibit of the Historical Museum of Ecology.

5. Research Report (Collaborative)

Choosing one of the scenarios described below, students will work in groups of three or four writing and designing a report appropriate to the situation. From the chosen general scenario, each group will invent the specific situation and audience for your report.

Assignment Deliverables

- **Pitch**
Students will make a 60-second pitch for a particular research report topic and possible audience. After all pitches are completed, the class as a whole will select four or five projects for the class to work on for the semester. Once projects are selected, students will identify their project of choice and should be as flexible as needed. The specifics of the pitch selected will be negotiated by group members who will make decisions regarding the required documents.
- **Research Report**
Research reports should be 8-10 single-spaced pages with appropriate explanatory visuals, an executive summary, table of contents, in-text annotations, and a bibliography.
- **Situation Analysis (worksheet available in drop box)**
Each group will submit a situational analysis worksheet that defines the general and specific scope of the research report.
- **Communities of Practice Writer and Audience Analyses (worksheets available in dropbox)**
Each group will submit two communities of practice worksheets, one for the writer and one for the audience for their research report.
- **Audience Analysis (worksheet available in dropbox)**
Each group will submit an audience analysis worksheet that defines various aspects of the audience for their research report.
- **Collaborative Narrative**
Each group will submit a single-spaced, one-page collaborative narrative that details its work throughout the project. This description should be an evaluative summary of the work completed as a group written in a coherent, cohesive manner. Be sure to consider how the group did or did not evolve into a community of practice. To help you think about what to write, consider the categories available on the COP writer's and audience's worksheet.
- **Individual Narrative**
Each student will submit a daily individual activity log that describes her or his activities throughout the project. This description should be an evaluative summary of the work completed by the student written in a coherent, cohesive manner. Be sure to consider how you participated in a community of practice. To help you think about what to write, consider the categories available on the COP writer's and audience's worksheet.

- Performance Evaluation (one for each group member) (worksheet available in dropbox)
Each student will submit a performance evaluation for each student with which she or he worked on the research report. Please use the worksheet provided on the course website.

6. Self-Assessment & Reflection

As a cover memo for your semester work, reflect on what you've learned about technical communication. Consider the various aspects of the course such as the communities of practice theory, situational and audience analysis, document writing, planning, researching, production, technical communication style, collaborative work, and performance. You might also want to make suggestions about the class content for the next time I teach it. Your memo should be thoughtful and at least one complete page.

APPENDIX

Terrarium Glossary of Terms

Listed below are terms that I garnered from my reading of Terrarium. No term may be used more than once for all assignments combined. Students are welcome to add to the list any terms I may have missed or to create new terms as long as they make sense within the context of the novel.

Alaska City	Float Cities	Locations
Allotments	Food Dispensers	Lockplates
Astroid Colonies	Furnishings	Marconi Plaza
Balancers	Game Puzzles	Mechano
Belt Phones	Game Shows	Oregon City
Brazil City	Gameparks	Pocketcybers
Breeze Capsules	Gliders	Portland Complex
Bubble Villages	Habitats	Preservation Institute
Bump Cars	Health Board	Preservation Institute
Calcutta City	Health Passes	Project Transcendence
California City	History Parks	Psyche Sessions
C-Clinic	Hormonal Therapy	Rehabilitation Center Rhetoric
Chemmies	Housing Bureau	Matches
China City	Hovercrafts	Sani-showers
Credcards	Identiplates	Sanitation Control
Cyberfield	Incunabulary	Seatubes
Cybernet	Infection Alerts	Security Stations
Daykillers	Infection Division	Solarovens
Disneys	Infomat	Travel Control
Dozers	Institute of Global Design	VID Calls
Emergency Repairs	Iowa City	VID Screen
Enclosure Act of 2026	Lake Erie City	VID Wardrobe
Enclosure History	Lake Michigan City	
Enclosure Maps	Land Cities	
Enclosure System	Land City	
Enclosures	Laughter Booths	
Eros Parlors	Leases	
Eugenics	Lightshows	