

Practices of Technical Communication

a textbook by Tracy Bridgeford

Digital Literacies Deliverables

engl/jour 4810/8816 | Fall 2009 | M 5: 30- 8: 10 | ASH 145

Semester Deliverables Quick List

All assignment descriptions are available on the textbook website at this URL: www.tracybridgeford.com/practices/dl. Most assignments are directly connected to the reading for that unit. All deliverables are due on December 14 by 5:00 p.m. at the latest.

<input type="checkbox"/> Response to the Syllabus	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Semester Project Website	
<input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Portfolio	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Description of audience	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Annotations (3 at 5 pts)	15
<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Screen Capture Tutorial & Annotated Screen Capture	10
<input type="checkbox"/> Unit 1: Symbolic Analyst	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fact Sheet	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Advising Form & Explanation	10
<input type="checkbox"/> Collage	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Unit 2: Technique	
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Illustration	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Diagram	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Unit 3: Information Panopticon	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ideal Workspace	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Description & Illustration	10
<input type="checkbox"/> Website	5
<input type="checkbox"/> End-of-Semester Reflection	5
Total Semester Points	110

Response to the Syllabus

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: All students must include a response to the About Grading information.)

Questions to Get You Started

What are the main skills I am hoping you will gain by the end of the quarter?

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?

Screen Capture Presentation & Annotated Graphic

Deliverable

Presentation (5)

Annotated Screenshot (5)

Software

Word

Software is typically designed according to a metaphor, which makes it easier for users to learn it. Microsoft Word, for example, uses a typewriter metaphor; Photoshop uses an art metaphor, Dreamweaver uses a construction metaphor, and InDesign uses a printing press metaphor. These metaphors play out in the visual presence of the interface, the language used to identify and imitate that metaphor to make it easier to understand the functions and tools.

Screen Capture
continued

For this assignment, I will ask each student to present one five-minute, mini-tutorial to the rest of the class on some aspect of the software assigned. Students will also be expected to create a one-page handout to distribute to classmates (14) of the screenshot with annotations created using Microsoft Word's drawing canvas.

It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the window (illustrated in the screen capture), to articulate how the metaphor used by the software helps users learn, articulate and use the software. In this five-minute presentation, students should present according to the following format:

1. Identify the window and where it is located in the software.
2. Describe how it uses the metaphor of its design.
3. Explain the function for each item in the window.

Choose from the following screen capture windows:

Photoshop	Dreamweaver	InDesign
Colorpicker	Behaviors	Character
Image size	Insert Panel	Number & Section
Layer Options	Property Inspector	Paragraph/ Indents & Spacing
Save for Web & Devices	Reference	Context Window (right click)

Annotated Semester Portfolio

Deliverables

Definition/description of audience (5)
Presentation (5)
Annotations (3 at 5/15)

Software

Dreamweaver
Photoshop
InDesign
Acrobat
Word

This assignment requires that you gather and display all your work from the semester and any other work you choose to display within a single website. This project requires you to define and describe the audience for the portfolio, create a design, an organizational schema that shows the work, and an annotation for each work included. You need to define and describe the audience for which you will be directing the portfolio (e.g., job market, course completion, graduation portfolio). You are welcome to be as creative as you want to be, but the website must be designed in Dreamweaver using CSS.

Annotations. The portfolio must include at least three annotations—one for each of the projects completed for this class. Annotations provide your audience with information about the value and relevance of the work to the audience.

When beginning to write the annotations, your first goal should be a determination of the needs of the audience. For example, if you are creating the portfolio for a potential employer, what does the employer need to know about the knowledge and skills you developed with this project in order to consider you a viable candidate? The annotations should provide at least three kinds of information: 1) title for each work, 2) brief description of the work, and 3) the techniques that project demonstrates about what you know about the work in your field.

Symbolic Analyst

Deliverables

Fact sheet (5)
Career Advising Form &
Explanation (10)
Collage (5)

Software

InDesign
Word
Photoshop
Acrobat

As a soon-to-be college graduate and a major focused on symbols (e.g., language), you would fit into what Robert Reich says is one of the three jobs of the future: symbolic analyst. Symbolic refers to the “manipulation of symbols—data, oral and visual representations” (p. 177).

Fact Sheet. For this assignment, I will ask you to create a one-page fact sheet in Microsoft Word intended for new majors in your field. The fact sheet should consist of at least a textual definition and description of what constitutes a symbolic analyst in your field, a designed version of that definition, which includes an illustration of that definition/description as created by you in Adobe Photoshop, and incorporation the symbols (whatever form) representative of your field in some way. You are welcome to be as creative as you want to be, but it must be designed in InDesign.

Form. Another part of this assignment involves the education of the symbolic analyst in your field. You will need to write/design/produce an advising form for potential students and reflect the symbolic analyst metaphor. Although you can use existing forms for inspiration, you cannot replicate any forms already used by your school/department for advising. You must create this form in Microsoft Word using the Developer tools and include at least one graphic/symbol. Again, you’re welcome to be as create as you want to be.

Collage. Using Photoshop, create a collage that conveys your interpretation of symbolic analysis in your field.

When your fact sheet and form are completed, export a copy of each as PDFs to include in your annotated portfolio.

Technique Phenomenon

Deliverables

Newsletter (5)
Diagram (5)
Illustration (5)

Software

InDesign
Acrobat
Photoshop

In *The Technological Society*, Jacques Ellul defines technique as “the totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency” (from “Note to the Reader,” p. xvi). In other words, *techniques* are those operations, procedures, and methods, or repertoire, that define a particular field, that include both mechanical and cognitive techniques, and that represent that practice’s comprehensive whole. For this assignment, I will ask you to explore the techniques and the technique phenomenon in your field.

Newsletter. Using InDesign, create a four-page (8.5 × 11) newsletter for new majors in your field. This newsletter must include six individual “stories” and illustrations of at least four techniques particular to your field, at least two cognitive techniques specific to your field with illustrations. Each student will write one of the stories (negotiated previously), which will then be made available to all students in Blackboard for use in their newsletters. The cover story—an introduction written by you—must be focused on the technique phenomenon in your field as a whole. The final story must be an analysis of the “goal of efficiency,” as defined by Ellul, evident in those techniques.

Diagram. Create a diagram using the Drawing Canvas in Word of your ideal workspace. Do not use Smart Art. Export the diagram as PDF for your annotated portfolio. The document will likely need to be cropped to a specific size, which you can do with Acrobat or Photoshop. Indicate, in any creative means you'd like, how it does or does not show the technical phenomenon. Try to create the diagram first to avoid shaping the diagram to the analysis. Feel free to include the diagram in your newsletter.

When your newsletter and diagram are completed, export a copy of each as PDFs to include in your annotated portfolio.

Illustration. Create an illustration that conveys your interpretation of the technique phenomenon for the newsletter's cover story.

Information Panopticon

Deliverables

Description (5)

Description and

Illustration (10)

Website (5)

Software

Dreamweaver

Acrobat

Photoshop

In the *Age of the Smart Machine*, Shoshana Zuboff describes what she calls an *information panopticon*, which she defines as a power structure used to observe, evaluate, and control workers. In her analysis of information panopticons, Shoshana Zuboff discusses what she calls *techniques of control* in the workplace. These techniques help management level employees keep better track of production, but at the same time, enables them to avoid any confrontations (both good and bad) associated with production such as efficiency and problem solving.

These techniques of power can be seen today when employers, for example, monitor employees' browser history and emails without their knowledge. You can also see it with companies that turn off browser access.

For this assignment, I will ask you to reflect on the concept of an information panopticon in your field.

Description. In a strong, rich paragraph describe any information panopticon(s) operating in your field and to critically reflect those techniques of control

Ideal Workspace Illustration & Annotation. Using Photoshop, create an illustration of your ideal workspace and write a description of that space. You may draw this illustration by hand and scan it or create it in any of the programs.

Panopticon Website using CSS. Using CSS in Dreamweaver, create a website that defines, describes, and illustrates what an information panopticon looks like in your field. The website should include links to resources that you used to gather information, graphics that visually represent, any other links you find useful, and an illustration that conveys your critical interpretation.

End-of-Semester Reflection Memo

Deliverable

Memo

For this final memo, which also serves as a cover memo for your annotated portfolio, I will ask you to reflect on this course as a whole. This is your opportunity to evaluate the content, structure, and design of this course in ways

that could influence pedagogical and programmatic decisions. It is also your opportunity to demonstrate what you learned throughout the semester.

In writing your memo, use the questions below to get yourself thinking. Do not simply answer the questions—find a way to focus the content of your memo around a central idea. Introduce this idea (focus) and provide a conclusion that sums up your thoughts. Memos should be addressed to me and long enough to provide a useful discussion.

Questions to get you thinking:

- › How did the readings help you explore aspects of your field?
- › How did you come to understand the contexts that shape technology in your field?
- › How did your understanding of technique change or not change?
- › How did you come to understand the ability to control software?
- › How do you now understand the role of symbols in your field?
- › Does knowing about the idea of an information panopticon affect or not affect the perception of your field?
- › How and in what ways did what you learn about digital literacies that can help you in your career or help you in preparing your materials for the job market?