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Technical Communication, Fall 2010

About Grading

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Everyone in this class works hard, and what I hear at the end of the term from almost everyone is "I put more time into this class than I have into any other class..."—with the implication that time alone should earn you an A.

You should expect to spend significant time outside of class working on assignments or collaborating with other students on assignments—especially revising your writing. But time alone does not make for excellent work; time alone does not alone make for work that gives you shivers of pride when you see it and gives others the sense that attentive thought went into the work.

As you work in this class, you need to be attentive to what you are doing. You need to be focused on this work and nothing else—while you are working on it. You need to look at your work continually and ask yourself if it gives you pleasure and pride, if it is an expression of all of which you are capable.

Completing assignments is all about demonstrating competence. To be competent is to be as knowledgeable and capable as everyone else is in a particular community. To demonstrate excellent work is to demonstrate competence beyond what everyone else can do. Students who do excellent work (A+ work) tend to engage with their work in the following ways:

Developing and sustaining lively engagement with the ideas and concepts of class

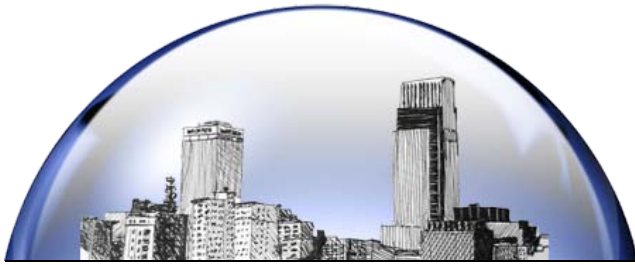
- You come to class prepared to discuss the readings (articles, textbook, or example documents), with questions and opinions and considerations of consequences.
- You actively seek feedback on your own work from others, before it is due.
- Your work is on time and complete.
- Your work shows that you think about and respond to the feedback you receive from me and from others.
- You discover new resources for helping you do the work of class and share them with your instructor and classmates.

Seeking to understand and applying the concepts and discussions of class

- You continually look around to see how people interact with the world (both natural and virtual) and other people, and ask yourself which interactions seem to support the kind of world in which you want to live—and then you work consciously at making your work encourage those kinds of interactions.
- You are continually attentive to how you and others learn and work to have the software you develop encourage others in their learning.

Taking personal responsibility for developing the technical skills you need in this field

- You recognize that the technologies of our time are changing rapidly (with consequences for the pocketbooks and attentiveness of all of us), and that there is therefore no way this class can be



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your only source for learning all the technical skills or critical abilities or all the computer applications you need or want.

- You therefore work consciously to develop a questioning and personal relation with the technologies you use in your work, being carefully attentive to what *you* need to learn and the approaches by which you learn best.
- You are continually on the lookout for designs that use the technology (including non-computer technologies) differently from how you do, so that you learn not only that your way is not the only way but you also learn to turn to others for support and assistance.
- You make use of the considerable technical resources of the class and the lab. You ask others for assistance, you look through the materials provided, and you come to office hours with questions about how to do something.
- You share that knowledge with others in your community of practice, whether it is the class itself as a community, or the various collaborative groups you may work with while taking Technical Communication courses.

Contribute to a final project that shows all of us—including yourself—that you are engaged, learning, and applying what we discuss in class.

- Your final project may not be as complete as you would like, but what it does have is the result of much experimentation on your part: you have tested out different possible interactions and approaches, and have found one (or more...) that seems to you to encourage people to learn what you intended and to learn it richly.
- Your final project is engaging: you have used experimentation and testing to redesign your project so that people *want* to use it and *do* learn from it.
- Your final project is designed fully to achieve your goals: its buttons and interactions and screens have the appropriate level of polish, cohesion, and color for your audience and intention; its structure and interactions support the overall intentions of the piece.