

OVERVIEW OF A DISCIPLINE

Due: Tuesday, October 14 (in class)

This assignment asks you to become familiar with a single discipline and to produce a website that collects pertinent information for non-technical academics and writing instructors who may work with students from this discipline.¹

Assignment Objectives:

- Analyze the writing practices of a single discipline, as part of the collaborative development of an online teaching resource
- Produce a professional and coherent website for an audience of your colleagues (i.e., college writing instructors)

Assignment Tasks:

1. Choose a portion of one of the broad disciplines represented by Case's Professional Schools: Social Work, Medicine, Dentistry, Law, Business, Nursing, and Engineering. For example: while it will be useful to have a sense of what "Engineering" is as a discipline, your project should use this information primarily to inform your deeper analysis of a single sub-discipline (e.g., Biomedical Engineering).
2. Create a website that provides an overview of the discipline and that includes a collection and annotation of resources (e.g., bibliographies, professional organizations, scholarly journals, etc.) associated with it. This website should be directed at your colleagues, namely college writing instructors who may work with students from this field on their disciplinary writing tasks. It should serve as an introduction to the key professional questions, genres, and activities of the discipline.
3. Deliver a 15-minute oral presentation of your discipline to the class and provide a 1-page handout (up to both sides of a single sheet of paper). Your presentation should include a tour of your website (though every page and link need not be demonstrated) and allow time for questions from the audience (i.e., you should plan to talk for no more than 10 minutes and field questions for the last 5).
4. Provide a PDF file of your handout and a CD containing your HTML pages (website) for archival purposes – these materials will be shared online via my teaching pages and will serve as the basis for future iterations of ENGL 506 and our Disciplinary Writing Orientation programs.² If you wish additional time to revise this work before it is published online, please contact me with a proposed timeline and revision plan.

¹ It may be possible to focus this assignment in other ways – toward a particular technology of instruction rather than a single discipline, for example – please feel free to propose your alternatives to me in the form of an informal (but written) proposal and conversation (in office hours or by appointment). Be sure to provide a rationale for your choice and an explanation of how your project will fulfill the objectives of this assignment.

² Your final FAQ project will also be a website. If you wish, you may combine both websites and produce a single CD (containing all of the files for both) at the end of the semester. If you choose to do this, for the "Overview of a Discipline Project," please email me with the link to your Discipline website and attach the PDF file of your handout for this project. Then, provide a CD containing both sites (labeled with your name and the titles of the two sites) with your final FAQ project.

Minimum Requirements (please free to expand on these guidelines):

This assignment has been left intentionally open-ended to provide you with the greatest flexibility. The primary pedagogical goals are to find strategies for efficient “uptake” of disciplinary ways of knowing and writing and to gain experience producing professional, user-friendly websites (neither high-flash-value nor complex design is an objective, or even particularly desirable).

Your website should contain the following information, though additions and expansions of these categories are enthusiastically encouraged:

- A brief overview of the discipline you have chosen (1-2 paragraphs of summary)
- An annotated list of scholarly journals in the field (at least 3 major journals)
- An annotated list of professional organizations, prominent scholars, handbooks & teaching guides, and/or research portals & databases (at least 5 items)
- An annotated list of common genres: both scholarly/published and informal genres are appropriate (at least 3 genres should be described)
- A sense of what scholars (i.e., professors), students (i.e., graduate students and undergraduates), and professional community members (i.e., practicing lawyers, doctors, etc.) believe about their disciplines’ communication genres and strategies (this can be gathered in a number of ways, but you should plan on talking with at least 3-5 people about the discipline – professors, students, editors of journals, research librarians, practicing professionals, etc.)
- Additional information of your choice – be creative!

A Note about Web Expertise:

If you do not have any web experience, there are a variety of tools and support resources available to you – most significantly the Freedman Digital Media Center, whose staff can assist you with various software and technology questions. You may wish to make use of user-friendly website tools such as the Google Applications “Sites” and “Pages” – both of which are free when you sign up for a Gmail account. Every Case student has access to server space via Filer (and DocShare) – <http://filer.case.edu> and <http://docshare.case.edu> – which can be used as web space as well. Please be proactive in your approach to this project – if you need help, ask early and often (many of your peers will have relevant experience, too).