Selecting a Client and a Project

The ideal client is someone who's willing and able to work closely with you at various stages in the development of your project. For example, early along in the project, your client should be willing to sit down and brainstorm with you in order to generate an initial pool of ideas for the project. Further along in the quarter, your client should also be willing to sit down with you and review your progress in order to help ensure that the final product will meet with his or her satisfaction. When you first negotiate a project with a client, you should make clear that to serve the ideal client is someone who's willing and able to work closely with you at various stages in the development of your project. In addition, if you choose to do a collaborative project, be sure to select a collaborator that you know you can work with and someone who you are confident will make a valuable contribution to the project.

How Many Credits Is a Project Worth?

Whether or not a project is substantial enough to justify three credits depends on the nature of the project. Some three-fold brochures can be completed in a single afternoon and certainly aren’t worth three credits. Other brochures require extensive research, consultation with clients, and design considerations. Such a brochure might be worth three credits. On the other hand, your final product might be a one-hundred-page document, but if all you’ve done is mechanically edit a previous version of this document according to your client’s specifications, you won’t have exercised much creativity or gained much experience. Again, this wouldn’t justify three credits. A twelve- or fifteen-page document that you start from scratch would be more appropriate. Roughly speaking, a three-credit project should entail 90 to 100 hours of your time over the course of the quarter (this time estimate assumes that you’re working at an average rate of efficiency).

You cannot receive credit in this class for work you’ve done for another class.

Six Stages in Developing Your Project

Projects developed for HU470 will include at least the six following stages/components:

1. Oral Project Proposal

By the end of the second week of the quarter, you should have identified a client, negotiated the preliminary details of a project with this client, and met with me to propose a suitable HU470 project. During this brief individual conference, we will negotiate appropriate details and quickly develop the outlines of an acceptable project.

2. Written Project Prospectus

Once I’ve approved your oral project proposal, you’ll describe your project in an approximately 750-word (three-page) prospectus. (If you’re doing two projects during the same term, you’ll need to submit two prospectuses.) The prospectus helps to ensure that you’ve planned your project carefully, that you’ve discussed your project with both your client and me, and that you’ve had an opportunity to get feedback on your project from both of us. The prospectus also provides further practice in technical writing.

If problems become clear in the prospectus that were not apparent in your oral proposal, you’ll have to reexamine your project with me and your client. If you don’t have an approved project by the end of the second week of the quarter, you should withdraw from the class.

Your prospectus must include at least the following five components: (1) a description of your client and of the nature of your project (promotional materials, manual, videotape, information sheet, brochure, newsletter, etc.); (2) a rhetorical analysis of your project, that is, a description of the audience for and purpose of your project and an explanation of how you’ll appeal to this particular audience; (3) a description of how you’ll reach your audience and what response you hope to elicit; (4) an explanation of your project carefully, that you’ve discussed your project with both your client and me, and that you’ve had an opportunity to get feedback on your project from both of us. The prospectus also provides further practice in technical writing.

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In the context of completing your project, it is important to:

1. **Progress Report**
   - Submit a progress report in weeks five and ten. This report should include:
     - A description of work completed and work yet to be done.
     - A revised timetable if your progress has changed.
     - A description of any problems encountered and how they were resolved.

2. **Final Project**
   - The final project should be submitted along with the prospectus and progress report.
   - Include any additional documents required for your project.

3. **Evaluation**
   - Your final grade will be determined as follows:
     - Participation in class and conferences: 10%
     - Oral report: 10%
     - Progress report: 10%
     - Prospectus: 10%
     - Final project and letter of transmittal: 50%

4. **Schedule of Assignments and Class Activities**
   - Submit written prospectuses to the instructor in weeks five and nine.
   - Work independently and consult with the instructor during office hours.
   - Attend conferences and submit written reports and documents after attending them.

5. **Letter of Transmittal**
   - Include a brief (one-page) cover letter or letter of transmittal.
   - The letter should introduce the reader to the document and its purpose.
   - Ensure the document is sent to the correct recipient.

6. **The Americans with Disabilities Act**
   - MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity.

7. **Disability Services**
   - If you have a disability, you may contact the Office of Equal Opportunity for reasonable accommodations.

8. **Ethics and Professional Conduct**
   - Honor the ethics and professional standards of your field.
   - Submit a separate letter of transmittal with your final project.

9. **Questions**
   - If you have questions or need assistance, contact the instructor during office hours or by e-mail.

10. **Conclusion**
    - This guide covers the requirements for your project.
    - Good luck with your project!
Tuesday, Week 5: Progress report and project draft due; meet as a class to discuss progress and problems and to sign up for conferences and oral presentations (if you will need a VHS and TV, let me know); bring name and mailing address of your client to class with you; tips on oral presentations; continue with independent work.

Week 6 or Week 7: Individual conferences to discuss progress reports; continue to work independently—and with your client—on your project.

Weeks 9 & 10: Oral reports on projects

Last day of class: Oral reports on projects; final projects due; course evaluations (Submit an SASE if you want your final project returned by mail.)