

Memo

Date: Friday, 6 May, 2011
To: Professor James Heiman
From: Alexa Sandbakken
Subject: Final Exam

The purpose of this document is to explain what grade I think I should get in English 505. Based on my actions, the effort I put forth, what I've learned, and how I've applied what I've learned in English 505, I believe I deserve an A in this course. I have satisfactorily achieved the course objectives, already achieved a grade just on the border between an A and A-, and I have exceeded the general guidelines for many assignments.

Achieving the Course Objectives

By the end of this semester, I have achieved all of the course objectives. The objectives for English 505 were the following:

- Understand the relationship between rhetoric and professional communication
- Employ rhetorical strategies to assess, develop, compose, and revise arguments presented in various workplace communication discourse genres
- Plan and conduct an independent or collaborative project in professional communication to complete a workplace project performing for a client or a research project for the academy
- Articulate how professional communication functions as a profession of situated action in relation to organizations and technology

Through participation in class discussions and finishing assigned readings, I am able to articulate the relationship between rhetoric and professional communication. I also can explain how professional communication is situated action in a workplace. I can now use this information to help market myself as I currently try for an internship and apply for jobs.

Because of the various assignments I've completed such as my final project, I have learned how to create specific workplace documents like memos, short reports, white papers, and cover letters. More importantly, I understand the formats and functions of this genre, and I will be able to adapt accordingly to any workplace writing assignments because of the knowledge I have gained from this class. I also completed a final project with four deliverables.

Grading

I have 926/1000 points currently and am only 237 points away from receiving an A in the course. However, with 250 points still available with ungraded assignments, I must assume that I will match my current averages on assignments and obtain around 232 points out of the 250 points

still possible. If my current average of 92.6% is maintained, I will end up with 1158/1250 points, or 92.56%. The grading scale shows that anything over 93% gets an A, so I will most likely be only five points away from achieving an A instead of an A-, with 1163 total points needed to get 93.04%, or just over the 93% mark.

Not including the final, this class met thirty times from Monday, January 10, 2011, to Wednesday, April 27, 2011. I missed five class periods because of medical reasons associated with delivering my baby. I assume that because of these absences, I lost five participation points per day. In other words, missing class because of my delivery cost me twenty-five points out of the 1250 possible for the course, and has dropped my grade two percent.

According to the policy statement for this class, a person who deserves an A does “[o]utstanding work that shows a superior analysis of the assignment[; p]rovides excellent selection of content, organization, and wording of material to fit the rhetorical needs of the particular situation[; u]ses a style that is fluent and coherent[; h]as no mechanical errors[; and s]hows great insight, perceptiveness, originality, and thought.” I have met these requirements and should receive an A in this course.

Exceeding Assignment Guidelines and Expectations

Despite the grading setback because of my loss of participation points, I am still very close to achieving an A in the course (around five points away). I should receive an A in this course because even with my personal circumstances and absences this semester, I continued to exceed assignment guidelines and expectations. I always completed assignments fully and on time, even when I could not be in class.

My participation in class was stellar; I was the only one who regularly took notes. Because of this, even after this class is completed, I will have materials I can go back to for valuable information about our class discussions. I also spoke often, adding to our class discussions, and I was rarely late or without my materials. In comparison with my peers, my work seems to be outstanding. The general feedback you provided in class about proofreading assignments and following assignment guidelines did not seem to apply to me, as I paid close attention to detail and always double-checked my work before turning it in. I also showed initiative by visiting with you outside of class, and I often exceeded assignment guidelines.

Exceeding the Work of my Peers

When it came to assignments, I often exceeded my peers' work. They would joke about my attention to detail, and about how I was “making them look bad.” On Feb. 28, 2011, we were required to turn in our research about white papers. I had compiled twenty-two pages of notes with eight sources documented, including applicable quotes and information from each source. The research most of my peers turned in was between one to three pages. While quantity does not preclude quality, the length and quality of my work often exceeded expectations and my peers' work. This can also be seen by the fact that many of my memos turned into short reports due to the all of the information I found while researching and wanted to include.

I also surpassed my peers in regards to appearance during our final presentations. As a final presentation showing what I learned from my final project regarding how to obtain a job in

professional communication, I thought it was important to appear professional. Throughout the semester, you stressed the importance of appearance and professional dress. I took this information and learned from it, exhibiting how to dress professionally during my final presentation. While some of my peers attempted professional dress, I far exceeded expectations (and even intimidated some of my peers!).

In regards to the white paper itself (Sketch 2), I stepped out of the box (and my comfort zone) to take a risk and create more than just a boring, plain document, unlike some of my peers. I worked with different fonts, sizes, formats, spacing, and other elements of *Microsoft Word* to create a professional-looking yet simple document that appealed to readers. Since this document was turned in, I have also taken the initiative to meet with you outside of class to improve upon the original in order to use it as a writing sample when applying for positions.

For my final project, I proposed the following four deliverables: a short report, a presentation, a long report, a portfolio, and a memo. By the time my final project was finished, I had completed the following: a short report, a presentation with handout, a short report (we covered in class how long reports were not appropriate for the context of our course), an electronic portfolio, and another short report. I turned in all my deliverables on the dates I proposed, as opposed to many of my peers, who did not complete their deliverables on time. I also took the initiative to apply for a job I found while researching for my final project, and meet with you about the materials needed to apply for the job in order to present myself in the best possible way.

With what I'd learned and worked on in this course, I recently applied for an internship and a local professional communication position. Because of my success in this class, during the week after finals, I have an interview scheduled for the internship position. Throughout this semester, I have consistently participated in class, turned in all assignments and deliverables on time, and through my hard work, achieved the course objectives. I have exceeded the general guidelines for assignments and exceeded the work of many of my peers. I am already very close to achieving an A, and because of my effort, consistency, and initiative, I believe I deserve an A, rather than an A-, in this course.