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**Summer 2013 Sustainability Course through the Faculty Commons  
Funded by the students of Bellevue College**

**ENGL 235 Sustainability Mission**

Technical and professional writers create documents designed to help groups of people solve problems.  In this class you will learn how to analyze problems that might require professional or technical writing as part of their solution.  You will learn the traditional textual forms that have been used successfully to solve these problems.

But the demands on you, the technical writer, have become much more complex in the 21st century.

Technology has changed how communication is encoded and it has changed the problems technical writers must solve.  You will learn how to apply the most robust and powerful models for analyzing 21st century professional and technical problems and creating healthy, durable solutions. These models, based on systems analysis, come from the field of Sustainability.

There are two levels of problem solving for the technical writer. At the basic level, the technical writer types up the document the work team needs and uses traditional writing formulas to create a document that meets the team’s needs appropriately. The more powerful writer, however, is a creative and engaged problem solver in all his or her professional interactions. At the end of this course, you should be able to use the analytical tools you have learned and the toolkit of writing genres and formulas you have collected to write elegant, sustainable, solutions.

**Sustainability’s Connection to Technical and Professional Writing**

Technical writing is about using texts to solve problems in professional contexts.  Part of writing a good technical document is understanding the problem the text is supposed to address.  Students are already taught to examine the stakeholders (writers, managers, users, clients, employees, etc.) in a particular professional context, analyze the needs of these stakeholders, research needs, define needs, articulate the problem,  decide what needs to be researched,  match the problem/need with appropriate textual forms,  test the effectiveness of texts or proposed solutions and make recommendations.  Students already need to adjust the forms traditionally taught in this field to the modern communication contexts shaped by evolving technology.  Adding an level of analysis to all problem solving that includes Sustainability’s triple bottom line seems only natural and responsible.  It should be part of every analysis of every workplace problem.

**ENGL 235 Overview of Changes**

**45% of students' grade in this class was based on a group project that culminates in a research based recommendation to the Academic Success Center on how they should develop their communication strategies to create a broader perception of inclusiveness.**

**This group project will now, instead, be a research based proposal to any campus unit arguing how and why they should make a particular business practice or policy more sustainable.  The course will follow the proposal instructions listed on Bellevue College’s Sustainability website -** <http://depts.bellevuecollege.edu/sustainability/create-a-project/>

**Student groups were assigned four major memos, reports or proposals as milestones leading to their final recommendation and were taught team work and communication strategies to use in their work   For my sustainability curriculum, I will add the sustainability content to support their work on their new term project, but I will also add sustainability systems analysis as a problem analysis strategy, to apply to all professional contexts, just as team work and communication strategies are to apply to all professional contexts.**

**Original Course Outcomes and Sustainability Outcomes Map to Assignments**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **ORIGINAL**  **Students should be able to:** | **SUSTAINABILITY** | **ASSIGNMENTS** |
| Write documents such as summaries, instruction manuals, analyses, proposals, and research reports, using accepted professional formats |  | Term Project: Create a proposal for funding from the Student Environmental Sustainability Fund for a project designed to increase sustainability at Bellevue College.   1. [Create a Sustainable Work Team](https://bc.instructure.com/courses/791283/wiki/create-a-sustainable-team) -  DELIVERABLE DUE WK 2 2. [Educate Your Team about Sustainability](https://bc.instructure.com/courses/791283/wiki/educate-your-team-about-sustainability) 3. [Research Sustainability at Bellevue College and at Other Colleges](https://bc.instructure.com/courses/791283/wiki/research-sustainability-at-bellevue-college) 4. [Choose a Project and Create a Research Proposal for the Instructor](https://bc.instructure.com/courses/791283/wiki/choose-a-project-and-create-a-research-proposal-for-the-instructor) – DELIVERABLE DUE WK 4 5. [Create a Needs Analysis and Research Plan](https://bc.instructure.com/courses/791283/wiki/create-a-needs-analysis-and-research-plan) – DELIVERABLE WK 6 6. [Complete Needs Analysis and Research Plan](https://bc.instructure.com/courses/791283/wiki/complete-needs-analysis-and-research) 7. [Report Progress with Needs Analysis and Research](https://bc.instructure.com/courses/791283/wiki/report-progress-with-needs-analysis-and-research) – DELIVERABLE WK 8 8. [Create a Formal Proposal](https://bc.instructure.com/courses/791283/wiki/create-a-formal-proposal) – DELIVERABLE WK 10 9. [Present the Proposal](https://bc.instructure.com/courses/791283/wiki/present-the-proposal)– DELIVERABLE WK 12 |
| Design a research strategy to solve a specific problem for a specific client  Conduct secondary and primary research | Synthesize and communicate an understanding of social, economic, and environmental systems  in the context of sustainability  Apply an ethical perspective in which one views oneself as embedded in the fabric of an  interconnected world. |
| Propose a clearly reasoned, convincingly supported solution to a client's problem  Paraphrase, summarize, and quote information with integrity and document sources accurately, following the accepted form for the field of inquiry | Apply practical solutions to real world sustainability challenges.  Explain how sustainable thinking and decision making contribute to solutions for current and  emerging social, environmental and economic crises.  Demonstrate technical skills and expertise necessary to implement sustainable solutions in solving problems related to the course. |
| Design visually effective documents and presentations |  |
| Revise and edit to improve clarity, economy, and rhetorical effectiveness |  |
|  | Demonstrate connections between a student’s chosen course of study and sustainability. | **Individual Assignment: Reflection of connections between student’s chosen course of study and sustainability.** |

#### Grading Rubric for Team Deliverables (Sustainability linked items are bolded)

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| --- | --- |
| Addresses Particular Readers | The document responds appropriately to the relationship between writers and readers in the document.  The specific needs of the specific reader of this specific document are clearly addressed. |
| Helps Readers Solve Problems | Each technical document exists to solve a specific problem for a particular reader.  The specific purpose is clear for each technical document and the specific problem the document is supposed to address is solved by the document.  Note:  Do not confuse the overreaching project and problems associated with the project with the specific problem solved by a specific technical document. |
| Reflects the Organizations’ Goals and Culture | The organizations you are working with, at the very least, include Bellevue College and the Student Environmental Sustainability Fund Committee.  Your documents should incorporate and appeal to the values and goals shared by these organizations and any other stakeholder organizations you are working with. |
| Uses Design to Increase Readability and Accessibility | Templates for different technical document genres are used appropriately.  Lists, paragraphs, headings and other coherence strategies all work to increase accessibility and readability. |
| Honest and Accurate | All information is accurate, honest and cited appropriately. |
| Correct | Language use and citation methods adhere to the institution’s preferred style guide.  For this class you can choose either APA or CSE. |
| Comprehensive | Critical thinking is apparent.  Analysis, primary research, and secondary research all illustrate a thorough consideration of relevant systems.  Connections between local, non-local, individuals, groups, and other eco-systems are explored appropriately. |
| Clear and Concise, Focused | Titles, headings, paragraphs and sentences are well focused.   Clarifying detail and relevant context is not skipped.  All information a reader needs in order to understand the specifics of the document are immediately available within the document itself. |

Screen shots of sample course documents from CANVAS site follow in the next pages of this Word document. I have developed an entire course site with sustainability resources infused throughout. I have only included a few sample screen shots here.

