Course Meeting Time and Place

Section 1
Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00-12:15
Storm Hall 126

Section 2
Tuesdays 4:00-6:40
Storm Hall 126

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Sheppard
Office: SH 120B
Phone: (619) 890-1683
Email: **jsheppard@mail.sdsu.edu** (best way to reach me)

Office Hours

Please make use of this time for questions or concerns about the course. These times are available for your benefit.

Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00-3:00

Required Texts

*Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach, 8*th edition, (Paperback)
by Paul V. Anderson
Publisher: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning
ISBN 13: 978-1-285-06470-3

Course Description

In today's workplace, communication is often cited as the number one priority for employers, regardless of field. The ability to communicate clearly, competently, and persuasively with co-workers, clients, and other stakeholders is essential to your success and to that of the organization for which you work. In professional environments, you will often be called upon to propose ideas, solve problems, and collaborate with co-workers. At their core, all of these practices are rhetorical, requiring you to choose the most appropriate genre and approach for your audience.

This advanced course is designed to help you examine and gain experience with a variety of professional communication genres. **The core of the course is based on a sequence of assignments, each building on the work of the previous one.** This sequence will provide you with an opportunity to investigate your own professional communication practices, to conduct research on an issue of professional interest, and to construct persuasive documents that seek action by convincing others of the value of your ideas and experience. In each of these assignments, you will focus on understanding and **negotiating the rhetorical situation** which includes three core components:

- **purpose**- the reason for which you are writing
- **audience**- the people or groups to whom the communication is directed
- **context**- the situational conditions in which the text will be read and used

By focusing on the rhetorical demands of communication, you will learn practical approaches for developing content for multiple audiences. Importantly, this course will also focus on the **design and arrangement of documents,** as well as on the development of their textual content. As several of your readings will demonstrate, using basic principles of design will help readers to:

- locate needed information quickly and easily
- notice and understand important ideas and their value
- comprehend how individual parts of a document are related
- respond more positively to a document's content

Throughout the course, I'd like you to concentrate on how you can best shape your documents to most persuasively and effectively communicate your message to your intended audience.

Course Goals
By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- understand the rhetorical nature of professional writing and that each communication situation requires negotiating the unique context in which it is located
- improve your processes for project planning, research, and development
- understand how to investigate and address the rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, context) to shape the development of professional communication
- understand how to integrate written content, graphics, and basic design principles in order to create usable, persuasive, and reader-friendly documents

Turning in Work- Course Sequence and Assignment Deadlines
The course schedule is arranged so that assignments build upon one another. This means it is important for you to turn in work when it is due. Work more than two weeks late will not be accepted. However, we all know that disruptive situations sometimes arise and I am willing to negotiate those situations with you. Just as you would in the workplace, though, you need to be proactive in asking for a reasonable accommodation. **I will accept late work only if prior arrangements have been made**. To get an extension, you must **email me** to ask for one **prior to the due date**. Failure to get an extension **in advance** will result in a lowering of your grade. Additionally, getting too far behind can have a detrimental result on your progress and grade in the course.

Revision
In the workplace, you rarely submit or present the first draft of your work without seeking feedback from your supervisor or co-workers. Similarly, I see the creation of any type of communication as a process in which the overall message improves through gathering research in multiple ways, through thoughtful attention to critique and suggestions, and through attentive work on multiple drafts. I encourage revision on components of the major course project, even after a grade has been given. You may re-submit a course project **one time** for consideration of a higher grade as long as it represents a serious effort on your part to re-see or re-envision your approach to an assignment's rhetorical development. **Just tinkering with spelling, grammar, or minor issues will not earn you a higher grade.** In addition to your revision, you must also submit a short memo outlining the major issues you have addressed.

Course Grading Policies
I will provide grading criteria with the the instructions for each major assignment. Grades for major assignments, as well as your final course grade, will be determined using a point system aligned with a standard letter grade scale: A, B, C, D, and F. Since this is a class about professional communication, the grading criteria will focus, in part, on how well your work would be received in the workplace. The following will give you a good sense of what each letter grade means.

90-100 (A): In terms of the workplace, your supervisor would be very impressed with your work and would remember it when discussing with you a promotion or salary action. In this course, this means work that I find a pleasure to read; it has excellent content, grammar, sentence structure, mechanics, and visual design. In addition, the work is thorough, complete, coherent, well organized, sufficiently supported, and demonstrates a superior understanding of audience, purpose, and rationale.

80-89 (B): In this case, your supervisor would be satisfied with your work, but not especially impressed. This means that I find your work well written and well produced with few language issues; it is sufficiently developed, organized, and supported, and demonstrates a solid understanding of audience, purpose, and rationale.

70-79 (C): Here, your supervisor would ask you to revise or rewrite sections of the work before allowing clients and others to see it. That is, your work may have clear ideas but they are underdeveloped or fail to fully engage or affect the reader. There may be several errors in grammar, mechanics, or logic, making your reader work harder than necessary to grasp your point.

60-69 (D): The poor quality of work at this level would trouble your supervisor, who would require that you rewrite it entirely. The work forces your reader to work too hard to find and understand your main ideas. This usually results from your work containing incomplete information, having serious grammar and mechanical problems, lacking clear organization, and/or being conceptually murky.

Below 60 (F): Work of this quality would drive your supervisor to start looking for someone to replace you. In particular, it fails to address the tasks of the assignment, is so underdeveloped as to demonstrate incompetence, and is mechanically and grammatically incomprehensible.

Assignments and Points
There are a total of 160 possible points to earn in this course. No extra credit assignments are available.

- **Class Participation** (15 points)

- **Short Writing Assignments** (30 points)

- **Page Redesign** (written assignment- redesigned page and reflective memo, 15 points)

- **Job Materials Project** (ad, cover letter, and resumé (15 points)

- **Professional Advocacy Proposal** (8 parts, 85 points total)

Attendance

Just as you would be required to show up everyday in the workplace, I expect you to attend all class meetings (except in the case of an emergency, illness, or absence related to a conference presentation) and to be on time. If you have more than two absences for the one-day-a-week section or four absences for the two-day-a-week section, your grade will be negatively affected and may result in failure of the course. You are responsible for checking the course website in Blackboard, seeking help from classmates, and/or contacting me during office hours to find out what you missed (and yes, you missed something if you weren't in class).

Participation

Because all learning is essentially a social activity, you are expected to be an active and respectful participant in all activities. I expect that you will read all assigned material prior to class and that you will engage in thoughtful, critical dialog with your classmates. In order to explore the breadth of perspectives on professional communication, we will need to rely on the work and resources each of us brings to this experience. Throughout the semester, we will discuss readings, share collected materials and research, and provide feedback on drafts of one another's work. Your sustained engagement in this process will create a rich learning environment for yourself and your classmates and will help you to develop professional and collaborative practices that will serve you well in any professional environment.

Professional Etiquette

My goal is to create a comfortable, inviting environment for all students so learning can take place. To this end, I expect professional and respectful behavior in class, both in person and online. Please be mindful of your behavior, language, and tone in all interactions with classmates and me. Behavior that detracts from the culture of respect and professionalism a class such as this requires will not be tolerated. Please do not text or talk on cell phones, use computers for reasons outside our class, or engage in any other distracting behavior.

Since this is a professional writing class, I ask that you are professional in all forms of communication. When contacting each other or me through Blackboard or email, please use an appropriate subject line, greeting, and closing. Also, please be polite when asking a question, making a request, or addressing a concern. That is, I ask that you use appropriate rhetorical strategies when communicating. For example:

An acceptable email:

> Good afternoon, Jenny,
> I have a question regarding my grade. You may recall that I submitted my proposal on Tuesday, September 3rd, but I received a 0 for the assignment. Can you please double check the accuracy of this grade? If this grade is accurate, I would appreciate feedback so I can be sure to improve my work in the future.
>
> Thank you for your time,
> Matt Damon
> RWS 503

An unacceptable email:

> why did i receive a 0 on my assignment?

Accommodations for Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism is using another person's work without acknowledgment, making it appear to be one's own. Intentional and unintentional instances of plagiarism are considered instances of academic misconduct and are subject to disciplinary action such as failure on the

assignment, failure of the course or dismissal from the university. With that said, we live in a **culture of remix** and the sampling or redesign of others' work for new rhetorical purposes has become commonplace. This is acceptable within our class only with inclusion of clear and appropriate credit to original sources.

Discrimination and Harassment

SDSU complies with all federal and state laws regarding discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender and gender identity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, medical status, veteran status, and disability. Further, the expectation for our classroom is that it is a safe, collegial space where differences of background and perspective are treated with consideration and respect. Disagreement on some issues is expected as part of the learning process, but should always be expressed within a framework of collegiality.

Course Schedule- Fall 2014

RWS 503W Section 1 (T/TH 11-12:15, SH 126)
This schedule is subject to change based on student needs. Please check it regularly to stay up-to-date on assignments.

T 8/26

Course Activities:

- Introductions
- Course overview and syllabus

TH 8/28

Reading:

- Anderson Chapter 1- "Communication, Your Career, and this Book"

Course Activities:

- Questions about syllabus
- Discuss Chapter 1
- Complete Anderson Chapter 1 activity in class and discuss

Due:

- **Syllabus Response**- posted to Blackboard discussion thread
- **Reading response to chapter 1**- posted to Blackboard discussion thread

T 9/2

Reading:

- Assignment directions for the semester-long **Workplace Advocacy Proposal** project
- **Organizational Selection Guidelines**
- Anderson Chapter 23- "Writing Reader-Centered Letters, Memos, Emails, and Digital Exchanges"

Course Activities:

- Discuss readings
- Look at sample memos
- Work on **Part 1: Organizational Selection Brainstorm** using the **Organizational Selection Guidelines**

TH 9/4

Course Activities:

- Discuss and peer review **Part 1: Organization Selection Brainstorm**

Due:

- **Part 1: Organization Selection Brainstorm**- posted to Blackboard discussion thread

T 9/9

Course Activities:

- Discuss and peer review **Part 2: Pre-proposal brainstorm**

Due:

- **Part 2: Pre-proposal brainstorm**- posted to Blackboard discussion board

TH 9/11

Reading:

- Anderson Chapter 16- "Designing Reader-Centered Pages and Documents"
- "**How to Do a Visual Analysis: A Five Step Process**"

Course Activities:

- Discuss readings
- Assignment directions for **Page Redesign**
- Bring an image to class for analysis
- In-class visual analysis activity

T 9/16

Reading:

- Anderson Chapter 14 "Creating Reader-Centered Graphics"
- Anderson Chapter 15 "Creating Eleven Types of Reader-Centered Graphics"

Course Activities:

- Discuss readings
- In class work time on Page Redesign- bring all necessary files

Due:

- **Reading response to chapters 14 and 15-** posted to Blackboard discussion thread

TH 9/18

Reading:

- Anderson Chapter 7- "Using Five Reader-Centered Research Methods"

Course Activities:

- Work on question development for **Part 3: Decision-maker Interview** using the **Decision-Maker Interview Guidelines**
- Discuss readings and logistics of interviews

Due:

- **Schedule your Decision-Maker Interview NOW**

T 9/23

Course Activities:

- 1 minute mini-presentations of Page Redesign assignments- highlight 2-3 key features of your analysis

Due:

- **Page Redesign-** posted to Blackboard discussion thread

TH 9/25

Reading:

- Anderson Chapter 24- "Writing Reader-Centered Proposals"
- **Sample student proposal** (choose one)

Course Activities:

- Questions about interviews or proposal assignment
- Discuss readings and sample proposals

Due:

- **Reading Response to Anderson Chapter 24 and One Sample Proposal-** posted to Blackboard discussion thread

T 9/30

Reading:

- Anderson Chapter 6- "Conducting Reader-Centered Research"

Course Activities:

- Discuss readings
- Brainstorm ideas for conducting and reporting on **Part 4: Additional Research Activity**

TH 10/2

Reading:

- Anderson Chapter 4- "Planning for Usefulness"
- Anderson Chapter 5- "Planning Your Persuasive Strategies"

Course Activities:

- Complete and discuss the Case Study activity in Anderson on page 103
- Complete and discuss ideas from "Explore Online" on page 127 of Anderson
- Discuss ideas from Chapters 4 and 5

Due:

- **Reading Response to Anderson Chapters 4 and 5-**posted to Blackboard discussion thread

T 10/7

Course Activities:

- Share interview findings with classmates
- Discuss ways to use interview findings in constructing your proposal's argument

Due:

- **Part 3: Decision-maker Interview**- posted to Blackboard discussion thread

TH 10/9

Reading:

- Anderson Chapter 3- "Defining Your Communication's Goals

Course Activities:

- Discuss how chapter strategies can be used with information gathered through your additional research activity and interview

Due:

- **Part 4: Additional Research Activity-** posted to Blackboard discussion thread

T 10/14

Reading:

- Anderson Chapter 2- "Overview of the Reader-Centered Communication Process: Obtaining a Job"

Course Activities:

- Discuss directions for **Job Materials Project**
- Discuss reading
- Look at websites for job advertisements

TH 10/16

Course Activities:

- Do analysis of job/internship ad and online research of organization
- Discuss findings

Due:

- **Bring job or internship ad for which you are currently qualified**- posted to Blackboard discussion thread

T 10/21

Course Activities:

- Peer review of draft job application materials

Due:

- **Draft of resumé and cover letter due-** posted to Blackboard discussion thread

TH 10/23

Course Activities:

- In-class work on job application materials- bring ad, drafts, and peer feedback to class

T 10/28

Course Activities:

- Discuss final job materials
- Discuss campus and professional resources for finding employment/internships

Due:

- **Job ad and final, revised resumé and cover letter-** posted to Blackboard discussion thread

TH 10/30

Reading:

- Anderson Chapter 10- "Developing an Effective, Professional Style"
- Anderson Chapter 17- "Revising Your Drafts"

Course Activities:

- Discuss Readings

Due:

- **Reading Response to Anderson Chapters 10 and 17-** posted to Blackboard discussion thread

T 11/4

Course Activities:

- **Part 6: Feedback and Suggestions to Classmates' Proposals**

Due:

- **Part 5: Proposal Draft due**- posted to Blackboard discussion thread

TH 11/6

Class cancelled for individual conferences

T 11/11

Veterans' Day- Class Cancelled

TH 11/13

Class cancelled for individual conferences

T 11/18

Reading:

- Anderson Chapter 20- "Creating and Delivering Listener-Centered Oral Presentations"

Course Activities:

- Discuss readings
- In-class voice activity
- Look at and discuss techology possibilities for presentations

TH 11/20

Course Activities:

- In-class work time on **Part 8: Proposal Presentations**

Due:

- **Part 7: Final Proposal-** posted to Blackboard discussion thread

T 11/25

Course Activities:

- In-class work time on **Part 8: Proposal Presentations**

TH 11/27

Thanksgiving Break- Class Cancelled

T 12/2

Course Activities:

- **Part 8: Proposal Presentations**

TH 12/4

Course Activities:

- **Part 8: Proposal Presentations**

T 12/9

Course Activities:

- **Part 8: Proposal Presentations**

TH 12/11- W 12/17

Final Exam Week- Class wrap-up and any revisions due

Course Assignments

There are a total of 150 possible points to earn in this course. No extra credit assignments are available.

- **Short Writing Assignments (35 points)-** Prior to each class, please read all assigned material and respond in 1-2 single-spaced paragraphs using the following format:

    1. What are the key concepts or terms and why are they significant?

    2. What, if anything, doesn't make sense to you?

    3. What 1-2 questions do you have about the reading or its application to professional writing and/or your assignments?

    A good response will do at least a few of the following:

    - reference specific passages (with page numbers)
    - provide summation when necessary to clarify points
    - focus on unpacking the meaning/implication of key ideas
    - pose questions to stimulate class discussion

- **Page Redesign** (written assignment- redesigned page and reflective memo, 15 points)

- Job Application Materials (job or internship ad, resume, cover letter, 15 points)

- **Professional Advocacy Proposal** (8 parts, 80 points total)

- Class Participation (15 points)

Page Redesign Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to put the document design skills you have been reading about to use in creating a more readable page. Your task is to use the principles from Anderson to design a page that engages the reader (encouraging them to make this recipe) and helps them to follow the steps as easily as possible.

Directions

1. After reading the assigned material from Anderson, use Microsoft Word (or other applications with which you are familiar, such as InDesign) to redesign the information on the **page linked here**. Using the design principles and guidelines from the readings, **create a one page document** that organizes the content in a usable, reader-centered way, and that incorporates at least one graphic of your choosing to help convey the information to your target audience. If there is information that you feel is unnecessary to successful completion of the recipe, you may leave it out.

2. Along with your one page redesign, write a short memo (no more than a page) explaining the design choices you made and how they make use of the principles from your reading. Be sure to reference specific strategies frome the readings in your memo. Post your finished assignment to the discussion board thread titled "Page Redesign".

Job Materials Project

The purpose of this assignment is to help you think rhetorically and strategically about the professional job or internship search process. Using guidelines from Anderson Chapter 2 and our class discussions, you will find a position advertisement, analyze its explicit and implicit expectations, and create application materials as if you were applying for it.

Directions

1. After reading Anderson Chapter 2, you will search for an **professional job or internship advertisement** for which you are currently qualified (please note that basing your materials around a position for which you are not qualified and thus have to make up experiences you don't currently possess is NOT the point of the assignment). Be sure to choose an ad with significant detail for this assignment as this will help you to complete a more detailed and appropriate set of materials. Also, be sure to save a copy of this advertisement since you will be turning it in as part of your final project.

2. After finding and analyzing the position ad and researching the hiring organization, you will complete a **resumé**. The goal for this work is to create a professional, well-designed, rhetorically appropriate document to showcase your academic history and workplace skills. A resumé, in essence, is a *persuasive document* that seeks to convince a potential employer that you have experiences that will help you to serve their interests. You must think critically about content, phrasing, organization, and design for it to be most successful.

3. Finally, you will create a **cover or application letter** to accompany your resumé. The primary role of a cover or application letter is to build a case for why you would be a good fit for the organization and what you could contribute to their mission. Keep in mind that most organizations receive dozens, if not hundreds, of applications for a single position, most from people with similar qualifications, so your letter needs to persuade that employer why your specific background and skill set could do the best job. You should think of your letter as a document that unpacks and explains the relevance of the items in your resumé. In other words, use your letter to highlight two or three *specific experiences or qualifications* that make you suited for the position and help the employer to understand how these will help their organization. You also want to make it clear that you have taken time to find out about the position and organization and that you have something unique to offer. Your grade for this assignment will be based on the clarity and organization of your letter, its relevance to the specific organization, and grammatical correctness (this is one document where perfection in editing is absolutely essential).

Organizational Advocacy Proposal Assignment Directions

Purpose

The steps in this project are designed to provide contextualized, hands-on practice in applying the professional communication strategies we read about and discuss during the course. Your ultimate task is to write a **persuasive proposal** about a change you would like to see in your workplace or other organization of which you are a member.

You will begin by identifying a problem, issue, or conflict and providing some background on why this problem exists. You will then construct a convincing and tactful argument about why your recommended change and course of action is both necessary and beneficial. You will use findings from an interview with the key decision maker who would decide on your proposal to shape your content and approach. Additionally, you will use organization observations, interviews and/or surveys with co-workers/organization members, and/or academic research articles to provide support and justification for your proposal. **You should view your intended audience as the people, committee(s), or governing body with the authority to enact your proposal**.

Directions

This assignment has eight parts that run throughout the semester:

Part 1: Organization Selection Brainstorming
The purpose of this activity is to help you select a real life organizational setting and rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, and context) to write about throughout this project. The more relevant your topic choice is to your life and/or future profession, the more useful and engaging the project and learning will be for you.

Begin by listing at least 10 organizations of which you are or have been a part within the last few years. These possibilities can include jobs, school, internships, or clubs/professional societies, social, volunteer or religious organizations, sports and recreational groups, and more. You want to generate as many ideas as you can. **Include this list with the posting that follows.**

Once you are done with your list, choose the *three* that seem most promising and use the **Organizational Selection Guidelines** to help you evaluate whether it's a good fit for the advocacy proposal assignment. **Write about the pros and cons of each of your three possible organizations using the selection guidelines,** discussing potential problems, challenges, or needs within the organization that you might be able to address in this project. When you are finished, post your brainstorm to the discussion board thread called "Organization Selection Brainstorm".

Part 2: Pre-Proposal
Begin by reflecting on your reading response to Anderson Chapter 1, as well as problems or inefficiencies you see within your three select organizations. **Choose one organization** that holds the greatest personal/professional interest and appropriateness to the advocacy proposal project. Write an informal, 250 word brainstorm about the issue/problem, how it effects the organization/people, and how you might like to see it addressed. Make sure that the issue has at least some component that you can realistically argue for change about. The purpose of this step of the assignment is to generate ideas and possibilities, not to produce a polished piece of writing. The more you are personally invested in this issue and care about its outcome, the easier it will be to write your proposal. When you are finished, post your brainstorm to the discussion board thread called "Pre-Proposal".

Part 3: Decision-maker Interview and Memo
After choosing your organization, your next task is to interview a decision-maker about a potential proposal. A decision-maker is the person (or persons) who would make a decision on whether to act on the recommendations in your proposal. The purpose of the interview is to provide you with context about the problem, the potential consequences of enacting it, the stakeholders involved, and the kinds of evidence that would likely make a difference in his or her decision-making process. Use the **Conducting Decision-Maker Interview Guidelines** to help you develop your interview approach and questions. Also, be sure to read pages 169-178 in your Anderson text for specific guidance on preparing for and conducting interviews and developing the wording of questions.

Following your interview you will write up a report on your findings. This single-spaced **memo** (use a memo template in MS Word and refer to chapter 23 in your Anderson text for formatting help) will include the following:

- Start with a background section about the project.

- Include a section on the details of the interview. Provide specifics about when the interview took place, where it was held, how long it went, and in general how it went.

- Include a section on results, describing what you learned. This should NOT be a transcript of the interview. Instead, **summarize** the interview and include a few direct quotes. Direct quotations are an exceptionally effective way to present data because they help personalize the subject for your audience.

- Discuss your reflections on the interview and how your findings will influence your approach to the proposal.

- Attach your interview questions to the memo as an appendix.

Part 4: Choose *ONE* of the following additional research activities and complete

For whichever of the three options you choose (interview, survey/focus group, published articles), you'll need to briefly write-up (in no more than a page) what you did, why you chose it, how you approached it, and what you learned from it. Post your write-up in memo form to the discussion thread titled "Additional Research Activity"

1. **Write up a series of questions and interview at least one co-worker/organization member**
   Using the guidelines from Anderson, write a short set of questions to use in interviewing at least one co-worker/organization member about the issue you will discuss in your proposal. Be sure that you write/ask your questions in an open-ended way so that your respondent(s) can answer in more depth than simply giving you a yes or no answer. You will need to write up your questions and what you discovered from this interview. You'll also need to include your list of questions in an appendix at the end of your proposal.

   OR

2. **Create and conduct a short survey or focus group with multiple co-workers/organization members**
   Using the techniques you learned from conducting your decision maker interview, create a short survey or focus group session that can be used to gather opinions and ideas from co-workers/organization members. Often, this kind of information can be used in a proposal to demonstrate support of ideas or the desire for a specific kind of change. Generally, this information is presented anonymously to protect the confidentiality of partipants, though you may use names to increase credibility with the permission of participants. You will need to turn in a copy of your survey along with a summary of your approach, what you hoped to find through the survey, and an overview of your results.

   OR

3. **Find and analyze at least two published articles relevant to your issue**
   Using your professional publications and the databases available to you through the library or your workplace, locate at least two credible (and preferably academic) articles relevant to the issue you have selected. Since you will be using this work to support your proposal's argument, you should try to find sources that take as diverse perspectives as possible so you will be aware of the sub-issues you'll need to address. You will need to provide bibliographic citations and brief summaries of each article.

Part 5: Proposal Draft

After completing your decision maker interview and other relevant research (organization observations, informal interviews or surveys with co-workers or organization members, and/or academic research or professional articles), you will begin drafting your proposal. Your completed draft Proposal should be posted on the discussion thread entitled "Draft of Organizational Advocacy Proposals".

Keep in mind that the purpose of a proposal is to ***persuade others to accept or enact your reasoned recommendations.*** Readers want to know what the problem is, why it matters to them, how you plan to address, how much it will cost them, how it will be accomplished, and what the results will be.

Chapter 24 of your Anderson textbook offers a complete discussion of proposal development in greater detail, but the general structure is discussed below. You should also consider the advice of Anderson's chapter 5 for incorporating persuasive strategies. Your proposal should include the following sections (though some specifics may be merged depending on organizational setting and/or issue addressed):

Introduction (aka Executive Summary): Briefly summarize what you are writing about, how and why your proposed idea is relevant to this group and its objectives, and why this proposal has value for readers. Your introduction will do the following:

- Define the subject
- State your purpose
- ***Stress the importance of the subject for the organization***
- Offer a brief background on the subject/situation
- Forecast the organization of the document

Problem: Identify the problem your project will address and persuade readers that your proposal will offer a significant and worthwhile approach. Be sure to emphasize to readers why reading your proposal is worth their time. Your problem section will do the following:

- Define and describe the problem
- Discuss the causes of the problem
- Discuss the effects of the problem if nothing is done

Objectives: Briefly outline the objectives of your proposal based on the problems identified in the previous section. Objectives offer a logical component to your argument, helping audiences to see how your proposed actions in the next section will address the problems you have outlined. Your objectives will do the following:

- Describe the objectives of proposed solution without describing the solution itself.
- Briefly summarize the aims of the project for evaluation separate from the writer's particular strategies for achieving those aims.

Solution/Project Plan: Describe how you plan to address the problem and achieve the objectives identified above and why this approach is justified. *You are making a case here for why your approach is the most desirable way of achieving the objectives.* Describe the process, step-by-step, that your plan would follow. Describe the specific ways your proposal would be enacted and how it is relevant and appropriate to the organizational context. Your solution section will do the following:

- Describe the plan's steps
- Identify and discuss the outcome
- Include findings from research, interviews, and/or observations to help support recommendations and approach
- Discuss how this solution affects stakeholders and how/why this plan is effective for the greatest good

Qualifications: Since you likely won't be enacting this proposal yourself, this section may not be necessary in this case. However, qualification sections generally describe the abilities of you or your team that make you the best choice for the work you propose. This section is an argument about your qualifications to complete the work you propose. Qualification sections include:

- Describe personnel involved (with brief bios)
- Describe previous experience (especially as related to the project)

Costs/Resources: Summarize the advantages of saying yes to the proposal while also telling readers how much the project will cost. Your cost section will do the following:

- State the costs without apology or sales pitch
- Immediately after, describe the significant benefits of approving the proposal

Schedule: Specify a detailed time-line for the project, listing deadlines for what will be completed or developed by specific dates.

Conclusion: This is a concise restatement of your proposal and its benefits. Your conclusion section should:

- Summarize the solution you propose
- Offer a thank you for your readers' time and consideration
- Provide information on how to proceed should readers accept your proposal
- Provide multiple means for readers to contact you (phone, email)

Part 6: Feedback and Suggestions to Classmates' Proposals

Looking at the Blackboard Discussion thread for "Draft Proposals", read and provide thoughtful and in-depth feedback for two classmates' proposals using the reply feature. **Your comments should be equivalent to at least one page in length**, though you may choose to format it in a different way (such as a bulleted list). Comments that simply tell the writer that they are doing a good job or that something seems problematic are ***NOT HELPFUL IF YOU DON'T ALSO PROVIDE AN EXPLANATION OF WHY.*** DETAIL IS IMPORTANT HERE AND IS THE MAIN CRITERIA I WILL USE IN GIVING POINTS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT. A focus on grammar and mechanics is not appropriate or useful for review at this stage of writing since content may change.

In providing comments, you need to address the following:

- Does the overall proposal make sense? Does it provide a clear understanding of the problem and how the proposed solution would address it? If not, where and how does it need to be made clearer?

- Is the structure of the proposal appropriate and does it follow the assigned outline? Which sections need more detail (or less) and explanation? Where can the sections be made more persuasive?

- Do the sources used provide persuasive evidence that help to provide insight for the issue? If not, what else do you need to know? What suggestions do you have for where to find this information?

- What other specific feedback do you have for this author for how to improve this proposal?

Part 7: Final Proposal

After receiving feedback and suggestions on your Draft Proposal from me and a classmate, revise your document so that it is polished, professional, and persuasive. Read Anderson Chapter 9 for advice on developing a more effective writing style. Read Anderson Chapter 15 for advice on how to approach your revising process and priorities.

Your Proposal will be assessed based on how well you:

- introduce your subject and provide contextualization of the workplace setting and issue

- identify the sources of conflict or inefficiency that your proposal addresses

- argue for and support your proposed idea in a way that addresses the concerns that stakeholders and decision makers for the issue may have

- structure and organize your document so that it follows the conventional format of a proposal AND facilitates clarity and ease of use for readers

- present your ideas in ways that are rhetorically-appropriate for your target readers, particularly in terms of the proposal's overall tone

Part 8: Proposal Presentations

The final step in this assignment sequence is a presentation of your proposal ideas to your classmates who will stand in for the decision maker(s) from the organization. In this presentation you will present a condensed version of the problem you have identified, its significance or influence on the organization, and justified explanation of your proposed changes/ideas. This presentation is NOT simply a reading of your proposal, but a careful consideration of which information is necessary to make your case and thoughtful organization of textual and visual information for support that argument. Your presentation should be 4-7 minutes in length.

The following criteria will be used to assess your presentation:

- clarity of problem to be addressed and solution you are advocating
- quality and preparation of materials
- use of textual and visual information to support your argument
- design and appropriateness of presentation technology (i.e. PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi, etc.)