NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE LIBRARY SERVICES
INFORMATION LITERACY AND INSTRUCTION PROGRAM
SPC 230: Business & Professional Communication - Berkland
Spring 2015

Session One: Working-world Internet research (for task force memo assignments)

Hard truth #1: Unless you're working for a large, wealthy company, you will not have access to the academic resources to which you are accustomed.

Strategy: Use government documents & reports, as well as data & reports from professional organizations, related businesses/industries, & non-profit organizations.

Government documents:
- ✓ Data.gov
- ✓ Advanced Google search, specifying .gov as the domain
- ✓ State, county, & local government sites

Professional organizations, non-profit organizations, and related businesses:
- ✓ Search will depend on area of interest.
- ✓ Look for industry surveys, trends, reports.
- ✓ Look for annual or quarterly reports, press releases, contact information.

Hard truth #2: It takes time to evaluate properly the quality of Internet resources, and in the working world, you will not be given enough time.

Strategy: Learn to recognize key details on a website.

Look for:
- ✓ Credibility – Why do you trust the information being presented?
- ✓ Currency – Are you able to locate a date updated/date created?
- ✓ Relevance – Does the site matter in your research?
- ✓ Accuracy – Is the information presented verifiable if you look at other sources?
- ✓ Authority – Who is the author? Is s/he or the organization a scholar, practitioner, or leader in the field?
- ✓ Purpose – Why does the site exist?

Session Two: Expanding our research scope (for group presentation and white paper)

Pre-research: search term development for book topics
- Corporate culture

- Listening

- Motivation

- Negotiation

- Sales strategies

Library resources:
- Communication & Mass Media Complete (scholarly & trade)
- Business Source Premier (scholarly & trade, company & industry information)
- LexisNexis (company information)

External resources:
- Government documents
- Polling sites/organizations
- Professional organizations

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The Course, the Library Research Sessions, and the ACRL Framework

Course Objectives: Preparing Students for Business Environments (as stated on Dr. Berkland's syllabus)

SPC 230: Business and Professional Communication focuses on writing, speaking, and interpersonal communication. Although differences in instructors' presentation styles are a natural and valuable part of a multi-section course, all sections of SPC 230 have the same objectives. These objectives specify that students, at the conclusion of the course, should be able to

- Analyze communication situations and audiences to make choices about the most effective and efficient way to communicate and deliver messages
- Conduct research that includes the use of library resources and the Internet; use the results of that research to complete written and oral reports
- Deliver effective business presentations in contexts that may require either extemporaneous or impromptu oral presentations
- Provide feedback, accept feedback, and use feedback to improve communication skills
- Write business documents that are grammatically correct and use appropriate business style
- Develop effective interpersonal communication skills
- Use communication technology appropriately and effectively

Course Assignments directly linked to research sessions:

All course assignments will presume that you are a member of a governmental taskforce (local, state, or federal). You may choose the issue.

You will be required to complete the following assignments surrounding that issue. Please make sure it is a topic in which you are interested, and preferably, one to which you could apply your expertise (major area).

1) Topic memos (25 points) – (Individual) These memos will introduce to your supervisor (the professor) what topic/issue you are choosing and which task force you will be joining (this should be a real taskforce, although you, of course, will not be joining it for real). Your goal of this memo is to overview the progress of the task force to date and to highlight the goals of the group.

2) Good news memo (25 points) – (Individual) You have done some research on a narrowed issue important to your taskforce and are raising with the taskforce some information which will be helpful to them.

3) Bad news memo (25 points) - (Individual) You have done some research on a narrowed issue important to your taskforce and are raising with the taskforce some information which will disappoint them.

4) Presentation (50 points) – (Group) Students will be put into groups of three or four and will choose one book to read and reflect on during the term. Students are responsible for finding their own copy of the book. After having read the book, students will give a 30-minute group presentation on an issue/topic/concept within the book that would be of interest to burgeoning professionals. This topic/focus should be narrowly focused so that the audience can walk away with something specific and concrete to apply to their business communication experiences. Students will, as a group, send a memo to the instructor explaining what the narrowed focus of the presentation will be with an explanation of why they are narrowing in this way for this audience. Groups will also compose a handout that, using additional sources if necessary, that summarizes for the audience the take-away ideas that they will want to have (this can take any form that is appropriate). Groups have the option of assigning a task/reading/activity that can be awarded up to 5 points (approved, graded/monitored by the instructor).

Here are the titles you may choose from among:

- *Drive* by Pink
- *A Slice of the Pie* by Sarillo
- *Delivering Happiness* by Hseih
- *Selling to VITO* by Parinello
- *Difficult Conversations* by Stone
- *Getting to Yes* by Fisher & Ury
- *Just Listen* by Goulston
- *The Definitive Book of Body Language* by Pease

5) Report/White Paper (50 points) – (Group) You may choose the format that you prefer, but your goal is to educate a wider audience about an issue related to the ideas you've read about in the book. This report will include substantial external research. Include a cover memo explaining to me why you chose the format you did.

ACRL Framework: Knowledge Practices Addressed in Library Research Sessions Corresponding to the SPC 230 Assignments

ACRL Frames	Knowledge Practices	SPC 230 Assignments
Authority is constructed and contextual	Define different types of authority, such as subject expertise (e.g., scholarship), societal position (e.g., public office or title), or special experience (e.g., participating in a historic event).	Memos, presentation, and white paper
	Use research tools and indicators of authority to determine the credibility of sources, understanding the elements that might temper this credibility.	Memos, presentation, and white paper
	Recognize that authoritative content may be packaged formally or informally and may include sources of all media types.	Memos
Research as inquiry	Use various research methods, based on need, circumstance, and type of inquiry	Presentation and white paper
Searching as strategic exploration	Identify interested parties, such as scholars, organizations, governments, and industries, which might produce information about a topic and determine how to access that information	Memos
	Utilize divergent (e.g., brainstorming) and convergent (e.g., selecting the best source) thinking when searching	Presentation and white paper
	Use different searching language types (e.g., controlled vocabulary, keywords, natural language)	Memos, presentation and white paper