English 3105 and 3107: Technical Writing

**Assignment: Report**

Vital Statistics

* **Due Date:** Monday, May 4, 2009, at 12 noon. ***Begin work now!***
* [**Report Proposal Due**](http://faculty.tnstate.edu/whennequin/tw/report.html#proposal)**:** April 13, 2009.
* **Drafts Due:** April 17, 2009.
* **Conferences:** April 20-27, 2009.
* **Length:** 1200-1800 words.
* **Research Requirement:** Major; [see below](http://faculty.tnstate.edu/whennequin/tw/report.html#Research) for details.
* **Questions?** E-mail me, bring it up in class, or post to the discussion board.

All institutions have problems, and TSU is no different. Doubtless, sometime during your University career, you have come across a problematic situation or two (or three or four or . . . ). Choose a problem that interests you, study it, investigate it, report on it, and make recommendations on solving it.

**The report should answer at least all of the following questions:**

* What is the origin of the problem?
* When did this problem begin? How long has it been going on?
* What caused or causes this problem? What actions / inactions resulted in the problem?
* Why is this a problem? How does this problem affect the campus, its operations, and / or its community (students, teachers, employees, neighbors, etc.)?
* What does the problem cost the university--in time, money, resources, potentials, etc.?
* What sources did you use?

**The recommendations should answer these questions:**

* What actions / inactions (etc.) could solve this problem?
* Which of these plans do you recommend? Why?
* What will the solution cost the university--in time, money, resources, etc.?
* Why does the cost of the solution outweigh the cost of the problem?

**First, you will have to** **propose a topic of study.** On April 13, I expect a short (300-500 word) proposal in memo form. The proposal should include:

* A clear definition of the problem: What exactly will you be investigating? What parameters do you set for the study?
* A plan for research: How will you go about studying and investigating this problem?
* A statement of need: Why should we study or even care about this problem?
* A preliminary list of research sources: Where are you going to look for information about the topic? This list should include **at least 5 sources** and should be in either APA or MLA format.

You need not present these topics in this order, and you may add other topics to the proposal as necessary.

**Obviously, you will have to** **research the problem**, whatever it is. Your report **must use at least 5 sources.** You are not restricted to scholarly sources, however. You may use:

* Published reports. The University is part of the state government and is required to report things publicly. Various agencies on campus report to other agencies. See what you can find.
* Newspaper and magazine stories. Yes, this includes the *Meter* and its predecessors, as well as local newspapers.
* Archival material. Check the university archives.
* Interviews with employees, students, professors, retired employees and professors, officials, etc.
* Books.
* Web sites, official and otherwise.

Things to remember for the report:

1. **Use technical writing techniques!** This is not an academic term paper, but a technical writing report. Reports which do not use technical writing techniques will receive significantly lower grades.
2. **Checkyour textbook for the components and format of a report.**
3. **Conduct copious research!** You must be able to demonstrate to your audience that you have examined the topic thoroughly enough to find trends and differentiate minor developments from major ones.
4. **Document all your sources!** You **must cite information from any of the following sources:**
   * web sites
   * newspapers
   * magazines
   * books
   * radio
   * television
   * archives
   * official documents, including brochures, letters, press releases, etc.
   * quotations
   * paraphrased information
   * statistics
   * facts
   * lectures
   * interviews
   * any ideas that are not yours.

**Lack of proper documentation will result in a** **failing grade!**

1. **Do not plagiarize!** Use your own wording unless you are quoting directly.

**Report due:** May 4, 2009 at 12 noon.