**TECHNICAL AND REPORT WRITING
ENGL 3053**

**Major Assignment 3:** **Proposal**

A proposal is an offer to carry out research, to deliver goods, or to provide services. A successful proposal clearly identifies some problem and advances a solution. The readers are usually in a position of authority—supervisors, managers, elected officials, etc.—to endorse or reject the writer's plan. To be successful, every proposal you write must exhibit a "can do" attitude, putting the reader and his or her company's needs at the center of your work. The tone of your proposal should be persuasive, saying to the reader: "Here is what I can do for you." This assignment is collaborative, completed and graded as a group assignment. You will write an external unsolicited proposal. Please refer to Chapter 11 of *PSTC,* pp. 296-316 and *HTW* pp 409-426 for a detailed look at proposals and examples of proposal content, organization and formatting.

A proposal is an argument (a plan) you must convince your reader to accept. You cannot write a successful proposal until you:

1. Fully understand the need/problem and why solving it is important to your audience.

2. Formulate a careful, detailed plan of action to address and solve the problem.

3. Prove beyond doubt that you have the ability to solve the audience's precise problem.

4. Can match your timetable and budget with your reader's needs and resources.

Each of these steps requires research of the problem, your audience’s needs and viewpoint, possible solutions, and the time, costs and materials required. When you run into something you need to include but you don’t know, research it.

**What's the assignment?**

This is a collaborative assignment, as many proposals in the workplace are. As a group, you will write an unsolicited external proposal in which you will propose a solution to a complex problem. You should try to choose a topic related to your field of study. If you are unable to identify some problem from within your future field or your major discipline, you could alternatively propose a solution to some problem in your current work or living environment.

Unlike a solicited proposal, in which the company to which you are submitting the proposal knows about the problem, your unsolicited proposal has to convince readers that (1) there is a problem and (2) you are the one to solve it.

An external proposal is sent to a decision maker outside your company or organization. External proposals tend to be more formal than internal ones, and they should be formatted in the form of a proper business letter. (Internal proposals are most often formatted as memos.)

After you have selected your topic, you might want to use the following guidelines to write your proposal:

* Approach writing a proposal as a problem-solving activity.
* Regard your audience as skeptical readers.
* Research your proposal thoroughly (use at least 3 sources).
* Scout out what your competitors are doing.
* Prove that your proposal is workable.
* Be sure that your proposal is financially realistic.
* Package your proposal attractively.

 A proposal should have:

1. front matter

2. statement of purpose

3. introduction

4. problem section

5. solution section including proposed tasks

6. if applicable, a schedule and budget section

7. references section

See your *Practical Strategies for Technical Communications* pp. 299-314 for explanation of these components, and appropriate design and formatting.

**Collaboration**

You will be completing this project as a group, so you can divide up the work in whatever way is logical in light of your group members’ resources, interests and abilities, but it should be equitable. Each member will sign a contract. A weekly accounting of each member’s contribution will be required, and the group has authority to dismiss a member who is not contributing. Upon dismissal, that member will be responsible for completing the entire project on his own, and will lose one letter grade for lack of collaboration. This independent completion is not a voluntary option. One objective of this assignment is to learn to collaborate and produce work as part of a group.

Your proposal should be **5-8 pages** long (not counting cover page), and should be formatted as a **full-block business letter, single spaced**.

You need to use **at least 3 sources** for your research of the problem, and include these in your references section.

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**Minimum page length**: 5-8 pages
**Due date:** [Week 11]
**Grade value**: 20% or 200 points