Project 2: Report on Workplace Writing
or Report on Workplace History and Culture
Individual – 20 Points

Purpose: *Option 1*: Conduct primary and secondary research to compose an empirical report on the types of communication professional writers perform in the workplace. Discuss connections between accurate and rhetorically effective communication and success on the job. Please note that you are responsible for finding your interviewee. *Option 2*: Conduct primary and secondary research to compose an empirical report on a workplace or graduate organization you may join after graduating from SLU.

Audience: Your instructor, your classmates, and future potential employers, intern sponsors, or graduate school program directors

Option 1: Workplace Writing

For Project 2, conduct primary (an interview, observations) and secondary (from class readings and sources you find) research to compose an information report on the types of professional writing people in your field perform in the workplace. Discuss connections between accurate and rhetorically effective communication and success on the job. It is vital that you conduct serious, detailed research for this project to push past the information that is available on an organization's website. A website is useful to begin your research, but you must use multiple resources—including an interview—to produce a professional document representative of an upper-level college course in professional writing. You should follow the five journalism questions:

- **Who** writes in the workplace?
    - In the workplace, we rarely write alone. So, who are the collective authors of documents? Do they write in teams? Do people compose with other writers, or do they collaborate with people from other fields (lawyers, engineers, programmers, etc.)? Also, do not forget about audience. For whom do people in your field compose (co-workers, bosses, clients, Internet)?
- **What** do they write?
    - *What is the most common short document (around five pages), besides an email, that people in your discipline write*? Do people in your field just compose instructions and annual reports? What other forms, memos, proposals, or presentations do they compose? In what formats do these compositions appear (PowerPoint, web, social media, PDF, RoboHelp, etc.)?
- **When** and how often do they write?
    - Do people in your field compose everyday? At what point in the composing process do they contribute to documents? Are they original authors? Or do they contribute to others' work later in the process? What does the composition process look like? In what rhetorical situations (contexts) do they compose?
- **Where** do they write?
    - With laptops and mobile devices dominating the workplace, our places of authorship are more diverse than ever. Where do people in your field compose? In cubicles? At home (remember that some proprietary information is not allowed off-property)? How might location impact the composition process?
- **Why** do they write?
    - Do people in your field write to help brainstorm ideas? To communicate with co-workers, bosses, clients? Or do they write for legal reasons, to archive information

or compose legally-binding documents of agreement or understanding? To they write to pitch sales ideas? Or do they write grants at non-profit organizations to secure funding from foundations? What are their goals when they write? What purposes do they fulfill for the organization? What part of the production process do they fill? Do they contribute to the decision-making process of a product? Do they influence policy and the direction of their organization?

- **How** do they write?
    - This is another process question, so tracing the lifecycle of writing and communication projects is important to answering this. But it also involves technology, like laptops, mobile devices, social media, and probably old-fashion pen and paper. Do people in your field follow a style manual/sheet? If so, investigate it. Do they just communicate with words, numbers, and pictures? What about visuals (video) and oral presentations? Social media and mobile devices? How do these emerging technologies impact the composition process?

Make sure you connect some of the ideas we learn about from the Anderson text_for example the reader-centered approach_and from other readings to your report. So, for instance, you might answer some of these questions:

- How do people in your field follow the reader-centered approach? Or perhaps they haven't heard of this idea. How *might* they use it? (Hint: just following the reader-centered approach could land you a job.)
- What are some other connections you see between what we have learned in class and what you have learned in your research? What are some disconnects?

Option 2: Workplace/Graduate School History and Culture

For Project 2, conduct primary (an interview, observations) and secondary (from class readings and sources you find) research to compose an information report on two organizations you may join after graduating from SLU. If you are planning on entering the workplace, then both of your potential organizations will be businesses or non-profits. If you are planning on entering graduate school, then both of your potential organizations will be universities/colleges and the specific programs you may join. You are investigating the history of these organizations and their culture, which includes vision, mission, strategic plan, environment—what it *feels* like to be there.

For example, if you are researching an investment firm, find out as much as you can about its formation, who was/is involved in the leadership, the firm's strategies, goals, etc. But also investigate its workplace culture. Does the firm "feel" younger, more progressive? Or is it old school and stodgy? If you are researching graduate school, find out as much as you can about its formation, who was/is involved in leadership, the school's goals, etc. Is the school a Jesuit institution? Does it focus on *cura personalis* and people for and with others? Is it listed as a Carnegie designated Engaged Campus? Or is it a high research Jesuit institution like SLU? Or is it a very high research university like Purdue?

It is vital that you conduct serious, detailed research for this project to push past the information that is available on these organizations' websites. Their websites are useful to begin your research, but you must use multiple resources—including an interview—to produce a professional document representative of an upper-level college course in professional writing. You should follow the five journalism questions:

- **Who** was involved in starting the organization and who runs it now?

    - This includes upper leaders and the leadership within the specific division/department you may be joining
- **What** were/are their goals, mission, vision, strategic plan?
    - This includes the organization's workplace culture: is it formal, informal, progressive, conservative? How do they handle hiring/accepting new folks? How do they handle workplace ethics issues, such as harassment, diversity, promotion, family and sick leave, health insurance, retirement? What are salaries/compensation like? How are they involved with giving back to the community? How invested are they in their employees and communities? How beholden are they to their shareholders, if they have shareholders?
- **When** was the organization formed and how often does it revisit and adjust its strategic direction?
    - What sort of work model do they use? *Kaizen*? Six sigma? Logic models? Gantt charts?
- **Where** are they physically located and how do they handle teleworking?
    - Do employees have to travel? Where? How often? How is compensation for traveling handled? Do they use per diem rates? Are there extended overseas assignments? May family members travel with employees?
- **Why** do you think you may want to join these organizations, and why do you think you'll be a good fit? Why do you think you can help them achieve their goals? Why would they want you to join their organization?
- **How** do you plan to join this organization? What are your next steps?

Make sure you connect some of the ideas we learn about from the Anderson text_for example the reader-centered approach_and from other readings to your report. So, for instance, you might answer some of these questions:

- How do organizations in your field practice the user/reader-centered approach in their approach to business, non-profit work, or education? Or perhaps they haven't heard of this idea. How *might* they use it? (Hint: just following the reader-centered approach could land you a job.)
- What are some other connections you see between what we have learned in class and what you have learned in your research? What are some disconnects?

Eloquentia Perfecta 4: Writing Intensive
This course is part of the Saint Louis University Core, an integrated intellectual experience completed by all baccalaureate students, regardless of major, program, college, school or campus. The Core offers all SLU students the same unified approach to Jesuit education guided by SLU's institutional mission and identity and our nine undergraduate Core Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

The **Writing Intensive** course requirement is one of 19 Core Components. The University Core SLO(s) that this component is designed to intentionally advance are listed below:
University Core Student Learning Outcomes The Core SLO(s) that this component is intentionally designed to advance are:
SLO 3: Assess evidence and draw reasoned conclusions
SLO 4: Communicate effectively in writing, speech, and visual media

Additionally, the Core Component-level Student Learning Outcomes are listed below:
Component-level Student Learning Outcomes Students who complete this course will be able to:
· Write effectively for specific purposes and audiences
· Analyze and synthesize claims from a variety of sources
· Synthesize, summarize, paraphrase, and quote from a variety of appropriate sources in support of specific claims
· Engage in processes of invention and revision that enable evaluation of their own and others' rhetorical choices in written messages and arguments
· Reflect on the ways in which rhetorically proficient written communication contributes to ethical public discourse

Goals of the Assignment

This assignment will help you better understand organizations in your field. The assignment should also help prepare you to enter the workforce as a more knowledgeable writer and to think critically, as well as communicate professionally. Lastly, the assignment should help you revise errors in organization, clarity, and rhetoric, as well as errors in grammar and mechanics. So, the goals of the assignment are to help you:

- research and understand organizations and people in your field;
- better understand the workplace history and culture;
- produce professional documents;
- practice following genre expectations for a high-level writing course.

The Format

This report *must* adhere to MLA, APA, or CMS guidelines and must be at least *1,750 – 2,500 words in length*. The report will be titled, typed in 12 point *Times New Roman (or similar font)*, single-spaced, with *1 inch margins* all the way around. Please follow the superstructure outlined in *Technical Communication* chapter 25. Please type the following statement and sign your name: "I understand and will uphold the ideals of academic honesty as stated in the Honor Code."

Project Deliverables

You will complete two deliverables for this project: a draft and an empirical research report.

Peer Feedback Questionnaire

On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest score, rate the following:

Front matter:

Introduction:

Research methods:

Discussion:

Conclusion:

Back matter:

Document design/visuals:

Grammar and mechanics (syntax, word choice, punctuation):

Overall score for the report:

Please answer these questions about the report:

Did you understand the report? If so, why? If not, why not?

Was the report clear? If so, why? If not, why not?

What did you like about the report?

What did you not like about the report?

Do you have any suggestions for the report to make it more effective?

Revision

You will have opportunities to revise your work throughout the writing process, and you will be able to revise *one individual assignment* after you have submitted your final draft. The revision is due with Project 3 on the day of our final exam. You may not use the revision due date as an extension for this assignment. I will average the grades from your original and your revised documents for your final assignment grade.