Unit I: Professional Development Project
Informational Investigative Report due February 8, 2016

Project Description
For this project, you will research and report on writing performed by professionals in your field. In carrying out this project, you will do primary research, secondary research, and field research, and you will compose memos, a professional inquiry letter, and an informational investigative report.

Stage 1: Describe Your Occupation (Memo – due 1/20)

Decide on an occupation you would like to pursue. Locate secondary resources that will help you answer the questions below, and write a brief summary of your findings in the form of a **1-2 page memo**. A good place to begin would be the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* [www.bls.gov/oco] for general information on positions in your professional field.

Consider the following questions:
- How would you describe your field or occupation (e.g., structural engineer)?
- How would you describe the specific position you are researching?
- What are the qualifications for the job?
- What are the duties of the job?
- What are the hierarchies in the workplace?
- What types of writing are done on the job?
- What are the various situations for which these types of writing are needed?

Use the Baylor University library system catalog, reference area, and electronic databases to locate and explore technical and professional writing resources in your field. These resources can include technical/professional writing handbooks specific to your field, research relevant to writing conventions in your field, and articles that address writing and document design issues in your particular field. The following technical writing journals are available through the Baylor library system:

> *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*
> *Intercom*
> *Journal of Business Communication*
> *Technical Communication Quarterly*

ALSO, you must find two **reputable** resources for professional writing in your field (not Wikipedia) and provide a one-paragraph description for each resource within this memo. Be sure to include appropriate citation information (use MLA unless discussed with me), enough information that I am able to find the source.

Stage 2: Write an Inquiry Letter and Interview a Professional (Letter – due 1/20 + Transcript/Notes*)

Write an **inquiry letter** to a professional working in your field to set up an interview with him or her (see Markel Ch. 9 for inquiry letter format). It is preferable that you interview this professional in person, but if that is not possible, you may set up a phone interview. The third and least preferable option is an email interview. You also should attempt to collect samples of a particular writing genre from the professional whom you interview. During the interview, ask about the following:

- The types of documents that s/he writes and the purposes and audiences of each type of document
- Sample documents that s/he would be willing to share with you to help you learn about a frequently used genre in your field

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- The steps s/he takes when writing a document
- How time and budget limitations affect his/her writing
- The amount of time s/he spends writing each day
- How and when s/he revises and edits his or her writing or the writing of others
- The types of electronic communications s/he engages in (e-mail, texts, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- The types of presentations that s/he gives, as well as the purposes and audiences for the presentations
- The frustrations that s/he encounters as a reader of documents within the field
- Valuable lessons learned about writing in this field
- The issues a young professional entering this field should consider

Either record your interview or take detailed notes during your interview. You must include these **<u>notes or a transcript</u>** of your interview with the Informational Investigative Report.
*The due date for interview is flexible, but its completion is recommended by 2/1 and *highly* recommended by 2/5.

Stage 3: Analyze Your Professional Writing Genre (Memo – due 2/1)

Use Anis Bawarshi's "Guidelines for Analyzing Genres" (on Canvas) to analyze <u>at least</u> two samples of <u>one</u> particular genre that you collected during your interview and/or while conducting secondary research. Write a brief summary of your findings in the form of a **<u>one-page memo</u>**. In your memo, describe the context in which the genre is used, identify the genre's textual patterns, and explain what the genre's textual patterns reveal about the context in which it is used (see Bawarshi handout, "Analyzing Genres," on Canvas). <u>Include excerpts</u> from the documents you analyze in your memo to illustrate your claims about the genre.

Stage 4: Write the Informational Investigative Report (Rough draft – due 2/5, final draft due – 2/8)

Write a **3-4 page, single-spaced, memo-style informational investigative report*** (consult Canvas for sample reports and Markel Ch. 12 for more information on informational reports). The audience for this project is me and your classmates. Your report should include the findings and insights gained from your primary research, secondary research, field research, and genre analysis. Some direct quotation should be used. Much of this information will be included in the other memos, but do not simply cut and paste paragraphs into this final report. Your goal is to integrate the information into a cohesive document. Your report should include the following sections:

- Identifying Information
- A Statement of Purpose
- Introduction and Objectives
- A Description of your Research Methods
- A Description of your Findings
- A Discussion of your Conclusions
- References
- Appendices: include your notes/transcript from your interview and the genre samples that you analyzed

*The length requirement includes the references (which should *not* be on a separate page), but not the appendices.

Turning in your Project
1. <u>Canvas:</u> Upload the Informational Investigative Report to Canvas by the beginning of class on 2/10
2. <u>In Class:</u> Turn in appendices (interview notes and genre samples) in a two-pocket folder.

The final project should be edited for wordiness and clarity. The report should have 1 inch margins and be formatted in block paragraphs. All sources should be cited correctly in MLA format to avoid plagiarism. While the majority of the grade will depend on the informative report, the rest of the materials will be considered supplemental information and will factor into the project grade. Neglecting to include any elements will negatively affect the final grade.