

PCJ 215: BUSINESS COMMUNICATION WEEKLY PROGRESS REPORT GUIDELINES

The major component of this course is your work with a nonprofit partner. This project is your midterm, final and substantial paper, all rolled into one. This is your job for the course. You're indispensable. People are depending on you to show up and put forth. This isn't the sort of thing that you can put off until the last minute.

But human nature being what it is, despite our good intentions, the immediate crisis—the test tomorrow, the paper due at week's end—tends to get more of our attention than the project that's due at the end of the term. The end of the term seems light years away at the term's start.

The project is actually a process, however. You'll be graded, not just on your final product, but also on how you managed the process. So you really have a series of deadlines throughout the term: one each week. There are several reasons for this, among them: Weekly deadlines will help you stay focused and spur you to continual thought and progress. They'll help you discover problematic aspects early on and help you correct them before they become major. Sharing through your weekly updates will enable you to tap your classmates and teacher for help: a pool with, collectively, great knowledge and experience who can help you find solutions, who will nurture and support you.

So each week, you'll give a progress update¹ to me and your classmates. You'll give me at least a page of writing. You'll update your classmates verbally.

Touch upon these things:

- What your project is—remind us.
- Why does it matter? Who is it going to help? How is it going to help?
- What's happened since your last update? How much time have you put in? Doing what?
- What do you have left to do? When will you have it done? Particularly emphasize what you'll do by your next report (next week). But include all remaining components and your timeframe for completing them. Do the best you can planning.

¹ This is vital to keep you on track.

- Share your successes and disappointments, hopes and fears. Everything will not turn out splendidly. That's OK. We learn from that, too—sometimes even more than from instantaneous success. Something is only a failure if we allow it to defeat us.
- What lessons have you learned?
- How will you build on your experiences to date, learn from what's going on at this time and adapt?

TIMELINE AT END OF EACH REPORT

You know when your ultimate deadline is. Now, working backward from there, build your timeline. Put down the set deadlines: those for the first draft, the second draft, the final. Remember that you need to test your product between polished draft and final. Don't forget to budget time to prepare your presentation. The key is to build in the steps necessary to get from where you are now to where you need to go. Adjust this with each weekly report, explaining what you've done and what you still need to do. You'll adjust and adapt as you go along: this isn't carved in stone. I won't hold you to it. But the outline will guide you and help you focus. It will let you – and I – see, at a glance, where you are now and where you still need to go to cross that finish line victoriously.

Feel free to include other information. This is an invaluable part of the journey and a great way to stay on track.