

Assignment Descriptions

Following you will find descriptions of the assignments due this quarter. I have listed the directions and the values for each assignment:

➤ class participation.....	1
➤ diagnostic essay (individual) (Credit (CR)).....	1
➤ communication improvement memo (and presentation) (individual) (CR)	1
➤ iFixit registration (individual AND group) (CR).....	2
➤ quizzes (individual) (20 points each).....	2
➤ iFixit guide doc specs and disassembled device (group) (CR).....	2
➤ Milestone 1a: Project Proposal (group) (CR)	2
➤ résumé (individual) (CR)	3
➤ Milestone 1b: Troubleshooting Guide and Flow Chart (group) (CR).....	3
➤ Milestone 2: Device Page (group) (CR)	3
➤ engineer interview memo (individual) (CR).....	4
➤ status report on iFixit project (individual) (CR)	4
➤ Milestone 3: Repair Guide Rough Draft and Peer Review (group) (CR)	5
➤ engineering recommendation report doc specs (group) (CR)	5
➤ memo rewrite (individual) (50 points)	5
➤ professional journal memo—(individual) (100 points)	5
➤ recommendation report draft (group) (CR)	6
➤ essay exam (individual) (200 points).....	6
➤ group presentation and .ppt printouts (group) (50 points – 10 point deduction per day late presentation or slide printout).....	6
➤ Milestone 4: Final Guides (group) (100 points – 25 point deduction per day late)	7
➤ engineering recommendation report (group) (100 points – 25 point deduction per day late)	7
➤ group evaluations (individual) (CR– 50 deduction for late or missing)	7

➤ class participation

Part of your grade will come from class participation and attendance. Arrive in class ready to contribute to the discussion. You may miss one class, no questions asked. After that a doctor's note will prevent the loss of 5 points per day missed. If you arrive late, check at the end of class to make sure I marked you present. I will excuse occasional lateness, but frequent lateness will affect your participation grade. We will also do occasional in-class assignments and quizzes. In-class work cannot be made up, but missing it will not result in an automatic fail.

VALUE: 25 points ✨

➤ diagnostic essay (individual) (Credit (CR))

I will assess the writing capabilities of the class through a diagnostic exam. I don't assign a grade to it, but it is my first impression of you—so do your best. (Note: You get a comment sheet for this essay; I keep the essays for a year.) ✨

➤ communication improvement memo (and presentation) (individual) (CR)

Each student will find an example of faulty technical communication, write a memo for it, and present it to the class. Faulty technical communication includes any type of business, education, or technological communication which confuses the reader, doesn't work, doesn't make sense, could harm the reader, and so on. You will sign up for a category in class; however, if you find a better example, come ask me if you can use that instead.

written requirement: You are writing this memo as an employee of the company or owner of the faulty communication. In a one-page, single-spaced memo (no more), directed to the writer or owner of the faulty example, you will include the following sections and headings after the memo headings:

✨ indicates the end of a specific description. If you do not see this symbol, you need to look at the following page for further directions.

- **Introduction to _____ (name the problem):** introduce the example, tell us how you found it, name the source, and state the purpose of the memo
- **Problem:** describe **3 specific faults** and explain how they are hurting communication (bullets make this section easier to read)
- **Solution:** explain specifically how you would fix each problem (often involves rewriting portions of the example) (bullets make this section easier to read)
- **Conclusion:** reiterate the importance of your suggested changes and ask for a specific action from the reader
- Finally, paperclip a **transparency copy** of the example to the back of the memo. You can get a transparency made at any local or on-campus print shop, including the print center in the library.

oral requirement: In a three minute oral presentation (practice for time), you will

- explain the problem
- offer a solution
- display the transparency for the class—some students choose to make transparencies of both the problem and the solution (Don't make a transparency of the memo.) NOTE: If we are in a smart room, you may bring a laptop and use the projector —> Attach a paper copy of the faulty communication and add a sticky note saying you will bring your laptop and use the projector on your presentation day.

IMPORTANT: Avoid on-line examples from faulty tech writing contests, joke sites, and so on. You need to recognize and solve the problem on your own. ✨

👉 **iFixit registration (individual AND group) (CR)**

Each group member must go to the iFixit website to register: http://www.ifixit.com/Wiki/Student_Deliverables

IMPORTANT: Please use your real name for your avatar. ✨

👉 **quizzes (individual) (20 points each)**

I give five quizzes during the quarter. They will primarily cover lecture notes and readings for the previous week or two (up to and including that day's reading), but expect to see items from any previous lecture or reading on technical style, grammar, mechanics. ✨

👉 **iFixit guide doc specs and disassembled device (group) (CR)**

So I can get an idea of your plans for the iFixit Guide, your group will

- bring your device, disassembled, to class to show me
- write a brief **memo of transmittal** with your team logo on it as well as all of the team members' names and initials in the memo heading. Include the hashtag number and device name in the subject line.
- print out and fill in the iFixit guide doc specs from my website, and keep copies for each group member
- **staple** the memo to the top of the doc specs (and don't forget **initials**). ✨

👉 **Milestone 1a: Project Proposal (group) (CR)**

Your group project this quarter consists of putting together a Guide for iFixit that will include a Device Page, a Troubleshooting Guide, and a Repair Guide for an electronic device. Examples include cellphones, iPods, digital cameras, and so on. To see sample projects, go to *iFixit.com*. Your project will provide a minimum of 5 repair guides for problems such as cracked screens, dead batteries, broken buttons, faulty logic boards, and so on.

Milestone 1a will tell iFixit and me your plans for the group project. Reread iFixit's Student Deliverables page at http://www.ifixit.com/Wiki/Student_Deliverables. Follow iFixit's directions for the proposal section of Milestone 1 using the formatting they require, and adding the following headings for me (**bold** all headings):

- **Introduction** (description of the project, purpose of the project, description of the audience, purpose of the memo)
- **Current Repair Information** (if none, list where you looked—list at least 5 websites)
- **Problems to Include in Troubleshooting Guide** (this section will require some research—include at least 5 problems, enough to connect your guides to)
- **List of Repair Guides** (minimum 5 hardware problems, but feel free to add others)

- **Schedule for Submitting Deliverables** (use a list or a table to estimate due dates for each Milestone)
- **Camera Availability** (list camera make and model, number of megapixels, and who will borrow the lighting kit and tripod).
- **Conclusion** (request permission to proceed with the project)

Use complete sentences and avoid subjective advertising language. Where appropriate, you may also use lists introduced by a sentence. You will

- limit the proposal to 1.5 pages
- place the team name and logo at the top, then correct memo format, then the iFixit header as specified on the Student Deliverables page
- email your proposal in .pdf format to iFixit—techwriting@ifixit.com—with a cc to me
- submit a paper printout of the proposal—**12 pt font minimum.** ✨

✎ **résumé (individual) (CR)**

Write a résumé including your contact information, education, and experience. Remember, the more information you include, the more feedback I can give you. Check my résumé tips handout on line for further help. The Career Services website also has some useful examples. (Note: I will keep the résumés until the day we go to Career Services. However, if you need it back for a job fair, interview, etc. let me know and I will get it to you sooner.) ✨

✎ **Milestone 1b: Troubleshooting Guide and Flow Chart (group) (CR)**

Your group will enter the information for the Troubleshooting Guide according to iFixit’s directions on their website. Use parallel grammar for the headings, complete sentences, consistent capitalization, and Standard American English.

In addition, you will submit a flow chart to me showing the anticipated order of disassembly of your device. This flowchart will help you figure out how to nest your prerequisites. You will also submit a paper printout of both the guide and the flowchart to me. Be sure to include a **memo of transmittal for the printout**. Refer to iFixit’s MacBook sample to see how to set up problem and cause headings. Check for the following:

- minimum 12-point font on all paper documents
- memo of transmittal with correct format and including group hashtag number next to the name (From-line)
- problems phrased specifically and as problems (“speaker goes dead” not just “speaker” or “faulty speaker”)
- causes phrased specifically (“weak signal” not just “signal”)
- solutions suggested (“To replace the X, refer to X-repair guide.”—or other sentence that can later be linked to the repair guides you write for iFixit)
- highlighted phrases or sentences which will become links to the repair guides
- flow chart in an easy-to-read format of your choice

And remember, all team memos need the team logo on them. ✨

✎ **Milestone 2: Device Page (group) (CR)**

For the device page, you will follow the directions on the Student Deliverables page and at minimum include the following:

- A photo with a caption briefly describing the device (include make, model, and type of device)
- A short sentence-style description to include make, model, function, and so on
- A section explaining how to distinguish it from similar devices

Use complete sentences and avoid subjective advertising language. Upload the information for the Device Page as directed on iFixit’s website, and print out a paper copy for me. ✨

✎ engineer interview memo (individual) (CR)

For this assignment, you will interview an engineer. You may interview a friend or relative, or you may call an engineering company. You may not use an engineering professor from Cal Poly. After the interview write me a memo—maximum one page, single-spaced, using paragraph style and subheadings as indicated—answering at least the following questions (you may add questions if you like):

Introduction to [Engineer's Name and Field]

- Who is your engineer and what company does he or she work for?
- What type of product/service does the company provide?
- What is your engineer's specific job?
- How long has this person worked in engineering?

Job Skills and Communication

- What job skills does this engineer find most useful for him/herself? For other engineers? (Ask for specific examples.)
- What percentage of this engineer's workday is spent in communication? What percentage is oral and what percentage is written?
- In which situations does this engineer recommend using which communication strategies (email, paper memos, letters, face-to-face communication, phone calls, etc.)?
- What advice can this engineer give you about communication skills and strategies?

Conclusion (now focusing on you, the student)

- Did you hear anything that you did not expect from this interview?
- Did this engineer give you any other useful advice?
- How will you use the information that this engineer gave you? (What will it motivate you to do?)

Note: Remember to use the strategies for writing effective memos: explicit purpose statement, concrete details, and so on. ✨

✎ status report on iFixit project (individual) (CR)

In a 2-page maximum, single-spaced status report, you will include the following sections and headings after the memo headings:

- **Introduction to** _____ [name of project]: In this section provide a brief description of the device, the goals of the project, and who your readers are
- **Work Completed:** Report what you and your group have done up to the due date, along with a **time log** (see sample on my website)
- **Work Awaiting Completion:** Describe what you and your group are planning to do
- **Complications:** Report problems your group has run into or may run into, along with solutions used or planned. If you have not run into any problems, say so.

Do not include individual work of fellow group members.

Use complete sentences and concrete details. Do not use the telegraphic style or the passive voice; you want to sound like you are working hard. Also, remember to construct each of your points in a parallel manner. Also remember to all the elements of an effective message. I will be forwarding the best status report from each group to iFixit.

Tip: use your class schedule and doc specs as references. They will help your memory, but they will not cover everything I expect to see. Don't forget research details and group work.

- address the report to me and iFixit using memo formatting
- use a subject line with hashtag and device name, ex: Subject: CPSU-DOE-W10S1G1 Nintendo Wii Status Report
- submit a paper printout to me.

Each student must turn in an individually written status report. ✨

✎ Milestone 3: Repair Guide Rough Draft and Peer Review (group) (CR)

iFixit uses the term “rough”; however, your Repair Guide draft still needs complete text, complete sentences, complete visuals, and complete proofreading. “Rough” indicates you expect outside feedback to change it. The more polished your draft is, the more useful your feedback will be.

To test the usability of your iFixit Guide, you will be having another group follow your directions for disassembling the device you are working with. We will be meeting in the computer lab that day.

For this assignment, you will

- follow the directions on iFixit’s website to enter the repair guide information
- print out **two copies** of the longest guide with the most prerequisites along with copies of any steps not included in that guide—one for me and one for the test group (12-point font)
- be sure the printout includes the tool list
- attach a memo of transmittal that lists all the guides you have written (remember to include the hashtag number)
- bring the assembled device
- bring all tools needed for disassembly. ✎

✎ engineering recommendation report doc specs (group) (CR)

Your group will fill out an submit doc specs for your recommendation report. See below for further details on the report. For this assignment you will

- write a brief **memo of transmittal** with your team logo on it as well as all of the team members’ names
- print out and fill in the engineering report doc specs from my website, and keep copies for each group member
- **staple** the memo to the top of the doc specs (and don’t forget **initials**). ✎

✎ memo rewrite (individual) (50 points)

You will submit a rewrite of one of the following: the engineer interview memo, the communication improvement memo, or the status report—your choice. Make the changes I asked for on the original draft using the assignment corrections sheet for help in deciphering the grading codes. (Feel free to ask me for help as well.) Staple the rewrite on top of the original assignment along with any earlier drafts with my comments. **Note:** Redoing an incomplete or incorrect assignment does not take the place of this rewrite. ✎

✎ professional journal memo—(individual) (100 points)

This assignment looks at some of the literature that will help you keep current in your field as your career advances. For this memo you will examine articles from **professional, peer reviewed journals in your field**. The journals must have peer review histories—if you can’t print out the review history, don’t use the article.

To complete the assignment you will need to select articles from two journals:

- one of the main peer-reviewed journals in your field from the past 12 months
- another of the peer-reviewed journals in your field or a related field from the last 3 years.

In a 1-page memo, addressed to me and using subheadings, analyze the articles separately, including the following information:

- the names of the journals
- the field(s) they come from (if it isn’t obvious from the names)
- the names of the articles you selected
- a brief summary of the articles’ contents. Be sure to include the topics, purpose, and final conclusions translated for a non-technical audience
- an explanation of how this information is relevant to your degree and the job you hope to have
- a reference section: full citations of both articles as they would appear in an APA-style reference list (see Figure 1 below)—this section may go on a separate page.

You will need to attach the following as well:

- A copy of the first page of each article
- A copy of the review history of the article **highlighted** (may appear on the first page).

McGregor, Seamus. (2007). The Advantages of Copper over PVC. *Journal of Applied Engineering in Agriculture*, 23(1), 5-11.

Figure 1: Sample journal citation in APA format ✨

👉 **recommendation report draft (group) (CR)**

Each group member will bring a copy of the recommendation report draft to class for your peers to read. For example, if you have five people in your group, your group will have five copies in class. The more complete your draft is, the more help you will get from your peers. ✨

👉 **essay exam (individual) (200 points)**

You will take an essay exam in this class on the date specified in the class schedule. The exam will last 50 minutes. I recommend that you concentrate your study on the following:

- Style and grammar notes from the textbook and lectures
- The Paramedic Method
- Formats and strategies of effective messages.

You may also bring and use

- your notes
- your textbook. ✨

👉 **group presentation and .ppt printouts (group) (50 points – 10 point deduction per day late presentation or slide printout)**

Share the results of your recommendation report with the class. Describe your reader, product, minimum specifications, evaluative criteria, findings, and final recommendation. You will use Microsoft *PowerPoint* or an equivalent software program to create slides. The presentation should last ten minutes. Practice beforehand so you don't go over or under. You may use notes, but don't just read them to us. Make your presentation interesting and informative, but please don't do anything that will disrupt other classes in the building.

The presentation must include enough slides to adequately illustrate your main points. Remember, effective visuals for an oral presentation should be larger and more simplified than those in a written report or on a website. Be sure to reread your notes on effective slides. I am specifically looking for A-E slides.

👉 I will need a **printout** of your slides. Use the 6-slide per page layout (Try this: choose print—under type, select PowerPoint—under *print what*, select *handouts*: **6 per page**. Grayscale is fine.)

Feel free to include fun activities: Ideas from past presentations include debates, class votes, games.

IMPORTANT: I will check out a projector, but you must order any other equipment you want from Media Distribution Services (laptop?). If you are using a Mac, be sure to bring the small connector cord. Remember to place orders with Media Distribution a couple of weeks in advance so they can contact me in plenty of time to verify my signature. You can find them in 02-09 and 10-125.

Consider this a **formal occasion**; dress appropriately. No sagging, no navels, no flip-flops, no athletic shoes, and so on—dress as though you were going to a job interview at a conservative company. ✨

✎ **Milestone 4: Final Guides (group) (100 points – 25 point deduction per day late)**

You will have all of your text and photos complete, polished, and submitted to iFixit on the due date. You will also return the drafts with my comments for the following:

- Device Page
- Troubleshooting Guide
- Repair Guides

Be sure to include a memo of transmittal with the hashtag number on it. ✨

✎ **engineering recommendation report (group) (100 points – 25 point deduction per day late)**

You and your group will write a short analytical report recommending a technical product. For example you may choose a new surface for a slippery walkway, replace a type of door or gate for Housing, recommend new copiers for the library—you decide. You will write this report for a real person on campus (but not in this class), and I will send it to that person by school mail. Choose a reader you can easily contact for further information and a topic that will fit within the page limit.

Your report (2 stapled copies)—body limited to 7, single-spaced pages—will employ the following:

- A letter of transmittal on the primary reader's copy AND a memo of transmittal on my copy
- An introduction covering these elements:
 - Topic with significance and relevant background
 - Purpose of report
 - Decision making process—minimum specifications, options (no more than 2), evaluation criteria, research methods
- Body: discussion of options in terms of criteria
- Final summary and recommendations plus summary table
- Appropriate visuals and document design
- A list of references including empirical (minimum 3) and print/electronic (3 minimum) sources

Off-limits topics: bike racks, cell phone plans, party-oriented products, anything to do with food services on campus, anything illegal

Criteria limits: Avoid subjective criteria—appearance, taste, smell, feel, and so on—unless you clear them with me first. Avoid general criteria—quality, workmanship, durability, ease of use, and so on—unless you define them specifically and concretely; you will probably need to include subcriteria. Your goal is for all criteria to be measurable.

✎ **REMINDER:** use the **review checklist** from my website to make sure you do not leave out any items. I strongly recommend you drop by my office to see samples. ✨

✎ **group evaluations (individual) (CR– 50 deduction for late or missing)**

You will fill out one group member evaluation form for each member of your group (excluding yourself). You can find the forms on my website. Although I strongly encourage you to submit group evaluations on the final day of regular classes, you may bring the completed evaluations to my office before the end of your final exam period. ✨