Assignment #2:
A2 Professional Correspondence

Due Dates:
Draft A2.1 due 2/4
Draft A2.2 due 2/8 (Email correspondence sent)

Assignment Description:

This assignment asks you to compose various correspondences addressed to the professional Technical Communicator who we will interview for our "What is Technical Communication?" Project. The details of the content needed in these professional correspondences will be delineated below, but this assignment will ask you to learn some of the etiquette and formal features of professional correspondence. This assignment will comprise of two main correspondences: 1) An initial email correspondence, and 2) a thank you letter after the project is completed (when you turn in your A3: Memo Report—the letter will be part of the A3 grade).

The "What is Technical Communication?" Project

Since the purpose and content of your correspondence with this professional contact will revolve around the opening project in our course, we need to understand what it involves. Our goal in this first part of our class will be to learn about what technical communication is as a field and what its skills and job duties entail.

To accomplish this goal, we are going to two sources: 1) our textbook, websites and whatever other literature we can find on the subject of what technical communication is; and 2) actual technical communicators who work in business, industry, or non-profits. We will use this A2 Professional Correspondence assignment to tap into this second source. This A2 assignment will also help us learn about and practice some of the principles of appropriate and effective professional correspondence.

The project revolves around these three questions:

1. What is technical communication? (What characterizes it? What is its subject matter? What might distinguish it from other forms of communication? Why even is it important?)
2. What forms does technical communication take? What are the common kinds of texts (or genres) and tasks do technical communicators engage in?
3. What tools and skills are needed to produce these various kinds of technical communication?

The culmination of this project will be the production of a Memo Report (Assignment A3) in which you report on what you found out from your investigations of both of our sources for information about technical communication.

Email Correspondence

In this email correspondence, I want you to put into practice the ideas of appropriate and professional email correspondence you read about in Chapter 16 as you communicate with our professional contact. Your request in this email is for his assistance in learning more about Technical Communication so that you can complete this class project. I don't want to set any

sort of exact template for what you should say or the order for what you will say, but your email should seek to accomplish these things:

- Identify who you are (and perhaps establish your ethos/credibility)—use/adapt your personal description! Attach your resume to share more about yourself with them (clarifying that you are not seeking a job).
- Describe why you are contacting them and what sort of assistance they can provide for you.
- Detail this assistance you need by asking them to answer **one or two key questions** you hope they will address when they come to visit.
- Thank them for their willingness to help you
- Whatever else you think is appropriate and needed
  Note: As I get our interview visit arranged, I will tell you the exact date of the visit so you can reference that date in your email correspondence.

> **Readings/Resources for A2:**
> Email and Instant Messaging: Chapt. 16 pp. 355-369
> Review our textbook resource page on Email correspondence—especially explore the additional weblinks and models (good and bad)

Professional Letter

The last piece of writing for this assignment will be a thank you letter to your professional contact written in business letter format. This letter will thank them for visiting our classroom, identify a couple things in particular that you found useful in their presentation for your A3 project, and wish them well in their work (or whatever closing you think appropriate).

Reading: Chapter 17 covers Workplace Letters and details business letter format. You might also look at the resource site from out textbook on Workplace Letters.

A2 Deliverables:

1. cc: copy of email correspondence sent to lirvin@alamo.edu (with resume attached)

2. Open up your Sent folder in your mail, read your email correspondence and print a copy to turn in to me. Print a copy of your revised resume and turn in the two together.

3. Thank you letter, put in business letter format (sent with A3 Memo)