ENG 4/572: Project Management in Technical Communication
Mondays, 1:00-2:45
AH 204
Spring Semester, 2008
4 credits
http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/haasg/

Professor’s Contact Information
Dr. Gretchen Haas
201N Armstrong Hall
gretchen.haas@mnsu.edu
(507) 389-5506

Office Hours
Mondays, 3:00 – 6:00
Wednesdays, by appointment
Feel free to use my office hours for “drop-in” appointments. I am also available to meet outside of office hours if you contact me in advance to arrange an appointment.

About the Course
“Project Management in Technical Communication,” or “Project Management” for short, is a course designed to prepare students for technical project management by simulating a project management experience. Learning will occur in this course through a number of methods including the simulated experience, reading course texts, working with classmates in “project management roundtables,” producing project documentation, and reflecting on the project management experience in writing. Since the course is worth four credits and meets weekly for only fifty minutes at a time, students should be independent and motivated. The learning experiences of the course have been structured so that students will find themselves learning a great deal outside of the fifty-minute class meeting. Project management is alternately known as a discipline and an art. Thus, while students will learn the tools of the project management trade (the discipline), they will also learn from the experience (the art). Since project management skill is ultimately crafted through experience, this course is intended to provide an initial project management experience for students. In support of the intent to foster development through experience, I require reflective writing in the course so that students can have an opportunity to overtly reflect on simulated project events and to provide rationale for their project-based responses and decisions, thus training students how to think and reason as project managers.

Texts

Custom text titled “Project Management” available from MSU bookstores ($77 new/$57.80 used). This text is comprised of readings from two separate texts, which you may purchase in lieu of the custom text:

Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty is not tolerated in this classroom or in any classroom at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Committing academic dishonesty in any portion of your work for this course is grounds for course failure.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
If you are a student with a documented disability, please see me as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and/or contact the Disability Services Office at (507) 389-2825 (V) or (800) 627-3529 (MRS/TTY).
Learning Objectives
• Understand a basic technical project development lifecycle
• Understand management processes of technical system development
• Understand the function and purpose of project management
• Be able to analyze a situation that requires a decision, to make a decision, and to articulate a rationale for that decision
• Be able to manage processes related to change management and risk mitigation
• Create and manage a project timeline
• Manage a project
• Understand the utility of project management practices for a project’s success
• Understand the implications of the project you are managing for a company’s employees, product, culture and ongoing business practices
• Learn how to work together with people – the people you manage as well as the people who manage you – to enable their success
• Value the management role and recognize the vast influence it has – for good and bad – in organizations
• Gain an ability to assess project management practices and be able to gauge their fittedness for your own project management philosophy and style

Assignments and Grades
All assignments (project documentation, reflective writing) are due to me via e-mail before the beginning of class. Quizzes are to be completed in D2L before the beginning of class. The class schedule indicates the weeks that assignments are due and there will be a quiz due each day that assigned reading is due.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Category</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade (Undergraduate)</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade (Graduate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Documentation</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflective Writing</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation in and Preparation for In-Class Activities</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Readiness Quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitation of a Project Management Roundtable Session</td>
<td>0%*</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Table 1: Breakdown of Final Grade Calculation
* Groups of two to three undergraduate students may request to facilitate a project management roundtable session and receive supplemental credit for that work, therefore possibly earning more than 100% in the course.

Due to the simulation involved in this course, assignments should not be turned in significantly ahead of time or you may miss some key information that would contribute to the assignment. I do not have any specific requirements regarding assignment formatting because the way you format your assignments will be part of your grade; however, I expect that your assignment will be formatted in such a way as to enhance my comprehension of its content. I expect all assignments to be submitted without spelling and grammar errors. If you have an excessive number of errors in your assignment, I will return it to you for revision without grading it and you must turn in your revised assignment to receive a grade. Attending class meetings is important and your failure to attend will result in a lower grade.

The evaluation criteria for project documentation and reflective writing will be elucidated in a separate document. For undergraduate students:
• Work of definitely superior quality will merit an A
• Work of a better-than-average level of performance will merit a B
• Work of an average level of performance will merit a C
• Work of a below average level of performance will merit a D
• Work an unacceptable level of performance will merit an F

For graduate students:
• Meeting the criteria of each assignment will merit a B for your work.
• Mastering the criteria of each assignment will earn an A for your work.
• Should you fall short of meeting the criteria for the assignments, you will receive a C for your work.
• The Graduate School reserves D and F grades for grossly substandard performance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Assigned Reading</th>
<th>Project Manager Roundtable (PMR)</th>
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</table>
| **Week One**  
January 14  
**Introduction** | • Introduction to Course  
• Introduction to Project Management  
• Introduction to Project | • Syllabus  
• Introduce the course  
• Introduce yourselves  
• Take questions about the course |  
| **Week Two*  
January 21  
* no class  
**Initiation** | No Class  
 No Class | • “An Overview of Project Management” (Fundamentals), pp. 1-23  
• “A Brief History of Project Management” (Art), 2-17  
• “Communication and Relationships” (Art), pp. 170-184 | No Class |  
| **Week Three**  
January 28  
**Initiation** | • Overview of initiation phase  
• Project Charter | • “The Role of the Project Manager” (Fundamentals), pp. 24-30  
• “Planning the Project” (Fundamentals), pp. 31-43  
• “Developing a Mission, Vision, Goals, and Objectives for the Project” (Fundamentals), pp. 44-55 |  
| **Week Four**  
February 4  
**Planning** | • “Software Project Planning” (Applied) pp. 16-32  
• “How Not to Annoy People: Process, Email and Meetings” (Art), pp. 186-204 | Project management documentation templates |  
| | | | • What are your impressions of the people on your team now having met all of them? What accounts for your impressions?  
• Do you anticipate needing to manage any of them in different ways?  
• Have you identified any personnel “red flags” for which you’ll need to be on the look-out? |
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<tr>
<td>Week Five</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>• Overview of planning phase&lt;br&gt;• Statement of work (SOW)&lt;br&gt;• Work breakdown structure (WBS)</td>
<td>• “Using the Work Breakdown Structure to Plan a Project” (Fundamentals), pp. 56-68&lt;br&gt;• “Estimation” (Applied), pp. 34-51</td>
<td>Project management software</td>
<td>Project charter due</td>
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<td>Project management roundtable (PMR) (PMR)</td>
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<td>Week Six</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>• Preliminary estimates&lt;br&gt;• Change management plan&lt;br&gt;• Risk management plan</td>
<td>• “Scheduling Project Work” (Fundamentals), pp. 69-80&lt;br&gt;• “Producing a Workable Schedule” (Fundamentals), pp. 81-99&lt;br&gt;• “Managing the Project Team” (Fundamentals), pp. 128-139</td>
<td>Project management resources on-line</td>
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<td>Week Seven</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Project Schedule</td>
<td>• “Project Schedules” (Applied), pp. 54-72&lt;br&gt;• “The Truth about Schedules” (Art), pp. 22-38.&lt;br&gt;• “Change Control,” (Applied), pp. 138-147</td>
<td></td>
<td>How would you have responded to the exchange among Jack, Royce, and Tim? &lt;br&gt;How will you respond to Cynthia’s messages regarding Nate’s non-responsiveness?</td>
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<td>March 3</td>
<td>Execute and Control</td>
<td>• “What to Do with Ideas Once You Have Them” (Art), pp. 108-125&lt;br&gt;• Skim “Software Requirements” (Applied), pp.117-138</td>
<td>Project management offices: valuable or a passing trend?</td>
<td>Project plan (statement of work [SOW], work breakdown structure [WBS], schedule, change management plan, risk mitigation plan) due</td>
<td>How would you proceed to resolve the potential requirements problem?</td>
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<td>Week Nine</td>
<td>Execute and Control</td>
<td>• “Project Control and Evaluation” (Fundamentals), pp. 100-112</td>
<td>Programmer culture</td>
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<td>March 17</td>
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<td>• “How to Make Things Happen” (Art), pp. 252-269</td>
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<td>Week Ten</td>
<td>Execute and Control</td>
<td>• Execute and Control</td>
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<td>Project status report due</td>
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<td>March 24</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Project Plan Management</td>
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<td>• Project Status Reporting</td>
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<td>• Dealing with Personnel Issues</td>
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<td>• Risk Mitigation Process</td>
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<td>• Change Control Process</td>
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<td>Week Eleven</td>
<td>Execute and Control</td>
<td>Skim “Design and Programming” (Applied), pp. 132-170</td>
<td>Managing people, boosting morale, and team building</td>
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<td>How will you respond to Jack’s note about Tim being pulled away for other work?</td>
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<td>Week</td>
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| **Week Twelve**  
April 7  
**Execute and Control** | • Execute and Control  
• Project Plan Management  
• Project Status Reporting  
• Dealing with Personnel Issues  
• Risk Mitigation Process  
• Change Control Process | • “How to Make Good Decisions” (Art), pp. 150-168  
• “What To Do When Things Go Wrong” (Art), pp. 206-228  
• Selections from “Middle-Game Strategy” (Art), pp. 280-291 | Project status report due |  |
| **Week Thirteen**  
April 14  
**Execute and Control** | • Execute and Control  
• Project Plan Management  
• Project Status Reporting  
• Dealing with Personnel Issues  
• Risk Mitigation Process  
• Change Control Process | **Skim** “Software Testing” (Applied), pp. 172-229 |  | This week was a whirlwind of activity. In retrospect, is there any way the stress of this week could have been prevented? Do you think the approach taken by the team was the right approach? |
| **Week Fourteen**  
April 21  
**Close-Out** | • Execute and Control  
• Project Plan Management  
• Project Status Reporting  
• Dealing with Personnel Issues  
• Risk Mitigation Process  
• Change Control Process | “Power and Politics” (Art), pp. 320-341 | Continuing education in project management | Project status report due | • What is your response to Roxie’s change request and the apparently low morale that surfaced after the team learned about her request?  
• What is your response to Jack’s and Jenna’s questions about what to do on Monday: more bug fixes or another build? |
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| Week Fifteen  
April 28  
Close-Out | • Overview of close-out phase  
• Project close-out document  
• Transition to product support (project to product) | “End-Game Strategy” (Art), pp. 294-317                                             |              | • How do you think you need to prepare for the go/no go meeting next week on Tuesday?  
What materials should you bring with you to that meeting and what materials might you think about sending to the attendees in advance? What are your objectives going into that meeting? What do you think the customers’ primary concerns will be going into this meeting? How will you address those concerns?  
• What messages, and to whom, do you think you would have had to send out regarding the project this week?  
• What messages, and to whom, do you anticipate having to send next week? |              |                                                                                       |
| Finals Week  
Thursday, May 8  
12:30 – 2:30 pm | • Project close-out document due                                          |                                                                   |              |                                                                                       |