Assignment #3
Journal Investigation
ENG 673

Description
In this assignment, you’ll work together in small groups of two-to-four people to explore and analyze periodical publications in the fields of technical and business communication. While the purpose of the fourth assignment (annotated bibliography) is to spur your exploration of technical communication research and theory from your individual perspective, this project is intended to spur your exploration of technical communication research and theory from a macro, journal-based perspective. At the end of this assignment, you should understand what constitutes recent research in the field (through the lens of your particular journal[s]) as well as to understand the publication record of each journal you analyzed. While you should focus on the last five-to-ten years of each journal’s publication, it would also serve you well to review earlier issues of the journal, which will help you to understand how it has evolved throughout time and where it sites itself at present.

Your study of journals – a text-based method of research – will be both descriptive and analytical. While I want you to identify some basic characteristics of each journal, I also want you to thematically analyze the journal for how it fits into our field. The outcome of this project will be a descriptive and analytical profile of each journal your group chooses to study.

Journals you and your group may opt to explore include but are not limited to the following:
- Technical Communication
- Technical Communication Quarterly
- Journal of Business and Technical Communication
- Journal of Technical Writing and Communication
- Journal of Business Communication
- Business Communication Quarterly
- IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication

As you prepare your profile of each journal, consider the following questions:
- Who currently edits the journal? Who has edited the journal in the past?
- Who is on the journal’s editorial board? How has the board changed over time?
- When was the journal initially published? What was the impetus for the journal’s initial publication?
- Is the journal associated with any organization?
- Where is the journal indexed?
- Which authors has the journal published frequently?
- Which theories are predominantly cited in articles published in the journal?
- Which research methods tend to be used in articles published in the journal?
- What are subjects/issues of recurring interest in the journal?
- Has the journal published any special/thematic issues? If so, what were the topics of those issues?
- Identify a few articles that exemplify the journal’s focus/concerns at different points in time.
- How can you make sense/tell the story of this journal’s record of publication?
- Overall, what are the concerns of the journal and how have those concerns evolved? When did that evolution occur? What are some of the factors that led to that evolution?

Due date
Each group will prepare an approximately twenty-minute long presentation for class on Tuesday, October 23. Please also prepare a hand-out that summarizes the journals you analyzed that your classmates can take home and use as a reference in the future.