

# Project 2: Professional Profile Package

## English 3840j - Writing, Reading, and Rhetoric in the Professions

### Introduction

In the first unit of this course, we've learned a great deal about how conventions of communities and genres within those communities can influence how we write, especially in terms of what makes certain ways of writing appropriate for a given situation. The readings in the second unit of our book are meant familiarize you with conventions of document design in professional genres (resumes, cover letters, LinkedIn). But we'll also continue to use the writing theory language we've been introduced to. Accordingly, we'll still be talking a lot about ideas like **transfer**, **discourse communities**, **genre**, **purpose**, **audience**, and **rhetorical situation** in this unit, but we'll also be learning some explicit strategies for composing appropriately designed texts. Your goal for this project is to take what you've learned from the course readings and apply that to a specific writing situation: applying for a job in your field or preparing materials for a graduate school program.

Rather than trying to imagine a hypothetical situation for this task, I'd like you to identify an actual job opening or graduate program that coincides with your professional goals. Doing so will allow you to study the **rhetorical situation** you will be responding to in your writing as well as provide you with the opportunity to become familiar with the audience(s), purposes, conventions, and discourse communities of *your* professional field. An important lesson you should gain from this assignment, as well as the course as a whole, is that the more you know about the social contexts surrounding a writing task, the more successful you will be as a writer.

This project is made up of 4 parts: a professional or academic resume and cover letter (or statement of purpose), both geared toward a specific job opening or academic program in your field, a [LinkedIn](#) profile which you will create with material from your new resume, and a reflective essay written in the context of this course and the readings from the course so far.

### Professional Resume and Cover Letter/Statement of Purpose

One of the first requirements of this project is that you locate a sample resume and cover letter/statement of purpose from a professional in your field and analyze it. We'll work on this in class (10/2) but you'll need to start looking for a good example immediately. This activity should help you begin to start noticing conventions that are unique to your field as well as provide a model for your own writing. Look for a sample that is successful, one written by someone in your field you want to emulate. Where to look? It would be ideal if you could make contact with a working professional in your field, as this will help you in

Projects 2 and 3, but it's not completely necessary. You can also find examples online, but make sure you're critical of what you find.

Your analysis should attempt to determine certain conventions of the resume and cover letter genres within this particular profession. What is valued and given priority in these documents? What kind of experience is highlighted? What makes this document successful in terms of both content and visual design?

This analysis should help you start thinking about your own resume and what kinds of experiences you want to highlight. Analyzing model resumes in your field will provide you with some general information about the **discourse community** your profession belongs to, but your writing should also be highly influenced by the rhetorical situation of a job advertisement or academic program you're responding to. You should look for a job opening using an online search engine such as [monster.com](http://monster.com) or [indeed.com](http://indeed.com). For academic programs, check out academic program websites. Once you settle on a specific opening, you'll want to pay close attention to the language used in the advertisement. What kind of candidate is this employer looking for? What experiences, skills, and education do they seem to value? Looking closely at the language they use should help you write both your resume and cover letter. Remember also that your cover letter is essentially an argument for what you can do for the company, rather than what the company can do for you. Your letter should highlight the skills and experience you bring to the table, as well as your appropriateness for the opening and should be written as a formal business letter, with a conventional header, salutation, body and closing.

Statements of purpose for academic programs are also guided by some of these conventions, but they have their own particularities that we can talk about one-on-one or in small groups. One of the most important conventions of the Statement of Purpose is demonstrating a knowledge of the field, its central issues, debates, and methodologies, alongside your academic goals—i.e. what and why you want to study in the discipline.

### **My Criteria for the Resume and Cover Letter**

- Cover letter is written as a **professional** letter, with appropriate header, salutation, body, closing, etc.
- Cover letter makes a strong argument by making specific claims concerning the candidate's qualifications for a position and providing support for those claims using detailed evidence.
- The cover letter's argument is well organized with appropriate forecasting and topic statements.

- Cover letter strives for original rather than formulaic structure and language within the genre conventions.
- Cover letter uses appropriate and professional tone and style.
- Resume contains typical elements: e.g. education, employment (work experience), contact information, etc.
- Resume is organized appropriately according to purpose and genre conventions
- Both documents follow standard conventions for spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- Both documents follow principles of good visual design.

### **My Criteria for the Resume and Statement of Purpose**

- Statement of Purpose (SOP) responds to instruction or guidelines specific to program's admission requirements. The genre is usually a mix of personal letter/personal essay genre conventions.
- SOP makes a strong argument for the candidate's qualifications for the academic program by making specific claims about his/her past academic experience and future goals of study.
- SOP demonstrates knowledge of the field of study, including its central issues, debates, methodologies, etc.
- SOP is well organized with appropriate forecasting/topic statements.
- SOP strives for original rather than formulaic structure and language.
- SOP uses appropriate and professional tone/style.

### **Creating a LinkedIn Profile**

This element of the project is fairly straightforward. Using material you've gathered for your resume regarding education, skills, experience, etc., you'll create and publish a working profile on [LinkedIn](#), the social network site for professionals. To receive credit for this part of the project, you'll need to complete all 5 of the editing steps associated with creating a new profile, including: "Basics," "Education," "Experience," "Photo," and "Skills & Expertise." Once you've completed your profile, you don't need to send me any additional documents, just be sure to include a link to your profile in your reflective essay.

### **Reflective Essay**

While the audience for your resume, cover letter and LinkedIn profile have been employers and other professionals in your field, for the reflective essay you are writing to only two people: yourself and me, the instructor. Think of this essay as a response to this assignment. What did you learn from the course readings in this unit that helped you understand how to create a successful professional package? What concepts, in particular, were helpful?

What do you know about the discourse community of your field or profession after doing this assignment that you didn't know before? How was your analysis of the sample resume helpful (or not)? What principles of visual design went into the creation of resume? In short, what did you gain from doing this assignment? Your essay should include a link to the job posting your resume and cover letter are responding to as well as a link to your LinkedIn profile.

### **My Criteria for the Reflective Essay**

- Essay demonstrates an understanding and familiarity with concepts from the course readings and applies those concepts to your own writing processes.
- Essay includes a summary of your sample resume analysis and identifies specific conventions of the discourse community gained from your analysis. What did you notice about your sample resume and cover letter/statement of purpose? What did you gain from your analysis? How did you apply that new knowledge to your own process?
- Essay is well organized with forecasting and topic statements.
- Essay recounts and reflects on your writing processes for this project
- Essay follows standard conventions for spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- Links to your LinkedIn profile and job advertisement/graduate program are integrated into the essay.

### **Length Requirements**

Resume: 1-2pp.

Cover Letter: 1-2 pp., 300-600 words

Reflective Essay: 1-2 pp., 300-600 words

### **Important Dates**

10/2: Bring sample resume and cover letters to class

10/4: Cover letter and resume drafts due for peer review

10/7-10/9: Professional Package with Reflective Essay and LinkedIn Account due