

Guidelines for BUS 161B team projects

These team-based projects are designed to help you integrate the learning from the class lectures and additional readings (textbook, articles, cases, etc.). The projects should be interesting to all team members and help all students understand how the topics we discuss in class are relevant to the “real world” and what is currently happening in companies. You will have several interim deliverables as well as a final presentation. In this document, you will find explanations and guidelines for each of the deliverables as well as some general hints and tips for writing and researching.

PLEASE discuss with me all issues, questions, concerns, obstacles, or whatever else you need some direction or help with during the course of your work and research. DO NOT wait until the end of the semester or the few days before something is due.

Project Focus – Choice 1

Choose a company from a list that I provide and research and evaluate their design, structure, culture and any recent changes they have gone through. You should draw on the learning and discussions in class to understand their overall design. Choose one area to go into depth – culture, organizational structure (including design challenges they face and have overcome, or not), or managing a large change process.

The basic premise of the project is to focus on the internal elements of a particular company - structure, design and culture. The focus of the project will be to integrate and make clear how the various aspects of structure, design and culture interrelate. You will have to make sound analyses of **why** the leaders made the decisions they did about how to organize themselves. The analyses should be related to the environment (competition, industry, resources, etc.) as well as to strategy. This project should reflect an integrative perspective and an understanding of many of the subjects we discuss in class.

You will also need to describe any changes that have happened within the company in the last five years and relate them back to what we discuss in class about organizational change and the internal structure, design, and culture. The discussion of change will include what the changes are, how they affect the organization, and how they are being managed internally. You can include additional information, such as why the organizational went through the changes, topics that will be discussed in class throughout the semester.

The final deliverable and presentation will include a short paper that includes your findings and analyses (as described above). This paper will be no more than 8 pages in length (double spaced, twelve point font). There will also be a short presentation of 5 minutes that each team makes, based on their findings.

To help keep you on track, there will be some interim deliverables throughout the semester.

Project Choice 2: Water for Elephants project

Read the Campus Reading Selection book, Water for Elephants. Then, examine and describe the circus presented in the book as an organization with structure, design, culture, management, leadership, and an external environment that it has to manage. You should provide an overall description of the circus, briefly explaining all of the above characteristics and parts of it. Then choose one area – **structure**, or **culture** and all they entail – to describe in detail and evaluate/analyze, based on what we have talked about in class.

You will need to do additional research into circuses, and other similar organizations, to understand your initial ideas about what is going on with **The Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth**. There are a lot of external context and social considerations that come up in the book and you are welcome to draw on them for analyses and connections to the internal circus elements. Feel free to do research into these elements as well, as long as you are able to describe the influence they have on the organization.

The final deliverable and presentation will include a short paper that includes your findings and analyses (as described above). This paper will be no more than 8 pages in length (double spaced, twelve point font). There will also be a short presentation of 5 minutes that each team makes, based on their findings.

To help keep you on track, there will be some interim deliverables throughout the semester.

Deliverable 1: Project Choice and Topic

Your team will hand in a one to two paragraph description of the organization you choose and a brief statement of why you chose it. You should also include some discussion of how you intend to focus the project – are there particular areas you are interested in? A major change the company went through recently? Or something else of specific importance.

Due: September 17

Points: 10

Deliverable 2: Project Outline and Final Goal

This will be a description of what your final deliverable will be (poster, or other visual-type display), and a one-two page outline that details the **sections** of the project you intend to write, with a one to two sentence description of each section and what will be included in it, along with a **preliminary reference** list – you can add to this later, but you should have a good start on it at this point.

This can also be helpful in splitting up the work among the team members. You may want to include a one page listing of how the work is being split up, in case there are any issues with team contributors.

Due: October 13

Points: 10

Deliverable 3: Progress Report

I know how easy it is to procrastinate, especially for things that are not due until the end of the semester. SO, I want to help you avoid that problem! Approximately one month before the final project is due, I would like a 2-3 page progress report. You should follow the outline that you handed in before, unless it has changed – then, we should have discussed and you should include an updated outline with the progress report. Include a one paragraph description of what has been accomplished, and what is yet to be done per section. Also, include an updated reference list. This is the time to raise any challenges or questions you may have about accomplishing the goals that you had originally set forth.

Due: November 3

Points: 20

Final Project

See the above description for more detail. We will talk throughout the semester in class about the report and any questions you have. I will also set aside time during class sessions throughout the semester for you to meet in your teams and work on the project.

Final Due: December 1

Points: 50 – these points will be 25 for the short paper and 25 for the presentation.

Research Tips

Many of you have already done research projects in other classes, so you should be familiar with some of the basics, but just in case... All material you use in finding your information and coming to conclusions **MUST BE CITED throughout whatever written document includes reference to or information from other sources**. Plus, there must be a full reference list at the end of the document, matching the citations that were included throughout. I am not particular about APA or MLA format, but choose

one and stick to it. Be consistent. You must also use **more than two sources** – i.e. the company website and wikipedia are not adequate sources of information. A few more tips:

- When you find an article online, either through the library website or another source, the citation (reference) is not the database or the website where you found the link to the article. The citation is the ORIGINAL article – author, title, original publication (like a newspaper or magazine), date.
- You need only include a url in a citation if it is a purely online source, like CNET or another online publication. If this is the case you must include the date the site was accessed.
- For this project you should not be using “academic” or “scholarly” resources. You should be using business and mass press type sources, as well as books and appropriate online sources.
- Be careful about purely online sources – many are NOT credible.

We will review many of these things in class, and feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions, but please be careful about sources and citations.

If you can talk to someone within the company you are studying, so much the better. Make sure you write down (or record if possible) the conversations and are able to cite them appropriately.

If you would like to do surveys or other kinds of field research, please check with me and we will develop an appropriate way to conduct this kind of study.

Links:

- library research help: <http://www.sjlibrary.org/research/index.htm>
- library electronic databases: <http://www.sjlibrary.org/research/databases/index.htm>

Writing Tips and Guidelines

Writing is a large part of the project and a VERY important part of succeeding in business. I am a stickler for good grammar and sentence structure. I will mark off for writing mistakes, especially those that are commonly made and that are glaringly obvious. A few examples:

- “its” versus “it’s”
- Incorrect usage of capitalization – one does not capitalize words simply because they are important, for example. There are lots of other mistakes that people make here.
- Incorrect usage of apostrophes. Plural words do NOT have apostrophes, simply because they end in “s”.

Links: the writing center is a very helpful resource and I urge you to go if you are not comfortable writing in English. <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>

I recommend that everyone have a copy of Strunk and White's "The Elements of Style". It is small and cheap and easy to find helpful information for all kinds of writing issues. Amazon link here: <http://www.amazon.com/Elements-Style-Fourth-William-Strunk/dp/020530902X>

Team dynamics and feedback

There will be an opportunity for all team members to evaluate each other on multiple dimensions – professionalism, quality of work, communications/involvement, and overall contribution.

PLEASE bring up any team issues as soon as they come up so we can deal with them promptly. We have all worked in teams where certain members freeload or carry all the work. Neither will be acceptable in this class, and dealing with concerns early on almost always serves to put a quick end to the issues. I am happy to help resolve these situations, as I know they can be problematic and tricky for teams to deal with.

GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN!!!!