**Final Team Project**

For the rest of the term, you’re going to be working with a “real life” scenario – 1) creating your own company and coming up with a product or service to solve a problem, 2) pitching to and writing a formal proposal for that product or service for potential investors, and 3) coming up with a marketing plan (including a web page) and giving an oral presentation to the investors that demonstrates that marketing plan. You’ll also write an informal report on your team/company’s progress while doing all of this work.

It should be interesting.

Here are the steps for doing this project.

**Week One (11/2)**

1. Form company. Give yourselves a name.
2. Decide on a project management system to help you stay organized since we only meet once a week. You can use Google Docs, Trello, Asana, Wrike, MS Planner, or anything else. If you want me to set you up a work area on Open Lab just for your team, let me know and we’ll walk through it together.
3. Brainstorm a product or service you would like to make a reality if given the time, personnel, and material resources. You can be very creative here, and even push the boundaries of technology, but keep it within the realm of possibility.
4. Look at Dr. Richard Johnson-Sheehan’s [“Planning and Organizing Proposals and Technical Reports”](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20080628094326_727.pdf) on the Purdue OWL website to help you plan and execute your proposal.
5. Start working on your written proposal, which should address all of the following:
   * Discussion of the problem or situation you’re trying to address.
   * Explanation of why your product or service solves that problem.
   * Research on the current state of the market you’re entering, which means discussing competition.
   * Description of your intended customers/users (demographics, etc.).
   * Justification for why you’re the most qualified to create/develop this product/service (ethos). Think in terms of both the company and the individual personnel.
   * Description of your methodology for creating and testing your product/service.
6. *Summary of Week One:* Form company, brainstorm product/service, begin background research.
7. *Due next week:*

* Paragraph about problem and current situation.
* Brief (2-3 sentences) description of the product/service you’re proposing to develop.
* 3 URLs to similar/competing/inspiring products or services,
* Brief description of your company and your qualifications for creating this product/service.

**Week Two (11/9)**

This week, you’ll be pitching your company and product/service to the rest of the class, and then working on completing your *Written Proposal which is due next week.*

***Pitching:***

1. A pitch is a sales tool. Period. For our purposes, you’ll assume that we’re potential investors, and you just want to get us interested. You don’t need a formal business plan with spreadsheets and financials; just present us with a brief Cost/Benefit analysis.
2. This article gives you an excellent outline for crafting your pitch: <http://articles.bplans.com/the-7-key-components-of-a-perfect-elevator-pitch/>
3. You’ll have time to craft your pitch at the beginning of class, and then you’ll pitch to us. Not everyone in the group has to speak. We’ll ask questions, if we have any, that we think you might have forgotten to discuss.
4. You’ll be able to use this pitch in the oral presentation you’ll be making at the end of the term.

***The Written Proposal Final Layout:***

1. Cover page
2. Introduction – Think of this like an Executive Summary, a single paragraph that hits the most important points.
3. Current Situation/Problem – This will also include the competition research you’ve done, since the competition shows how well or badly other companies have tried to solve the problem.
4. Project Plan and Methodology – This is written out in sentences and paragraphs. It creates a narrative for how the proposal will be realized into the product/service. You will explain step one, what is required to get it done, and how you’ll know that step is complete. Then, you do the same with steps two, three, four, etc., until you arrive at the testing methodology that will ensure your prototype works/solves the problem.
5. Qualifications
6. Conclusion – This is the cost/benefit analysis. It should explain what costs there are to the company or investors to create the product/service, and what benefits there are to the company or investors for creating the product/service.
7. Works Cited – A reference page for the research sources you used in your initial market/competition research.

**Weeks Three – Five (11/16 – 12/7)**

Okay! Let’s assume your proposal was a success (even if it *is* only due this week!), and your product/service is all developed, tested, and ready to go. Now you have to show the investors (that is,

us) how you’re going to market it. To do that:

1. Use Ehmke, Fulton and [Lusk’s “Marketing’s Four P’s: First Steps for New Entrepreneurs”](https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/ec/ec-730.pdf) which is on our Open Lab site to help you brainstorm ideas.
2. Create a website for the product. You can go as big as you know how to go and want to go. But ENG2575 isn't a web design class and many of you might not have the technical skills to pull off an expertly designed and domain-hosted website. For that reason, I’m more interested in the rhetorical (audience-aware) choices you make about what you put on the site and how you write it (in terms of tone, language used, etc.) than I am about how beautiful and fancy it is. That said:

* *For novice students*: I suggest you create an account at Wordpress.com for a free website. You can choose your site's theme, build pages, and add your own content. Wix.com is another novice option. There are plenty of resources online for free and through the NYPL (see further down below) to help with the technical side of the project. I’m also pretty experienced with WordPress, so I can help you with that, too.
* *For intermediate students*: You can use Adobe Dreamweaver, which should be on the classroom computers, to create a website from scratch and save it to a flash drive. To turn in your work, the easiest solution is to give me a flash drive with all of the site's files including the index.html.
  + *For advanced students*: Again, using Dreamweaver or coding by hand, you create a website, which you host online so that it is public-facing and easily accessible to me.
  + *For all student skill levels*: The NYPL gives free access for library card holders to Lynda.com (<https://www.nypl.org/collections/articles-databases/lyndacom>). This is a professionally produced video instruction website. You can learn practically any technical skill including webdesign, Adobe Dreamweaver, etc. from their videos. Without a NYPL card, lynda.com is an expensive subscription service, so get a library card if you don't already have one.

1. Deliver a 7-10 minute oral presentation that will show how you’re going to market your product/service. ***Everyone will have to speak*** at least a little bit. Don’t forget: you can use some or all of the pitch you made in Week Two, and also use graphs or data you gathered for your written proposal. For the oral presentation, you should include these things:
   * Reminder of the problem and solution.
   * Summary of your target audience/market.
   * Summary of current situation/competition.
   * Marketing plan – This will have been developed using the Purdue Extension article.
   * Presentation of website – This should show us how you’re addressing the target market, and showing off your product/service to best effect.
   * NOTE: there will be time for Q&A after your presentation, so think through what question we (the investors) might have for you and be prepared with answers.
2. Finally, you’ll create an informal report about your team’s progress from Week One through the Final Presentation. You should be tracking your progress as you go, so that you can turn this in the last day of class. It should include:
   * A report on the division of labor among group members (who did what).
   * A discussion of how well the team cooperated.
   * A discussion of any problems that the team ran into and what you did to solve them.

There’s no class November 30 because of Thanksgiving, but you’ll be using the rest of the term to create the presentation, website, and informal report.

***Everything will be due the last day of class, Dec. 14****,* when you’ll give your presentations.

Have fun!