The purpose of this project is for students to work collaboratively to produce professional, informational documents that incorporate a number of tech comm genres and exhibit knowledge of a range of tech comm skills. Important: A successfully produced manual is a very effective hiring tool, one that you should consider taking to interviews with prospective employers. Some successful manuals even have publication potential!

**DESCRIPTION**

Minimum length for the manual is 10-12 standard pages, including graphics.  **Note:** The manual must contain a significant amount of written text. Certain manuals may require more space—especially if the use of graphics is extensive, or the project is designed for a page format smaller than 8½ x 11 inches.

Manual subjects must be
- Substantial in terms of topic. (For example, Favorite Ice Cream Flavors of KU Sophomores wouldn’t work);
- Appropriate in scope. (A Guide to Civil War Lawrence clearly would be too broad);
- Original, not replicating material already available (on the Internet, for example).

In addition, most manual subjects will require a certain amount of research (libraries, news sources, the Internet, personal interviews, for example) and/or field work in their production.

Possible subjects for manuals are almost limitless, but successful projects tend to be those that are based on students’ prior knowledge, personal interests, educational backgrounds and goals, or practical experience. For example, a group recently decided to write a manual about backpacking in Colorado. To maximize the manual’s usefulness, they chose to make it pocket-sized (to fit easily into a backpack), about twenty pages in length, and laminated (to protect pages from wet weather). Sample manual projects include the following:

**Subject or informational manual.** For example, some persons visiting Lawrence might be interested in a handy manual entitled A Visitor’s Guide to Douglas County Civil War Cemeteries—a work that would involve some research into local history, the inclusion of a number of photographs, and perhaps a foldout map. Another possible topic: An Access Manual for Users of Computer Facilities on the University of Kansas Main Campus. This project likely would include a variety of information: locations and hours; types of hardware/software; availability of support staff; contact information; and so forth.

**Training manual** (for any student or community group, such as volunteer workers at the Lawrence Humane Society or the Douglas County Historical Society). Last year, for instance, a group produced a training manual for service personnel at a local bar and grill;

**Procedural manual** (for example, detailed instructions for gaining University recognition as a campus organization; how to use something; how to install, maintain, or repair a product);

**Planning of a web page** for a student group, activity, or commercial venture. **Note:** The web page needn’t be operational for this project; even if it is, though, a frame-by-frame hard copy of the site plan will need to be submitted. (For the Final Project some students may wish to plan a personal website for use as a professionalization tool. In effect, the site would function, at least in part, as an “Internet résumé,” complete with external and internal links to courses taken, samples of work, and so forth).

Consult the Instructor for a number of possible “real life” possibilities for web pages and community-related manuals. Whatever the subject of your group’s manual, expect to engage in various forms of research.

As explained in the introduction to the course, work on the manual project will overlap with other assignments. Hence, careful planning of time and tasks is paramount for a successful result. Throughout the process students should consult relevant sections of Markel, especially chapters 20 and 22. Feel free to confer with the Instructor (email, office hours) to brainstorm ideas for manuals, determine and clarify requirements for the project, and other relevant issues.
**SCHEDULE**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>M 6 Mar</td>
<td>Manual Project Proposal draft due for peer review *</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 8</td>
<td>Manual Project Proposal due (20 pts.); Manual drafting workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 3 Apr</td>
<td>Manual Project Oral Presentations (50 pts.); manuals due (80 pts.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 5</td>
<td>Manual Project Oral Presentations (50 pts.); manuals due (80 pts.)</td>
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<td>M 10</td>
<td>Manual Project Oral Presentations (50 pts.); manuals due (80 pts.)</td>
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*Note: Each member of the group must bring a copy of the Manual Project Proposal draft to the Peer Review session; failure to do so will count as an absence (see Course Guide).*

**COMPONENTS**

The manual project consists of the components explained below, weighted as noted.

1. **Manual Project Proposal (20 points possible)**

The proposal should be three pages long, consisting of a two-page formal memorandum and a one-page Task Schedule Appendix (see Markel). The proposal should be organized into sections to address the following items:

- **Summary:** Description of your proposed idea for a manual and major elements of the manual; scope of the manual;
- **Background:** Statement of your experience and knowledge of the subject matter;
- **Audience:** Description of the target audience for your manual; the readers’ background and knowledge (education, professional experience, attitude toward the subject, cultural characteristics, potential use of the document, physical environment in which the manual will be used);
- **Purpose of Manual:** Explanation of what the manual is intended to accomplish; what project or procedure it focuses on (training in a process, procedure for installing and maintaining something, for example);
- **Project Description:** Explanation of how you will gather information; resources you plan to use; equipment and facilities you plan to use in writing and designing the manual;
- **Task Schedule Appendix:** Outline and explanation of when the various phases of the project will be carried out. (Clarify responsibilities of group members.)

2. **Manual (80 points possible)**

The manual itself should be the equivalent of between 10-12 standard-sized pages. The physical size of the document and its binding will be determined by the intended audience and end use of the manual. It should contain three primary components:

- **Front Matter:** Cover, title page information, table of contents; preface or introduction (an overview of who should use the manual); the product, procedure or system the manual describes; the purpose of the manual; the major components of the manual; and an explanation of how the manual should be used (who should carry out the task, safety measures, and tools, equipment, and materials needed);
- **Body:** A structure based on how the reader will use the manual; simple and direct instructions expressed in the imperative mood; inclusion of appropriate graphics to clarify instructions or other relevant materials;
• **Back Matter:** As necessary for the subject and audience of the manual, you may need to include certain of the following: a glossary of key terms (if appropriate); appendices to graphics; diagnostic tests; reference materials; List of Works Cited; list of sources or reference materials; list of suppliers; a “troubleshooter’s guide”; follow-up advice.

### III. Manual Project Oral Presentation (50 points possible)

The presentation should take between 10-15 minutes (allowing a couple of minutes for questions). All members of a group should speak during the presentation, although not necessarily for equal amounts of time. The presentation should respond to the following conditions:

• **Type:** Extemporaneous presentation: while *some* scripting is acceptable, the entire presentation should *not* be scripted.

• **Purposes:** The presentation has two primary purposes:
  — *Informational:* Explain the need that exists for your group’s manual;
  — *Persuasive:* Convince your audience that the ways your group has responded to meet that need are effective.

• **Content:** For the manual to be both informational and persuasive, consider the following questions:
  — What is the existing need for this document?
  — How did your group determine the need?
  — How did your group meet that need?
  — What decisions did your group make about what to include and exclude, and why?
  — What decisions did your group make in terms of organizing and arranging the manual’s information? (Consider formatting, layout, front and back matter, binding, cover, and so forth.)

• **Audience:** Your classmates in a tech comm course—that is, people who know something about creating manuals but are unfamiliar with the processes that your group has followed and the decisions it has made.

• **Graphics:** Incorporate any graphics that may be useful in demonstrating your group’s progress and product. Some possibilities: computer presentations, transparencies, photocopies, PowerPoint, or posters. Review Markel’s chapter 22 for additional ideas. If you will need access to media not available in our classroom, please advise the Instructor as soon as possible.

### SUBMISSION

The completed manual should be submitted in *finished* form—that is, in the format in which it actually would be used, including binding, and so forth—inside a manila envelope, along with the group’s Audience Profile Sheet (loose).

### GRADING

The following criteria will be used to score your project:

**I. Manual Project Proposal (20 points possible)**

• Meets goals for proposal: to persuade of need and competence;
• Meets requirements for proposal (two-page memo and one-page Task Schedule Appendix; appropriate memo format);
• Clearly sets out project’s parameters; used headings appropriately;
• Well edited regarding grammar, syntax, punctuation, spelling.
II. Manual (80 points possible)

• Includes title page that clearly identifies the manual and other relevant information;
• Includes Table of Contents indicating major components of manual;
• Introduction sets out manual’s purpose and use and, if appropriate, safety concerns or tools/materials needed;
• Organizes its body logically, according to its use;
• Uses appropriate graphics/design elements;
• Uses imperative mood whenever appropriate to communicate instructions;
• Distinguishes one step from another; gives appropriate amount of information at each step;
• Includes completed Audience Profile Sheet;
• Uses clear and simple writing style;
• Well edited regarding grammar, syntax, punctuation, spelling.

III. Manual Project Oral Presentation (50 points possible)

• Set up topic in introduction, explaining main points and organization;
• Used language and delivery that were interesting, clear, appropriate to subject;
• Exhibited attitude and behavior that were not distracting; paid attention to audience; showed enthusiasm for project;
• Used graphics effectively to help audience understand presentation and to reinforce main points;
• Managed time effectively; concluded with effective summary, followed by polite request for questions.