

ENGL 380
ASSIGNMENT #2: DRAFTING THE DOC PLAN

This assignment asks you to write a documentation plan (aka “doc plan”). This document will lay out a plan for writing your Word 2010 user’s manual over the course of this semester. The manual must be *task-oriented*, use a *modular format*, and be written as a resource geared toward college professors in the humanities (English, History, Philosophy, Classics, and so on).

Assignment objectives:

- become familiar with doc plans and the kinds of information they include
- plan the contents and scope of your user’s manual
- clearly communicate your plan to other stakeholders for feedback

Doc plan format:

Follow a short report format (single-spaced, using section headings to organize the different sections of the plan). I will provide you with a handout that offers a suggested organization for the doc plan.

Doc plan due dates:

- Thurs, Sept 29 – bring a draft of the table of contents (TOC) for your user’s manual
- Tues, Oct 4 – bring draft of your doc plan to workshop
- Thurs, Oct 6 – submit final draft of your doc plan, due at the beginning of class

Assessment of doc plan:

Your document will be evaluated according to the following:

1—*Content*

- Is it complete? Does it present a coherent plan, given the context and users?
- Are the contents of the manual organized according to some governing logic (user’s needs, task-orientation, other considerations)? Is this organization explained?

2—*User focus*

- Is the proposed manual user-centered and task-oriented?
- Do you connect features of the program to tasks or problems that your users care about?
- Have you researched the software/situation/users, and is this apparent in your plan?
- Have you included your user analysis and applied your findings to good effect?

3—*Editing, attention to detail, presentation*

- Proofread (no spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors).
- Neatly formatted, tone is professional.

Notes:

Use the course calendar to guide your timeline (include assignment due dates, for example). As you develop your table of contents, use modules as units to help you estimate page counts.

Your manual must follow a modular structure, but you may supplement the main contents in other ways if your research justifies it (e.g., including a quick-reference sheet as an appendix or tear-out, including information presented in more of a narrative format to introduce chapters, etc.). If you have plans for possible supplements, describe them in the doc plan.

You do not need to describe your page design at this point, but you are welcome to begin thinking about a theme (visual and/or conceptual). We will talk more about this in class.

