Purpose: Learning to write and research properly, much like using a computer, is an invaluable tool in today’s workplace. Being as though most of you will be searching for jobs in your respective fields soon, it would be a great experience to learn a little more about your career choice.

Requirements: The paper SHOULD be about something in your major; if otherwise (for example, students’ with undeclared major), your topic MUST be approved by the Instructor.

You can work alone, or in groups of two (2) and ONLY two. But the instructor prefers individual rather than group work.

Grading:
5% Topic & Author Declaration
   * For Non-field Related Projects (Feb.18)
   * For others i.e. topics related to your field/major (Feb.25)
10% Outline (March 3)
10% Source List (March 24)
50% Paper – Minimum of four (4) pages of texts with font size 10 or 12. (April 14)
25% Presentation (April 7, 14 or 21)

NOTE: Due dates (for the steps above) will be posted.

Examples/Formats:

5% Topic & Author Declaration (due on: - see dates above)

...this is just an example; yours should be in the same format...

Name(s): 'Hakeem Sanni

Major: Computer Science - 2003

Project Title: Student-Authored Online Project Portals

Synopsis (Description):

A student web portal would allow MSU Computer Science students to access online departmental services, websites, and course information from one convenient location, using a single email address and password. They would be able to customize the portal to their own liking, adding or deleting links to internal websites, internal news channels aimed at particular groups of students or instructors, and external information such as sports, weather, entertainment, etc.

There are almost as many definitions of a student web portal as there are people talking about them. A portal and the information that it helps to organize are two sides of the same coin - great portal software without good information is not useful. Neither is usable without a network infrastructure that supports fast access by thousands of simultaneous users. In this project, a great deal about the larger world of portal development will be accomplished e.g. look and feel, content, the need for integration, management models, etc.
10% Outline (due on: March 3, 2004)

Name(s) of Writer (This should be left justified)

Topic (This should be centered, bold)

Paper Parts:

Introduction (bold, italic)
How you are going to start out, name your main idea or what you hope to show in the paper.

Body (bold, italic)
Individual points to make (bullets or numbers)

Or

Paragraph(s) describing what you are going to talk about

Conclusion (bold, italic)
Get together all of your ideas, conclude your main idea.

Sources (bold, italic)
Talk about where you are getting your info, research publications, text books, magazines, journals, friends, the internet, your intellect, etc.

10% Source List (due on: March 24)

Name(s) of Writer (This should be left justified)

Topic (This should be centered, bold)

Place sources here, left justified, following the Modern Language Association (MLA) style. You must have at least two sources (of information which you will use to produce your project paper); they may be from virtually anywhere.

Sources could be checked, so be sure you are honest in your paper and your citations.

Sources are meant to help in your writing; they allow you to use other people’s ideas provided that you properly give them credit by means of a citation. You are encouraged to take direct quotes and ideas from sources that are properly cited, just as long as you don’t make your entire paper a large quote of someone else’s paper.

Viable sources include:
Text Books
Magazines
Journals
Newspapers
Lecture notes
Interviews
Web sites
Online library searches
Etc.

If you don’t have access to a MLA documentation to help in your citation process, there is information available at this web site:
http://webster.commnet.edu/mla/index.shtml

If you still can’t find what you are looking for, try searching for “MLA Citation Style” in a search engine. You should find many resources that should be of some help to you.

50% Paper (due on: April 14)

Paper Instructions

Length: Title Page, 4 Pages for Contents and then, the Bibliography Page = 6 Pages (MINIMUM).

Please make your content concise and do not prepare excessive number of pages. 6 pages is reasonable enough.

Spacing: Double

Font: Choose a non-script font (i.e. not a cursive font). I love to see Verdana font type.

Choose a font size 10 or 12. Use bold, underline, and italic where necessary.

Header: Place the page number, right justified, on each page (except the title).

Footer: Place your last name, centered, on each page (except the title).

Quoting: Long direct quotes of 5 lines or more should be a paragraph by themselves. Anything less than 5 lines can be within the body of the document. Use the MLA citation style when doing this. Footnotes can be used when appropriate.

Grading: 50% - Content
25% - Source / Citation Accuracy
25% - Language Skills (Grammar, Spelling, Etc.)

The ‘Content’ grade will evaluate what you have done for this assignment and others. Make sure you are actually writing about what you have chosen; do not go off on wild tangents. If you want to change your topic you need to let me know before you hand this in to me, because I have a list of all topics I will be using. I do not expect any change in topic at this stage anyway.
The ‘Source/Citation Accuracy’ applies to your sources, and your writing / citation style. Everyone is expected to use MLA, and use it well. The sources should be real (don’t make them up), and accurate.

The ‘English Skills’ grade will account for a member of the ‘Writing Center’ reading each paper and giving me a critique on grammar, spelling, word choice, etc. I will be a little more lenient then they would be when I assign the final grade, but it is necessary that you write this well.

The ‘Writing Center’ is a free service offered to all students. Everyone should check into making an appointment so they may read your drafts and tell you what is good, as well as what could use some work.

Due Date: April 14, 2004 (This is one week after your 2nd midterm)

Everyone should have started researching (or at least considered starting) by now. The paper is being assigned VERY early for 2 reasons:

1) Some people like to do work early

2) I don’t want to hear complaints about ‘not having enough time’ to complete the assignment. You have one month, this is more than enough time. If you wait till the last minute that is your fault.

If anyone has trouble getting to a computer to do the research, use the time after lab each week to your advantage. I will not be allocating any class time for this project; this is to be done on your own.

From the next class, you can indicate which lab week you’d like to make your presentation.

25% Presentation (due on: April 7, 14, or 21)

Presentation Instructions

Length: You have a MAXIMUM of 5 minutes to present and 2 minutes for mobility. You should have AT LEAST five (5) PowerPoint slides to present.

Medium: A PowerPoint slide show or transparency slides.

Method: If you are in a group of 2, one can operate the computer and the other can talk. If the group is 1 person, then they must perform both duties.

Grading: 75% - Slide Show Content
25% - Presentation
A printed copy of the slide show must be handed in after your presentation. I will not grade you on your style or length, but basically if you can explain your topic in a coherent manner.

Due Dates:   April 7
            April 14 and
            April 21

The first day of presentations will happen on or before April 7.

The presentation is much less work than the paper itself; you are only putting basic information on the slides so this is not a ‘life changing’ event for anyone.

From the next class, we will start picking presentation times from a grid.

Don’t Do:   Do not take large chunks of your paper and paste them onto slides. Slides are just for basic concepts, outlines, pictures, etc.

Do not read every word off of a slide as your presentation. Use the slides as a guide to talk about your topic.

Do not go over 5 – 7 minutes. You will get the hook from me when you go too long. Practice this at home, try to hit close to this range.

Do not overuse animations, sounds, pictures, movies, etc. If you are going to use them, use them sparingly.

Do not panic about this whole ordeal, it will be quick and painless.

Do not leave after the presentation, everyone must stay and pay attention to each speaker.

Do:   Bring your presentation on a floppy disk, zip disk, or CD. We will be using the presentation computer in RI 108.

        Bring a printout of your slide show to the class.