# Semester Project Prompt

#consultants #socialmediarockstars
#thesearegoingtobeawesome

**Learning Goals**

- Convey an understanding of social media marketing principles
- Find and explore resources, read them critically, use them successfully as support, and cite them correctly
- Ask sound questions and think analytically, critically examining beliefs and assumptions
- Manage time, schedule, and resources effectively
- Work collaboratively
- Use technology effectively as a tool for both communication and credibility
- Develop, support, position, reposition, and present a sound argument, while anticipating and addressing questions and counterarguments
- Utilize rhetorical principles as a way to tailor communication for purpose and genre, audience, structure, tone, and level of formality, and document design
- Write and revise significantly through multiple drafts, considering outside feedback
- Edit and proofread carefully to ensure the presentation of an error-free final product

**Overview**

Your final project draws together many of the skills and concepts you've been building throughout the semester and asks you to implement not only your content knowledge, but also your critical thinking and writing skills in a complex, multi-step assignment. We will work through this project in stages, discussing, brainstorming, writing, considering feedback, and revising. Further, the work you will complete for this project utilizes, builds on, and asks you to reconfigure many of the smaller writing assignments you've completed, both on your blog and in class.

**The Scenario**

Congratulations! Based on your insightful and engaging blog, as well as the industry-specific expertise you've demonstrated, you've been hired as a consultant with Social Media Rock Stars, a start-up social media marketing firm. Details on your first big project are below.

---------- message ----------

**From**: Taylor "Your Boss" Taylorson <taylor@socialmediarockstars.com>
**Date**: Tue, October 15, 2015 at 10:46 AM
**Subject**: Info for upcoming client project/presentation
**To**: You <you@socialmediarockstars.com>

Greetings -

I'm writing with good news! One of the organizations/individuals whose social media presence you've been tracking (amazing coincidence, no?) has put out a call for a consultant to critique their current campaign and implement a new, more effective social media marketing plan. You're in charge of the proposal and presentation that will convince them that we know social media, their field, and what works in it.

One complication is that the company calling for presentations/proposals has had so little success with social media that they're not even 100% convinced using it is worthwhile. So, you're not only selling yourself and your ideas, but you also have to make a case for why this type of marketing is so crucial. Also, remember that you are an expert, meaning you are doing the work your clients can't/won't do, like deciphering complex material that could potentially help them. To that end, you should include some scholarly research. This multi-disciplinary research might come in the form of examining the psychology of buyers, taking a more in-depth look at industry economics, or even looking at interesting cases or studies that the organization might reframe as content for their social media outreach. What you research is up to you and will be determined by your industry/field, but you must make a convincing, supported argument for the

organization to move forward with you as their consultant. (Your research will be a combination of scholarly and popular sources, and it will also call on individual Facebook posts, Tweets, etc. There is no minimum number of *total* sources, but you must utilize at least six scholarly sources.)

The proposal isn't due for another two months, but obviously you'll want to get started on this ASAP. As you plan, you should consider the following deliverables:

- **Annotated Bibliography**—I'd like you to submit to me well before to the presentation an annotated bibliography of at least five sources you plan to use in your proposal. We want to show our expertise as well as our research ability, so this should include at least four scholarly sources. The annotated bibliography will give you an opportunity to begin to examine the sources you've found for your proposal for relevance and validity, and map out your project plan in terms of both your research and the writing. For each source, you should summarize, address credibility issues (of publication, author, bias in writing, etc.), state the article's limitations, and note how this source might contribute to your proposal as a whole. Each annotation should be approximately 100-150 words each. Creating an annotated bibliography requires several critical thinking and writing skills: describing, summarizing, and analyzing, most notably. Examining and evaluating sources is difficult work. As you write, you should keep in mind the following questions addressing this issue: *What is the author's main point? Is it logical? Does he or she support it? Where did I find this source? Is it from a "legitimate" publication? Is the writing unbiased? Who is the author and what are his or her credentials? What issues or limitations are at play here? What is the overall quality of the writing, as I see it?* You will need to have each of your sources cited in MLA format. (See attached sample.)
- **Annotated Un-bibliography** – The bibliography is a list of sources you select for use in a paper. An un-bibliography, then, is a list of sources that you will not use. Since it would be impossible for such a list to be exhaustive, your job is to identify ten resources that you have come across during the research process that at first seemed promising but which on further examination you decided to discard. (Note: this further examination should be at a skimming or browsing level.) Each entry in your un-bibliography should follow MLA format. Your annotation should include a very brief explanation of the resource, why you were at first drawn to the resource, and why you ultimately decided not to invest further time in that resource. (See attached sample.)
- **Proposal** – to include:
  (Note: You've already written about a lot of this in blog form, so part of the writing here will be rethinking the material for different audiences and purposes.)
  - **Cover page**
  - **Executive summary**—this will likely be the last thing you write, and should provide an overview of your arguments and a run-down of the information included in the proposal.
  - **Introduction**—this brief section
    - provides a concise statement that signifies your understanding of the company or organization, including their goals, pertinent history, and/or any issues they are working against
    - clearly states the purpose of the campaign you are proposing (Is it to sell? To raise donations? To inform? To create a better/different image or brand? To attract a new audience? Some combination of these?)
    - begins to make a case for your ideas by introducing the ideas in your proposal at large while placing these ideas in a larger context by introducing "conversation partners" who have written about this industry or discipline as well as those who have written about social media marketing. You want to introduce your reader to who they'll be hearing from throughout the proposal as well as demonstrate to the reader that you know the field at large.
  - **Audience assessment**—who is the organization's current target audience? How can you tell? Is this, in fact, who they should be targeting? Explore the demographics of the audience in the context of the campaign's purpose. This section should include outside research
  - **Case for employing social media** in general, with a specific target audience, their purpose, and in their field/industry specifically—in this argument, you should include outside research
  - **Competitive research overview**—what are other organizations doing effectively (or not) in this field, using specific examples and "mini-analyses"
  - **Critique of current campaign**—specifically, what they have been doing that is not working (including examples) and why

- o **Overview of the proposed campaign**—an exploration of the social media avenues they should be pursing and a sampling of potential status updates, tweets, calls for a response or user-generated content, etc. and why these will be effective. This section should also include research and address potential counterarguments. (organization up to you, and subheads for readability and images or screenshots are encouraged—be sure to focus on what will be easiest/most effective for the client)
  - o **Works cited**—MLA style

    *note: page counts are approximate, and are counted by double-spaced pages, although for the final version, you may choose to format/space any way you like.*

- **Presentation of 8-10 minutes** – Organization is up to you, but the presentation should address each element in the proposal and make a strong case for the organization to hire you as a consultant; also, the audience for this presentation will be both high-level and low-level employees in the organization's marketing department, including some who have been managing their current social media work, so diplomacy is key. These are very busy people, so you must stay within the time frame. Also, for the presentation, you will need to use some form of presentation technology (PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi, etc.).
- **Wrap-up email** (see below)

The proposal should, of course, look professional, and I would recommend using screenshots to break up the text and illustrate some of your points. These will probably be particularly relevant in the competitive research overview and your critique of their current campaign.

All of our consultants are really busy right now, so, to help, I'm grouping you and two to three other colleagues as team. You'll conceptualize the proposed campaign, write the proposal, and present on your own, but as you work through the project, you'll have this team to support you and provide feedback (and you'll do the same for them). You should plan to meet with your team several times, and as a group you'll all convene with me at least once to discuss your campaigns and progress.

Finally, be sure to email me and let me know how the presentation goes within a day or two after your presentation. A casual email will be fine, but be sure to be detailed and specific, and address the following questions: What was the process like for this project? How did it evolve over time? How and why did you make your most important decisions? Were they good ones? Were the project and the presentation, in your opinion, ultimately successful? Why or why not? What would you do differently next time? In what ways did this project force you to think critically about social media and argument? Also, please let me know how the collaboration element went (how, specifically, it improved your project, how each team member contributed, and how providing feedback to the rest of your group shaped your own thinking, as well as any issues or concerns you ran into during the collaboration). In this email you should also send me the file or link to your presentation file.

Remember, you're making an overarching argument here that a.) You're an expert, and b.) You can help this organization. These ideas should be guiding the questions you ask as you get started and as you write and revise. This is a big project, and the deliverables are obviously going to require multiple drafts, but you're prepared, and I know you'll be professional. Let me know if you have any questions, and good luck!

Taylor

---

## Grading
In the coming days, we will develop a rubric as a class, taking into consideration the rhetorical situation, learning goals, the requirements above, and a balance of content knowledge and effective written and oral communication.

*Note: The collaboration element will be counted as part of your participation grade, and first drafts, exploratory writing, and blog posts are also graded separately.*

**Sample Annotated Bibliography Entries**

London, Herbert. "Five Myths of the Television Age." *Television Quarterly.* 10.1(1982): 81-89.

Herbert London, the Dean of Journalism at New York University and author of several books and articles, explains how television contradicts five commonly believed ideas. He uses specific examples of events seen on television, such as the assassination of John Kennedy, to illustrate his points. His examples have been selected to contradict such truisms as: "seeing is believing"; "a picture is worth a thousand words"; and "satisfaction is its own reward." London uses logical arguments to support his ideas, which are his personal opinion. He doesn't refer to any previous works on the topic. London's style and vocabulary would make the article of interest to any reader, which is expected from this journal, which is scholarly, but particularly accessible. I plan to use this article in the area of my paper in which I discuss popular opinion about television viewing, and the ways in which the general public believes these specific myths.

*Sample modified from University of North Carolina at http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/annotated_mla.html.*

Aras, Bultent and Omer Caha. "Fethullah Gulen and His Liberal 'Turkish Islam' Movement." *Middle East Review of International Affairs Journal.* 4.4 (2000). 6 September 2005 <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/meria/journal/2000/issue4/jv 4n4a4.html>.

Fethullah Gulen has founded a movement that attempts to be modernist, nationalist, Islamic, and democratic all at the same time. The article, in the very prestigious and peer-reviewed *Middle East Revie of International Affairs Journal*, is a brief survey of Gulen, covering his life and influences, the foundations of the movement, the relationship to the military and Islamic community. The secular elites are covered, but not in any great depth. The authors provide a well-reasoned and insightful analysis of the significance of the movement, and conclude that Gulen's role will be an important one as a religious leader in modern Turkey, despite the multiple conflicting interests of his followers. I anticipate including information about Gulen found in this article by Aras and Caha in the counterargument section of my paper, as a way to refute those who disagree with my argument and state that a nation cannot be both Islamic and democratic at the same time.

*Sample modified from University of Oklahoma at http://www.ou.edu/cls/reference/bibliography.html.*

**Sample Annotated Un-Bibliography Entries**

Block, Fred. "Understanding the Diverging Trajectories of the United States and Western Europe: A Neo-Polanyian Analysis." *Politics and Society*. 35.1 (2007): 3-33.

> The topics and subject terms attracted me to this article because they were extremely related to what I wanted my paper to be about. It didn't make the cut, though, because it has too much to do with Western Europe and I want to focus my paper on the United States.

Kaussler, Bernd. "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000-2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy." *Iranian Studies*. 41.3 (2008): 269-295.

> This article looked promising because it talks about the relationship between the United Nations and Iran. It seems on closer look that the article focuses more on the UN's inability to enter into trade agreements with Iran due to Iran's human rights violations and nuclear proliferation and does not seem to stipulate precise human rights issues.

Swartz, M. J. "Negative Ethnocentrism." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 5.1 (1961): 75-81.

> This article seemed to include general theories that could educate me more about stereotypes and ethnocentrism. However, it was a very specific study of native tribe that was an anomaly to general anthropological theories.