

15.289

Written Assignment

The major written assignment in 15.289 should be tied to your own research. It should be in the form of one of the standard academic genres such as the journal article, the conference paper, or the proposal. You may use something you have already drafted, though you will revise it during the course, based on feedback from me and from one or more of your classmates. You may, of course, write the document during this term.

Some minor assignments lead up to the first draft. The stages of the project are described below, along with due dates.

Lecture 4 Topic and target audience

During the first two weeks of the course, you should informally discuss possible written projects with me. By March 6 you need to commit to a specific project, by sending me a brief e-mail message describing your topic, intended audience, and genre.

Lecture 5 Analysis of target audience/journal

Write a one-page analysis of your target audience, for you to use in planning the document and for me and one of your classmates to use later in reviewing the draft. For example, if you intend to write a journal article, analyze the readers of that journal and the norms for articles in it, based on instructions provided at the front or back of a journal issue and on articles that have appeared in it. Discuss article structure, style, and content, and how they reflect the assumptions of that journal. Tell me whether you find a dominant type of article, or a range of types, and what that tells you about the journal editors and audience. Similarly, if you are writing a conference paper, analyze the people likely to review for and attend the conference and the norms, as far as you can discover them, for that conference.

Lecture 10 Draft of written assignment

Bring two copies of your draft to this class, along with your analysis of the target audience and norms. You will give one copy to me, and another to one of your classmates. We will spend half of the class in workshop mode, during which a classmate will read your draft and you will read a classmate's draft, both of you providing comments to the other. The classmate and I will return comments to you as quickly as possible so you can revise the draft.

Lecture 13 Revised written assignment

You will turn in your final, revised version of the written assignment on the last day of class.