

Disciplinary Literacy Report

Context: Different academic disciplines and professions have different ways of presenting and analyzing information, different ways of building knowledge, and different ways of presenting knowledge in written forms. This assignment is an opportunity to learn about literacy in your major field and learn how to present the information you discover to a particular audience: high school seniors/college freshman looking to enter into your field.

Assignment Description: *Purdue Bares All: The Ins and Outs of Selecting An Academic Discipline at Purdue (By Students, For Students)* is paying for new submissions in the form of short brochures. In need of some quick cash, you decide to submit a brochure on your discipline/area of interest (figuring it will be slightly less painful or boring than donating plasma or flipping burgers). You go their website to look at the submission guidelines.

We're looking for a few good whistle blowers. Our guides are aimed at high school seniors and college freshman who are trying to decide on their academic futures. Your job is not to persuade these students to choose your discipline, but to give them an honest and accurate idea of what it means to major in _____, the sort of reading and writing involved within that field, and perhaps, even what the professional future might hold for them after they graduate from Purdue with a degree of that kind. A great way to get started with this assignment is to think of the questions you had (and might still have) about why one should or shouldn't follow this particular path.

To be accepted, your brochure submission needs to have the following elements (*a total of no less than seven pages*):

- 1. A cover sheet**—A single page featuring a catchy title setting up the information that follows, your name, and images that are indicative of your discipline (all in a well-designed format that conveys the tone of your field).
- 2. An overview**—Three to four paragraphs giving **a basic description of your discipline**, its subdisciplines, possible professions that arise from your discipline, and a handful of links that students can use to explore that discipline.
- 3. A mini-ethnography**— A mini class-based ethnography for one week in the class you are taking that corresponds to your academic major. (*Writing Today*, p. 472 is a good resource.) Pay attention to the reading and writing that happens in these classes. View this mini-ethnography as your "artifact collection" of various forms of literacy/documents in this class, of in-class activities, who's doing what, class protocol/etiquette (both explicit and unspoken).

Take observation notes of the class:

- What are the types of assignments given?
- How is information presented to the class? Are there discussions? A lecture? A question and answer format? (i.e. Who talks and when?)
- Are Powerpoints used? Handouts?
- What is the workload (in and out of class)?
- What is the coursework graded? Do you have a lot of assignments, quizzes, tests, etc? (The syllabus is a good resource for this)
- Will this course be a building block for later courses, or is it a more standalone in the material it teaches?

4. Two interviews/profiles in the discipline—one of these should be with an upperclassman within your discipline, and the other should be with a professor (preferably one who teaches in the subdiscipline/speciality in which you are most interested. You have the option of doing a third interview for extra credit. For each of these interviews you will need to:

- Draft a set of initial interview questions, which you will send to your interviewee in advance. You can of course ask more and/or different questions in the actual interview.
 - Note: Similar to the literacy narrative in which you reflected on an important moment in your literacy life, you can ask them to reflect on a moment or situation that they feel exemplifies the typical reading and writing they do in the major, or was most the most difficult, most influential, unsettling...
- Obtain a photo of the interviewee. You can take one, ask them to send you a photo, or get one online (if possible, and with their permission)
- Write a profile of the interviewee in which you set the scene (give a background of how they came to work/study in that discipline), relate an anecdote of their experience in that discipline, and either relate parts of your conversation in an interview format or weave it into the profile as dialogue. These profiles should include the interviewee's photo and share a common design.

5. A first-person summary of what you have learned—(1-2 pages) This is your chance to:

- Share why you were/are interested in this discipline and what you'd like to do professionally based on this interest.
- Reflect on what you learned from your mini-ethnography
- Reflect on what you learned (for good and bad) from each of your interviews
- Reflect on how what you have learned in creating this brochure has influenced your understanding on your major, as well as what the future might hold for you based upon your new level of enlightenment

Miss Woodburn, the Editor-in-Chief, looks forward to reading your submissions. Pending excellent submissions, all of you can expect a payment of an "A".

Happy writing!