

ENGR 125CS

Midterm Essay Assignment

Friday 3 October 2008

Draft (BRING *TWO COPIES* TO CLASS) for peer review: **Monday 13 October 2008**

Final paper due: **Wednesday 15 October 2008 at the start of class**

So far in this course we have considered how technological innovation requires teams of specialists who work together toward a common goal. For example, the construction process of a skyscraper involves interaction between several key stakeholders, including:

- Development group (financing)
- Architecture group (visual aesthetics)
- Engineering group (structure, mechanical, and electrical systems)
- Construction group (budget and physical assembly)
- Civic group (neighborhood folks and city officials)

Based on the lecture topics, reading assignments, and video presentations considered in this class, write a 3-4 page essay that addresses the explicit and implicit *obligations* of one of the key stakeholder groups. Please write your essay assuming that the audience is one of your peers: an undergraduate college student at MSU.

Your essay must include a clear thesis statement, such as:

"A skyscraper developer's primary obligation is to the investors, but the developer must also respect the needs of the surrounding community."

or

"One of the biggest challenges for the construction company when building a skyscraper is balancing the conflicting obligations to the architect for creating a beautiful structure and to the developer for maximizing profit."

or

"More than any of the other key stakeholders, the engineering team has the fundamental obligation to ensure public safety—even if this conflicts with legal or contractual obligations to the client."

or a similar, related thesis statement of your own choosing.

Depending upon your choice of thesis statement, you might want to organize your thoughts in a structured manner, such as:

1. Summarize the responsibilities and obligations of the chosen group, how that group's obligations are similar or different than the other groups, and the potential problems caused by conflicting obligations.
2. Consider the ways in which the explicit and implicit obligations of the specific group are enforced, and what recourse the other groups may have if the obligations are not upheld.
3. Describe the ways in which your chosen group might justifiably feel "ownership" of the building once the project is done, and how this sense of ownership affects the group's effectiveness.
4. Explain how a large project must be coordinated and managed in order to keep each group engaged and productive.

The essay needs to follow a standard format:

- Your name, date, and "ENGR 125 Midterm Essay" at the top of the first page.
- Introductory paragraph – expresses the thesis statement, your interpretation in terms of the skyscraper construction project, and the concise set of points you will cover in the rest of the essay.
- Supporting paragraphs – plan 4-8 paragraphs that contain the examples and commentary you use to support your points. Each paragraph must include a topic sentence and be self-contained to the extent possible.
- Concluding paragraph – a short, final paragraph to summarize your ideas and theme.

Your essay is to be prepared using a word processor and good quality printer. Use double-spaced lines with margins of one inch on each edge of the sheet.

Remember, in ENGR 125 there are NO LATE SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED. If you know you will be missing class on 10/13 for the peer review session or on 10/15 for the final paper submission, please make arrangements in advance by email contact with the instructor.

Grading

Grading will use the holistic method: we will assess the *overall quality* of the written material, including the strength and validity of your claims, the clear organization of each paragraph, and the mechanical/grammatical integrity. The grading scale will be as follows:

4 = top score. The essay not only has a viable thesis statement, but also clearly addresses the thesis statement. The arguments presented are well thought-out and creatively presented. Carefully chosen, *concrete* examples are used to support all statements and claims. The organization of the essay complements the thesis statement and makes effective use of transitions. The writing style is appropriate for a college paper, is suited to the designated audience, and is noted for excellent spelling and grammar.

3 = good score. The essay is commendable, with only minor shortcomings in content, organization, or appropriateness for the audience. Spelling and grammar are excellent, and at least some aspect of the essay can be considered outstanding. A paper in the '3' category might include a slightly weak argument, a set of clear but perhaps incompletely formulated examples, or a solid but unremarkable choice of vocabulary.

2 = acceptable score. The essay is judged adequate, but with several shortcomings in content, organization, or appropriateness for the audience. Spelling and grammar may show one or two careless errors or proofreading problems. A paper in the '2' category is noted for weak examples, uninspired choice of words, or prose that seems to underestimate the intelligence of the audience.

1 = poor score. A score of '1' indicates that the essay is below expectations in most areas (content, responsiveness to the thesis statement, organization, appropriateness for the audience, spelling, grammar). An essay in the 'poor' category will have fundamental flaws in organization, content, and/or writing mechanics.