The Earth Life and Time
Practicum Project
(CPSP239G, CPSP249G, and CPSP259)
Spring 2007
ELT Website: http://www.geol.umd.edu/~jmerck/eltsite/
Course Website: http://www.geol.umd.edu/~jmerck/eltsite/pracsyl.html

INSTRUCTORS:
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NOTE: It is your responsibility as a student to completely read through and understand this syllabus. If you have questions about it, please contact Dr. Holtz or Dr. Merck. You will be held responsible for following all requirements of this syllabus.

Requirements: In order successfully to complete the ELT practicum, you must satisfy three requirements:

• Complete your project:
  ○ If you are enrolled in the Discovery Project (CPSP259), you must complete the requirements set down by Dr. Cordes.
  ○ If you are performing a service or internship project, you must complete the appropriate number of on-site hours for the credit hours for which you have enrolled: 25 hours for 1 hour, 50 hours for 2 hours, and 75 hours for 3 hours. Naturally, you must also complete the duties to which you agreed when setting up the project. Go to http://www.geol.umd.edu/~jmerck/eltsite/pracforms.html to download the project completion verification form.

• Poster presentations of practicum projects results will be given in the College Park Scholars Academic Showcase on Friday, May 4. You must apply to participate in the Academic Showcase by February 13 (details later). If your service project or internship involves original academic or scientific research on your part, you may, instead, opt to present at the University Undergraduate Research Day, April 25. (We will post links to the applications for these events as soon as they become available). In either event, your presentation will be in a public forum that will be attended by current and future instructors, advisors, and, possibly, employers. Your presentation is an excellent opportunity to bring yourself to their (positive) attention.

• Post a pdf of your poster (preferred) or an abstract of your project linked to your academic web site prior to your public presentation and provide us with an up-to-date url. (A template for this abstract can be found at http://www.geol.umd.edu/~jmerck/eltsite/templates/pracreport.html)

Grades: The grade for this class is based on the following:

• 50% - Successful and adequate completion of the on-site work (based in part on your site supervisor’s report on the Practicum Verification form)

• 10% - Quality and timely posting of abstract. Due date is the date of the Academic Showcase, May 5. Lateness; typographic, spelling, grammatical, and factual errors; broken links and other miscodings; and the like will count against this grade.

• 20% - Poster/Presentation Content, including:
  ○ Accuracy of Information (it is all true)
Adequacy of Information (it explains in sufficient detail where you worked, what you did, what you accomplished at the site, what you learned from the experience)

- 20% - Poster/Presentation Style, including:
  - All required elements are presented (your name, major, and ELT affiliation; title of project; logos, etc.)
  - Text is grammatically correct and properly spelled.
  - Composition of the poster.

IMPORTANT!: Each and every person MUST do their own poster. This is true even if you were collaborators on the same exact project. Each poster must be individualized (although of course there will be some overlap if you are doing the same project!).

Our expectation is that everyone will get an A by following the rules. However, if you fall short of the standards, your grade will be docked accordingly.

GRADE SCALE (Course): 90-100, A; 80-89, B; 70-79, C; 60-69, D; <60, F. “+” and “-” grades are given to the top and bottom two-point range, respectively, within each grade.

GRADE SCALE (Poster Components): A+, 102; A, 98; A-, 92; B+, 88; B, 85; B-, 82; C+, 78; C, 75; C-, 72; D+, 68; D, 65; D-, 62; F, 50.

Schedule: The following includes our various meetings throughout the semester, plus other important dates. If you cannot make the individual evening meetings, please check in with us to make certain that you are getting all the relevant information.

IMPORTANT: It is expected that you will be present for your presentations at either the Undergraduate Research Day or the Academic Showcase. Please plan accordingly.

- Tues. 1/30: CCC1115, 6:30 - 7:30 PM. General orientation.
- Tues. 2/13: Submit Intent to Participate in Scholars Academic Showcase (more details soon!)
- Tues. 2/27: CCC1115, 6:30 - 7:30 PM. Project status assessment.
- Tues. 3/13: CCC1115, 6:30 - 8:00 PM. Poster techniques and trouble-shooting.
- 3/xx: Showcase Poster Information Due (more details soon!)
- 4/x: Applications for Undergraduate Research Day due (date and details to be announced)
- Wed. 4/25: Undergraduate Research Day
- Fri. 5/4: College Park Scholars Academic Showcase
- Tues. 5/8: CCC1115, 6:30 - 8:00. Post-Poster Presentation Party and ELT wrap-up.

Guidelines for Project Presentations:
One big benefit we hope to derive from this exercise is that we will all look good. In order to facilitate this we are suggesting the following presentation guidelines. There are certain things we absolutely require, however depending on the nature of your project, you may want to modify other aspects slightly. Feel free to do so. We present them as defaults:

Construction: You presentation will be mounted on a 40” x 32” rectangle of foam-core backing (we will provide these). Have your entire poster printed on a plotter. (We will be providing information about costs and location of printers that you can use for this purpose in the early weeks of the semester. Please stay tuned!)

- Advantage: Looks really slick. Enables you to use the full capabilities of computer graphics design features, including background images.
- Disadvantage: We hope to have our own Scholars printer this semester. Not everybody can use it at once! Therefore, we are going to set up rules so that we can get posters for all participating Scholars programs out in an organized and timely fashioned. More specifics later.
**Absolute Requirements:** ELT requires that the following conventions be observed for full credit:

- **You poster's overall dimensions should be 36” x 30”.** There should be a one-inch margin all around. This gives you 34” x 28” of useful space within the poster.
- **All poster materials must be printed by the plotter.** If you plan to use photographs, drawings, or charts, these must either be digitized with a scanner or developed digitally. Hand-Lettering of poster is prohibited. (If your poster material poses some serious difficulty, consult with us in advance.)
- **The University of Maryland logo and the CPS sunspot logo must appear in the upper left and right hand corners respectively.** (Note: links to these are on the online version of the syllabus.)
- **All posters are to have a heading indicating:**
  - Project Title
  - Author’s full name
  - Author’s affiliation (i.e., CPS program and major) and contact information (email).

  E.G.,

  **Monetary Benefit Analysis of Applying Suntan Lotion to the Backsides of Wealthy Retirees at the Sunny Side Up Naturist Resort**

  Mohn W. Jerck, Jr.
  Hypothetical Physics and Ceramics Double Major College Park Scholars - Earth, Life, and Time Program
  University of Maryland, College Park
  mjerck@blam.umd.edu

- **Bibliography:** Provide references for your text as if it were an academic paper. Depending on your project and write up, this may not be necessary. See ELT’s preferred bibliographic style at http://www.geol.umd.edu/~jmerck/eltsite/reading/bibstyle.html
- **All text should be in a common True-Type font such as Times Roman Bold, Palatino Bold, Arial, etc.** If you MUST use an unusual font, be sure to have a copy of it when you attempt to print it.
- **Poster must be readily legible from three feet away.** To this end, use large type (36 pts or more) for headings and 18 pt for body text.

**Suggested text format:** You will need to provide short, succinct blocks of text. We suggest dividing your text into the following sections (amend this as necessary to fit your particular project):

**If your project is non-research oriented:**

**Service Site:** Present the service site, its mission, and contact information for it.

**Issue Confronting Site:** Introduce the issue confronting your service site that your project was meant to address.

**Activities:** Tell what you did to address the issue confronting the site.

**Impact:** Describe the impact that your project had on the site, particularly with regards to the major issue you were attempting to address. Also, describe the project's impact on you (i.e., your knowledge base, attitudes, and outlook.).

**Future work:** Describe possible future issues that your project enables your service site to address.
Acknowledgments. Acknowledge everyone who gave you support or help. Be sure to acknowledge any individual who helped you (either your site supervisor or someone at UMD), College Park Scholars, and the Earth, Life, and Time faculty.

If your project is research oriented:

Abstract: A telegraphic summary of your work not to exceed 300 words. Readers will use this to decide whether they are interested in studying the rest of your poster.

Introduction: Introduce the issues and problems you are studying

Materials: Describe the materials you used, be they bibliographic sources, archival, or physical specimens.

Methods: Explicitly describe your methods of analysis so that a reader would be able (with some research) to replicate your work.

Results: State the results of your research clearly and succinctly.

Discussion: Interpret your results. This section should highlight your major conclusions and possible future lines of inquiry.

Acknowledgments: Acknowledge everyone who gave you support or help. Be sure to acknowledge any individual who helped you (either your site supervisor or someone at UMD), College Park Scholars, and the Earth, Life, and Time faculty.

In any event:

- Include photographs, illustrations, charts, or graphs if they are useful, but do not allow them to distract from your message. Be sure to include photographs of yourself working on the project if at all possible. This will really help reinforce that YOU did this work: this is not simply a report on someone else's accomplishments.
- Where possible, use bulletized summaries of information in your text, rather than full paragraphs. You don't have much room!
- Assemble elements in a logical visual sequence so that the viewer's eye is drawn around the poster in the right order.
- Design your poster in such a way that it will be logical and intelligible even if you are not there to explain it.
- In academic writing, one generally suppresses one's personal views for the sake of objectivity. In a case like this, however, infusing your text with your personal subjective reactions to your project will make it more engaging and interesting, so don't hold back.
- One neat trick for focusing attention on a key idea is to highlight an insightful quote by placing it in large print in some central location. (You've probably seen news magazines do this.) As you perform your project, be alert for clever quotes that seem to sum up some important aspect.
- But the real key is this: This is you opportunity to promote yourself. People will want to know what you did. Many CPS student presentations fail to grasp this important fact. Punch up your role and your contribution as much as you can without lying or slamming anyone else. In this setting modesty is a vice!

Drs. Holtz and Merck are at your service if you require further information. Remember, Merck loves to talk about Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. No excuse for poor visuals! Good luck.