

Assignment 1: Seize Opportunities in Your Creative Field

Weight: 25 points

Due: Week 5, Session 1 (By the Start of the Class)

Rationale

The purpose of this assignment is to prepare you to take advantage of professional opportunities as they arise in your own creative field, such as jobs, internships, scholarship, grants, and other opportunities to showcase your work.

If you have ever applied for a scholarship, created a resume, or prepared a professional portfolio, then—like most college students—you already have some experience presenting yourself and your credentials.

Even if you have applied for opportunities before, a candidate's dossier of credentials evolves with changing circumstances. The resume that won an internship must soon be reworked for paid and full-time positions, and even the most polished portfolio requires regular updates to remain fresh and current.

This assignment will introduce you to a new way of thinking about opportunities—a flexible, adaptive way of thinking that the ancient Greeks termed *mētis*. The concept of *mētis* includes vigilance, a repertoire of tricks and stratagems, and a willingness to try out multiple approaches.

Students who complete the assignment will be able to identify current opportunities in their own creative field, tailor application materials for each opportunity, and efficiently produce polished applications for multiple opportunities.

Requirements:

For this assignment, you will:

1. Identify more than 3 current, appropriate, and desirable opportunities in your own creative field.
2. Consult knowledgeable informants for advice on preparing your applications and make use of this advice as you prepare your application materials.
3. Apply for at least 3 of the opportunities that you identified in Step 1, and tailor your application materials for each specific opportunity that you apply for.
4. Prepare a portfolio for grading that documents your process of applying for opportunities. The portfolio must include the materials that you submitted for all 3 applications,¹ evidence that you submitted your applications, and a reflective narrative that describes what you learned from the process.

Process Timeline

Week 1, Session 1: Introduction to the Course and Assignment 1

Homework: Read selections on Antilochus's race from Book XXIII of *The Illiad* and Chapter 1 of *Cunning Intelligence In Ancient Greek Culture And Society* (PDF available on Canvas)

Week 1, Session 2: Defining the Scope of Your Search—Your Field, Your Goals, and Your Qualifications

Week 2, Session 1: How to Search for Opportunities / Visit from the Campus Career Center

Homework: Students search independently for additional opportunities. Bring in a list of 3 current, interesting, and appropriate opportunities for next session. Begin filling out data-entry areas of applications (demographics, etc.).

Week 2, Session 2: Identifying & Consulting Knowledgeable Informants

Homework: Students consult informants through any mutually agreeable channel (e.g., email, Skype, texting, or a face-to-face meeting over coffee). Be sure to prepare a list of questions for each informant and take informal notes during the consultation(s). Continue working on applications.

Week 3, Session 1: Tips, Tricks, and Tactics: What We Learned from Informants

Homework: Begin working on supporting documents for applications.

Week 3, Session 2: Workshop on Tailoring Applications

Homework: Complete Your Applications for Peer Review

Week 4, Session 1: Peer Review of Applications

Homework: Submit all 3 applications by Week 5, Session 1.

Week 4, Session 2: Review of Portfolio Requirements, Workshop on Writing the Reflective Narrative (in-class writing time & peer review)

Homework: Revise the Reflective Narrative, assemble your portfolio, and submit all 3 applications by next session.

Week 5, Session 1: Assignment 1 Portfolio Due at the Start of Class (hard copy or digital).

Introduce Assignment 2: *Pitch A New Idea*.

Grading Rubric

Criteria	D-F (2-0 points)	C (3 points)	B (4 points)	A (5 points)
Quality of application materials	Application materials are incomplete or not up to standards.	Application materials are complete.	Application materials demonstrate that you fulfill the requirements of each opportunity.	Application materials position you as uniquely qualified for each opportunity.
Tailoring of application materials	Application materials show no evidence of tailoring.	Application materials are correctly addressed to the reviewing authority and are free of major tailoring gaffes (e.g., wrong organization name, etc.).	Application materials are somewhat tailored for each opportunity.	Application materials are tailored for each opportunity; you clearly did background research and considered the fit between your credentials and each opportunity.
Resourcefulness	The process documented in your portfolio does not utilize resources supplied in or outside of class.	The process documented in your portfolio demonstrates adequate use of resources.	The process documented in your portfolio demonstrates extensive use of links and resources supplied in class, such as the Handshake portal.	The process documented in your portfolio demonstrates independent and strategic use of resources obtained in and outside of class (e.g., informational resources, informants, tricks and stratagems, etc.

Quality of Reflective Narrative & Documentation	Reflective Narrative or documentation are incomplete/absent.	Your Reflective Narrative adequately describes your process of applying for opportunities.	Your Reflective Narrative describes insights that you gained from the assignment.	The insights described in your Reflective Narrative are evident throughout the materials presented in your portfolio.
Editing and Proofreading	Your portfolio is disorganized, incomplete, or reveals patterns of error that interfere with readability and/or meaning.	Your portfolio is mostly complete, and your documents are free of grammatical errors that interfere with meaning.	Your portfolio is effectively organized, and your supporting documents are largely free of grammatical errors.	Your portfolio, supporting documents, and reflective narrative are edited and polished so as to convey a positive professional ethos.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: How do I determine whether or not a given opportunity is “in my field?”

A: For our purposes, your “field” denotes the profession or sector in which you aspire to work full-time after graduation. Your field is often, but not always, related to your academic major. This assignment presents an occasion for you to reflect on the field within which you position your work, and to expand the scope of your search for opportunities. Some students might consider applying for opportunities in more than one field. For instance, English majors might apply for positions in technical writing, apply to graduate school, and/or submit creative work for publication. Because our focus is on your long-term career goals, this assignment *excludes* opportunities for which you might apply just to make money on a short-term basis (e.g., holiday retail positions, etc.). We will talk more about your goals, your field, and the scope of your search in class on Week 1, Session 2.

Q: How will I find my three (3) opportunities or consult knowledgeable informants? I don’t know where to look or who to talk to.

A: As you search, you will have access to a range of resources including a visit from the campus Career Center on Week 2, Session 1, basic instruction in searching, and

assistance from classmates. Many students find that the assignment expands their search skills, enabling them to find opportunities that they might have overlooked before. Knowledgeable informants include a wide range of individuals such as industry professionals, academic experts, or alumnae. We will identify knowledgeable informants in class on Week 2, Session 2. If you have difficulty identifying knowledgeable informants or an informant bails on you, I will help you find and contact appropriate individuals.

Q: I'm confused about what is required. Do I have to actually apply for these opportunities in real life? Do I just fill out application forms, or do I have to prepare any documents that they ask for? Can I recycle documents from one application to the next? How will you grade my applications?

A: You will apply for opportunities exactly as you would in professional life. This includes filling out forms (online or offline) and preparing supporting documents (resumes, proposal, cover letters, etc). You will likely find that you can recycle some documents from one opportunity to the next. However, you will also need to tailor those documents to each specific opportunity. In addition to submitting your applications for external review, you will also prepare a portfolio for grading that includes all of your applications and a reflection (see grading criteria).

Q: What should my portfolio include?

A: Your portfolio should include all 3 applications, proof that you submitted your applications, and your reflective narrative of approximately 750 words explaining what you learned from the process.

As long as your portfolio meets these requirements, you have some freedom and flexibility in formatting the portfolio. You may create a portfolio in MS Word, a PDF portfolio, or even a physical binder. Regardless of the medium, your portfolio should be polished, complete, and easy to navigate—leaving me with no questions about what opportunities you applied for, what materials you submitted, or what you learned from the process. To ensure that you receive credit for your work, consider using section dividers and presenting a simple Table of Contents on the first page of your Portfolio.

Q: What if my applications are unsuccessful?

A: Professional situations that occur outside of class can be unpredictable. As we have no control over the external review of your applications, outside responses to your applications (including acceptances, interviews, and rejections) will have no effect on your grade. Even if you receive no response, you will learn habits, tips, tricks, and tactics that you can use to gain a competitive advantage when pursuing opportunities in the future.

Footnote:

1. Sometimes it may not be feasible to capture certain parts of an application. For example, if you applied for an opportunity in the Handshake portal, I might not be able to see what you entered into every text box on the portal—but you can still show me all the documents that you submitted, and a screenshot or confirmation email acknowledging receipt of your application. Please consult me individually if questions arise about documenting your process.