Memos are will be used in this design course for two reasons: to prepare you for the workplace, where you must routinely inform colleagues of the progress of your work, and to provide a concise, effective way to communication with your instructor and clients about the progress of your project.

The purpose of this memo is twofold: 1) to provide accepted guidelines for writing memos and 2) to present a model of a well-written memo that you can use when writing your own memos. These guidelines provide a consistent way to document your work in the design course, but these guidelines can also be adapted to the workplace after you graduate. The following guidelines will be discussed in this memo:

• What a memo should look like
• What a memo should include
• Why you are writing the memo
• How you will be graded

What a memo should look like
The memo is a brief communication (1-2 pages, single-spaced, double-spacing between paragraphs, each paragraph is flush left, 12-point font for body and 10-point font for footer, 1-inch margins, page numbers, plus attachments). You are writing to busy people who want to access information quickly. You must economize your ideas and present them as concisely as possible. Attachment 1 is a “style sheet” that shows you what a basic memo should look like for a bioengineering class.

What the memo should include
Always look at the memo as a three-part communication:
1. The main point and a preview (this includes the heading and the first one or two paragraphs)
   • The heading (To, From, Date, Subject, CC, Attachments) provides a quick summary of who is involved, why the memo is being written, and a date.
   • The first one or two paragraphs include a brief summary of needed background, a sentence that clearly states the purpose of the memo, and a preview of what will be discussed.
2. The discussion of the topics
   • The preview lists the main topic(s) of your memo. You will write one or more paragraphs about each topic. (Notice that this memo preview has three topics. A heading indicates each topic, and then each topic is briefly discussed in a few paragraphs).
3. A review of what has been said
The final paragraph should remind the reader of what is important. This paragraph can restate the main ideas or benefits, restate action that must be taken, or include recommendations for future actions. Include a contact number or e-mail address so that the reader can easily follow-up with you.

Note: Attachments are additional. In general, for bioengineering students, attachments will include calculations and/or visuals. Attachments are referred to in the memo and must be properly labeled so that the reader clearly understands why the information is there.

To whom you are writing the memo and why
For bioengineering students, the purpose of a memo is generally to inform the instructors and members of project teams of the progress of a class assignment and/or team project. Before you begin writing, you must decide whom you are writing to and why.

First, decide who your readers are. They fall into two groups, a primary audience and a secondary audience. The primary audience includes the person(s) listed on the “To:” line. The primary audience is your most important audience and usually needs information for decision-making purposes. Remember, however, that some critical primary audiences are not always listed. Examples of primary audiences include co-workers, senior managers, customer support, marketing, patent officials, regulatory authorities. Memos can always be distributed to the secondary audience, who might use the information in a variety of ways. You send the memo to these people out of courtesy. Usually, this audience is defined in the “CC:” line.

Next, decide why you are writing the memo. Your reader should know exactly why he or she is reading the memo. The most difficult sentence to write in a memo is a statement of your purpose. Ask yourself, “Why am I writing this memo?” Here are some common key phrases that express the purpose of a memo: You are transmitting information, submitting a request, making an announcement, presenting a proposed idea for approval, and so on.

How you will be graded
This memo outlines the basics of how a memo should be written. However, since memos will vary in content, you are responsible for including information in the memo that is appropriate to the assignment and accurate in its technical information. Attachment 2 provides a “quick reference” of what your instructors (and future managers) expect in a memo. First and foremost, your grades on a written project will reflect the appropriateness and accuracy of your information, but your grade will also reflect your adherence to the requirements of a memo (see Attachment 2).

Summary
This memo provides you with the basics of writing memos in your classes and later in the workplace. Remember to use this memo as a general model for writing your own memos, but also remember that requirements for the content of memos will vary from class to class. When in doubt, ask your instructor for help and clarification.

Sincerely,
Your Signature and contact information

*Adapted from the Mechanical Engineering Department at University of Utah*
The memo is a brief communication (1-2 pages, single-spaced, double-spacing between paragraphs, each paragraph is flush left, 12-point font for body and 10-point font for footer, 1-inch margins, page numbers, plus attachments). You are writing to busy people who want to access information quickly. You must economize your ideas and present them as concisely as possible. Attachment 1 is a “style sheet” that shows you what a basic memo should look like for bioengineering classes.

Always clearly state the purpose of your memo and a preview of what you will discuss.

**Heading Level 1**

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**Heading Level 2**

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• Example of bulleted list
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*Adapted from the Mechanical Engineering Department at University of Utah*
Attachment 2
Criteria for Evaluating Memos

As instructors read your memos, they will evaluate the memos based on some or all of the following criteria. Also note that, depending on the class and the assignment, these criteria can be changed or added to, as needed.

✓ Includes appropriate and accurate content (as required by the instructor).
✓ Presents complex ideas and technical information clearly.
✓ Includes a good opening paragraph that presents the purpose/topic(s).
✓ Includes a brief summary paragraph.
✓ Accessible to all readers. A reader should be able to easily locate the information he or she seeks.
✓ Professional in appearance.
✓ Consistent in tone, sentence style, etc. It should not read like several people wrote it.
✓ Uses action headings.
✓ Uses bullets to highlight important lists.
✓ Repeats important information, when appropriate.
✓ Includes appropriate information in attachments.
✓ Employs correct spelling, word usage, mechanics, and grammar.

*Adapted from the Mechanical Engineering Department at University of Utah*