

## How to figure out instructors' expectations for writing

- **Look at the assignment sheet (sometimes called a 'prompt') an instructor gives you carefully:**
  - What different words does the prompt use to describe the kind of **writing** the instructor wants you to do?
  - What different words does the prompt use to describe the kind of **thinking** your writing should reflect?
  - How does the prompt lay out a suggested series of tasks to follow in researching and writing the assignment?
  - Does the prompt make it clear on what basis the assignment will be graded? What criteria will the instructor use to evaluate the assignment?
  - How does the prompt define the **audience and purpose** for the written assignment?
  - What **core concepts** discussed in readings or in class does the assignment prompt reference?
- **Listen carefully to how the instructor talks about the assignment in class and ask questions of the instructor at that time or in office hours (particularly for questions above not necessarily answered in the prompt):**
  - What different words perhaps not reflected in the prompt does the instructor use to describe the kind of **writing** he or she wants you to do?
  - What different words perhaps not reflected in the prompt does the instructor use to describe the kind of **thinking** your writing should reflect?
  - What process or series of tasks would the instructor recommend following to complete the assignment?
  - What **criteria** does the instructor say will inform his or her grading of the assignment?
  - What **audience** does the instructor imagine you are writing to? What **purpose** (apart from completing a course requirement) defines why you are writing?
  - What **core concepts** discussed in readings or in class does the instructor want you to address in the assignment?
- **Talk to your classmates about how they interpret and work through the assignment:**
  - How is this assignment similar to or different from assignments they've done in the past?
  - How do they interpret what the **instructors' expectations** are for the assignment?
  - What are the **key course concepts** they feel they need to draw on to complete this assignment?
  - What **process** do they follow in completing written assignments like this?
  - What do they see is the **audience and purpose** of this assignment, and how does this audience and purpose affect how they write?
- If you are uneasy about talking with your instructor, make an appointment with a Librarian <<http://library.njit.edu/researchhelpdesk/askus.php>> or at the Writing Center <<https://www5.njit.edu/writingcenter/writing-center/>>, and bring your notes and assignment.