IDEAL Assignments:

Iowa Narratives Project:
Students take their learning outside the classroom by interviewing community members. Students bring these stories to a wider audience by creating podcasts and slideshows geotagged to a map.

Archives Alive! Project:
Students discover and transcribe archival texts in the University of Iowa Libraries’ DIY Histories. Students compose a blog post, screencast, and presentation that describe the document’s rhetorical construction and its historical context. Students reflect on the research process and related research in light of course concepts.

Rhetoric of a Public Space:
Taught in conjunction with the Iowa Narratives Project, this assignment asks students to compile a group report assessing the arguments put forth by a public space in the Iowa City area.

Rhetoric in Knowledge Communities:
This assignment asks students to find a rhetorical artifact related to a knowledge community within their local environment. They then analyze that rhetorical effect of that artifact.

Campus Culture Project:
Lessons and activities prompt students to think about sexual assault and the cultural narratives that surround it. This project includes student-generated data that becomes a visualization about the attitudes towards sex on their campus, as well as Bystander Intervention Training to help students make their communities safer.

What Our Students Are Saying:

On the Iowa Narratives Project:
“These projects, especially the narrative project, helped us develop skills that would not have been developed otherwise. It helped us get more comfortable with exploring the city and especially more comfortable with interviews and talking to citizens.”

“The Iowa Narratives Project was one of the best assignments I’ve ever had in any course. I would strongly recommend more courses that involve projects similar to this.”

On the Archives Alive! Project:
“Beyond being a fun project, this reinvigorated my love for research and reminded me that there are many more (and often better) resources out there than just what’s online. This was a great experience, and I’d do it again in a heartbeat.”

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About IDEAL:
IDEAL is Iowa Digital Engagement and Learning. Supported by the Provost's office and housed in the Rhetoric Department, IDEAL promotes hands-on learning through innovative assignments.

IDEAL works with instructors to devise resources and develop projects that make classroom innovation easier. These projects ask students to engage with communities beyond the classroom by using digital technologies and creating work that endures beyond the semester.

Starting an IDEAL Project:

1. Pre-Planning
Digital engagement and learning can be a valuable component of almost any course or initiative. A preliminary meeting will help you assess whether the IDEAL model will help you accomplish your goals. To schedule a meeting, contact ideal@uiowa.edu.

2. Instructor Interest
IDEAL projects should be driven by instructor interest from the early stages of development.

3. Inclusive Partnerships
IDEAL will help participants identify all key stakeholders connected with project. Gaps and weaknesses in stakeholder groups should be identified and filled before project launch.

4. Project Viability
Partners involved in developing an IDEAL project should have a basic understanding of the extent of digital capabilities and their boundaries.

5. Visioning Exercise
Partners should undertake a visioning exercise with all major stakeholders to identify the issues, objectives, and timeline.

6. Development Resources
Partners will work with IDEAL to identify and secure necessary resources.

7. Project Launch
Release forms are prepared for clients, subjects, and students. A web template is created for the project on ideal.uiowa.edu.