The required report format and related specifications reflect generally acceptable engineering practice. In this course their application to a modest project often may be rather strained, but keep in mind the purpose here is pedagogical. A completed report may be used both as a guide and as a template for a subsequent report, with cut & paste operations minimizing the effort required to prepare new report.

1) A recurring complaint, at least for the first one or two reports, is that completing the report takes an extraordinarily long time and much effort. Generally these complaints are well-founded. Here are several explanations to consider.
   a) The almost universally applicable explanation is simply an absence of experience. There is a lack of adequate familiarity with word processing programs, drawing and plotting programs, and computer-aided analysis programs. There are reasons why such programs enjoy wide use in an industrial context as well as an academic one. Indeed ABET engineering accreditation requirements explicitly stress the need for students to become familiar with such tools.
   b) Inadequate familiarity with tools is aggravated by a reluctance to allot adequate time for completing the report. Here is an engineering estimate of an appropriate time allotment. At least two hours of outside work per class hour is a time-honored estimate of the effort ordinarily expected in a course. (The specification of 12 credit hours as the threshold for a 'full-time' course load, 12 + 24 = 36 hours, is not entirely fortuitous.) Hence for the customary three-hour lab period alone add six hours of additional effort; this is a total of nine hours per team member per week for preparing the report. For a two-week project by a two-person team this is a total of 36 working hours! Even with a minimal effort for planning and tasking a typical project this ordinarily provides a generous margin for unexpected events and the occasional ennui.

   Incidentally you are encouraged to work cooperatively. For example a project team as a whole may (should) work together to develop each topic in an project, assign a specific individual (or more than one) primary responsibility for a draft of content, then collectively review the draft as a team, and ultimately coordinate the preparation of the several topics. Consider using this general approach rather than simply assigning topics ad hoc for separate preparation and hoping that it can all be stitched together properly in a last-minute marathon.

2) In general the font to be used for text is Times or Times Roman, with a font size of 12 points. This size may be modified (within reason) for special circumstances, e.g. on a drawing or a figure or as a heading.

3) Do not use color printing. While color printing is useful and indeed widely used color printers are not yet generally available to all students. This proscription is intended simply to level the playing field until a better day.

4) Use a document upper margin of 0.5 inch, and a lower margin of 0.75 inch. The lower margin allows for a one-line footer containing on the left side the project/team identification and in the center a page number. Use a left margin of 1 inch and a right margin of 0.5 inch. (The left margin allows for stapling or punching holes in a page.)

5) The first (cover) page of the report is as prescribed, except of course for obvious changes from one report to the next. A template is provided for downloading. Keep a copy of the template to simplify reproducing the page. For the report as turned in each team member will sign her/his name in the place next to the typed name to record acceptance of responsibility for the report as a whole. An explicit honor pledge is not needed; it is subsumed in your signature. I take this interpretation of your signature most seriously. You may not have someone else sign for you.
6) The second page contains (at the top) the project name and the names of the project team, but is otherwise blank. This page is for my convenience, and will be used by me as a predefined location for a grade, any overall commentary, or other remarks.

7) An Executive Summary and a Task Assignments list, both preferably on the same page and never on more than two pages follows the second page
   a) The Executive Summary (or Abstract) describes in general terms the nature/purpose of the project and the overall conclusions. Ordinarily it should not contain detailed technical material or (perhaps with rare exception for clarity or as a conventional shorthand) equations; these are for the body of the report. No more than about half a page; roughly 150 words or so should be quite enough.
   b) The same (preferably) or if there is some special reason a third page contains the Task Assignments item and lists who had primary responsibility for each of the various tasks into which the project was divided. (This division may be a bit strained particularly for the initial projects. Also in general responsibility for a topic can be shared.) Note that the report as a whole is a responsibility of the entire team. While poor performance on a particular task may be attributed to the task assignee, it also is a responsibility of the entire team to have detected this during a review and corrected it. The project should be managed so that there is a timely recognition of problem(s), and appropriate assistance sought for rectifying the problem.

8) The next report page is a Table of Contents page showing the major divisions of the report and their page location. In this respect refer to the comment on Appendices below.

9) The report content follows. There should be an Introduction laying out the general purpose of the report. The body of the report follows. Section headings will be numbered and underlined. Figures will be uniquely numbered and captioned. A figure preferably will be placed on the page where it is first mentioned, or at most on the following page. Reference to a figure in the text must always include the figure number.

Finally there should be Conclusions. You are encouraged to include opinions about the usefulness of the project, suggestions for its improvement, and other recommendations. Courteous critical remarks, good, bad, or indifferent are welcome.

For this course there is no other formal requirement on styles other than that a reasonable style be used. For a style reference consult your textbooks, technical journals, the ECE 498 style manual, or the style manual for papers for IEEE or other journals. While there are some idiosyncratic differences in these references it is their general uniformity that is more notable.

10) While more may be necessary the first two appendices as prescribed below are standard:
    a) Appendix I: Project Specifications is a copy of just the short project assignment statement as provided; simply paste it into your report. Do not paste explanatory material that may be part of a handout included with the specification.
    b) Appendix II: Progress Reports is simply the (somewhat artificial) collection of progress reports filed for the project. In general a weekly project progress report is required, and each report consists of four concisely worded items:
       1) Identification of the project team.
       2) What was planned (simply copy this from the previous progress report; omit for the first report).
       3) What was actually accomplished (and by whom)?
       4) The plan for the next progress report.

There should be at least two reports. The first one sets up the project, i.e. what will be item 2 for the second report. If the second report is the last one item 3 is 'Report issued on x/x/0x'.