

CA 253: CAREER STRATEGIES

FALL 2012

Monday/Wednesday – 10:00am–10:50am – Mickle Hall 114

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All contents of this syllabus are tentative & subject to change!

COURSE OVERVIEW

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to increase awareness of the professional decision making process, explore career choices, and expand understanding of the relationship between education and the world of work. Emphasis will be placed on self-assessment as it relates to professional discernment, tackling the job search, issues related to hiring and the workplace, and the graduate school admissions process. This course satisfies the *CAREER* component of Trek.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. **Career Development Process** – Students will gain an understanding of the lifelong career development process. Students will identify where they are in their own personal career development process, and become aware of the steps and tools necessary to help them make their career goals a reality.
2. **Self-Assessment** – Students will identify personal interests, values, skills, and personality characteristics that will assist them with professional discernment and professional development throughout their lives. Students will also participate in an individual coaching session to assist with this process.
3. **Career Exploration** – Students will explore possible career pathways through the collection and analysis of occupational information. Media used for data collection will include written material, Internet sites, and informational interviewing and/or observation.
4. **Job Search Strategies** – Students will become aware of and learn how to utilize various job search methods, as well steps in the job application process. Students will learn job search strategies, draft a professional résumé and cover letter, and participate in a mock interview.
5. **Graduate School Preparation** – Students will become familiar with the graduate school admissions process and criteria used by admissions committees to accept or deny applicants. Students who are interested in pursuing graduate school will explore various graduate

programs, draft a personal statement, and engage in personal communication with a program coordinator of a graduate program of interest.

**Learning outcomes will be assessed through performance on assignments, the pre- and post-course assessments, the final exam, and an end-of-course evaluation.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Pollak, L. (2012). *Getting from college to career: Your essential guide to succeeding in the real world*. New York: HarperCollins.

**Additional brief articles may be assigned over the course of the semester. Students will always be notified at least one week prior to the due date of any additional readings.

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance is taken daily for this class. The structure and nature of this course requires individual and group participation and interaction. **You are allotted ONE UNEXCUSED absence. Each unexcused absence beyond your one will result in a 2-point deduction from your FINAL grade!** Please be aware of this and realize that multiple unexcused absences could cause you to drop a letter grade.

Excused absences include emergency circumstances, such as illness, death in the family, etc. **Required** Centenary events (such as athletic events, leadership conferences, etc.) are also excusable. **Please inform me prior to class if you know you will be absent.** You will still be responsible for turning in all assignments on time.

LATE WORK:

You will lose two points per day for each day that an assignment is late! All assignments are due in class (paper copy) on the stated date, unless otherwise indicated.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

All electronic devices are to be **TURNED OFF** or **SILENCED BEFORE CLASS**. This includes cell phones, laptops, iPods, MP3 players, CD players, etc.

ACCOMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES:

It is the policy of Centenary College to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal law, state law, and the College's commitment to equal educational opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodations, for example in seating placement or in arrangements for examinations, should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. Students with disabilities need to contact Disability Services (a division of Counseling Services), which is located in the ground floor of Rotary Hall to obtain services. Telephone: 318-869-5466/5424

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE:

Membership in the student body of Centenary College carries with it an obligation, and requires a commitment, to act with honor in all things. Because academic integrity is fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge and truth and is the heart of the academic life of Centenary College, it is the responsibility of all members of the College community to practice it and to report apparent violations.

Students shall add to all papers, tests, assignments, etc., the following handwritten pledge followed by their signature*:

I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this examination (paper), nor have I seen anyone else do so, except as I shall report immediately to the Honor Court.

*Materials submitted electronically must contain the pledge; submission implies signing the pledge.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Self-assessments (40 points total)

Students will complete the following two self-assessments and turn in a copy of their results:

A. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (20 points)

- To access the test, go to: www.typefocus.com
- Click "New Users Start Here" to create a new account
- Create an account; Use access code DD862H57
- Take the "Personality Assessment" located under the "Self Assessments" tab. You may also take the "Interests" and "Values" assessments if you wish, but these are not required.
- Print out two copies of your results – one for you to turn in and one for you to have during class. (I only need page one, but you may want to print out the full results for yourself.)

B. Enneagram (20 points)

- To take the test, go to: http://www.enneagraminstitute.com/dis_sample_36.asp
- Print out two copies of your results - one for you to turn in and one for you to have during class. (I only need page one, but you may want to print out the full results for yourself.)

2. Self-assessment Reflection (40 points)

Write a 3-4 page reflection paper about your self-assessment discovery process. Your paper should address the following **three components**:

1. Reflect on the following:

- What are you good at? Include skills, natural strengths, and personality traits.
- What are you passionate about? Include your personal values and interests.
- How do your skills/strengths/values/etc. apply to your chosen professional path or various paths you might still be exploring?

- Did you gain any new insights about yourself? Did anything surprise you or conflict with your self-knowledge?
2. After you reflect, select three different occupations you might be interested in, and write a short summary of each. Include why you think each would be a good fit for you based on your self-assessments and self-knowledge.
 3. Finally, list any other questions that you may have related to your career exploration, job search, and/or graduate school preparation. This will help guide your individual career coaching sessions.

3. **First Draft of Résumé & Cover Letter & Individual Critique/Career Coaching Session (40 points)**

An important goal of this course is for you to leave with a polished and professional résumé, as well as an understanding of the role that résumés and cover letters play in the job search process. As such, **this is a two-part assignment:**

A. Résumé & Cover Letter (30 points)

Search online for a job that interests you. (If you don't know where to start looking, try monster.com and careerbuilder.com.) Once you find a job that piques your interest, create your résumé and a targeted cover letter for that position.

B. Individual Critique/Career Coaching Session (10 points)

Sign up for a time to meet individually with me to have your résumé and cover letter reviewed. In addition, we will discuss where you are currently in your career exploration process and individual professional development. Meetings will take place in my office.

Please submit your draft résumé and cover letter **via email BEFORE class on the due date.**

4. **Final Résumé & Cover Letter (40 points)**

Based off the feedback you received during your individual meeting with me, create polished copies of your résumé and cover letter (again, targeted to a specific job). Please submit your final résumé and cover letter **via email BEFORE class on the due date.**

5. **Mock Interview & Reflection (60 points)**

There will be several days throughout the semester during which employers will conduct mock interviews with students and offer constructive feedback. You will sign up for an interview slot during one of those days. **This is a two-part assignment:**

A. Mock Interview

For your Mock Interview, you are REQUIRED to:

- Dress professionally (as you would for a real interview)
- Arrive on time for your scheduled appointment
- Bring a copy of your final résumé for your interviewer

B. Reflection Paper

After the interview you will **write a 2 page reflection about your experience** – what you learned, what you think you did well on, and what areas you need to work on.

CONSEQUENCE FOR NO-SHOWS: If you do not show up for your scheduled mock interview without prior notice, you will be required to write a note of apology to the interviewer and have it approved by me before sending.

6. Exploration Project (80 points)

The Exploration Project allows you to research and reflect on a path that you might take post-graduation. **There are TWO options to fulfill this assignment. Pick ONE.**

OPTION #1: Career Exploration

The Career Exploration option is designed to help you explore a potential future career that interests you. For this assignment, you will research an occupation, interview or shadow someone working in your chosen field, and create a realistic personal budget for your “first year on the job.” **Include a reference page with ALL citations, in addition to the contact information (email address/phone number) for the person you interviewed/shadowed.** Your finished product should be 5 pages minimum (including your budget).

This is a three-part assignment:

A. Research & Interview/Job Shadow

Research an occupation that you are currently interested in pursuing. **As part of your research, you must conduct an informational interview OR job shadow someone who is currently working in that field.**

B. Paper

After you have conducted your research and participated in informational interviewing/job shadowing, write a paper to discuss your findings and experience. Your discussion should include (but is not limited to) the following items:

- Why are you interested in this occupation?
- What are the typical duties/responsibilities of someone in this occupation?
- What education and qualifications are needed to enter the field?
- What are the average entry-level and mid-range salaries?
- What is your personal plan for preparing yourself to enter this field? (What experiences will you need? Are there activities/student organizations that could assist you in gaining exposure/experience in this field? What other education/certifications do you need?)
- What did you find interesting/helpful in the interviews/shadowing? Did anything that you learned about the job/field surprise you?
- Demonstrate how the self-assessments and/or your self-knowledge support or do not support this career choice and what aspects of the career path might provide you with satisfaction, challenges, and difficulties. Indicate whether you still think this field is still a good match for you after your research and why or why not. **(THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SECTION! You must dedicate at least one page to this discussion.)**

C. Personal Budget

Select a city where you would like to live and work. Based on the cost of living for that city, and your average starting salary, create a monthly budget. Additional information will be provided to assist you in creating your budget.

Exploration Project option #2 on next page

---- OR ----

OPTION #2: Graduate School Exploration & Personal Statement

The Graduate School Exploration option is designed to help you prepare for the graduate school admissions process. For this assignment, you will research prospective programs, practice inquiring with a faculty member, and create your own personal statement. Your finished product should be 5 pages minimum (3 pages of program summaries and 2 pages for your personal statement). In addition, please **include a copy of your email exchange with the faculty member that you contacted**. If you prefer not to share your email with me, please create a reference page with the contact information (institution name, faculty member's name, title, & department, email address, and phone number) for the faculty member you contacted.

This is a three-part assignment:

A. Research & Program Inquiry

Conduct research on **three** possible graduate programs that you would be interested in applying to. Become very familiar with each program's website; look at ALL material on the program website, such as program curriculum & mission, cost, faculty research interests, opportunities for students, program benefits, what alums are doing, etc. As you are reviewing the program websites, you will likely have many questions. **Select one faculty member at one institution (preferably the program coordinator), and email this individual with a question or two.** Make sure that your email is professional, as you may end up actually applying to this program one day! I am happy to review your email before you send it.

B. Program Summaries

For EACH graduate program, write a one-page summary that includes:

- Admissions requirements (materials, deadlines, etc.)
- Program mission statement
- **Most important part – discuss why you are interested in applying to this particular program/school.** For example, research opportunities, institutional type, specific faculty, graduate assistantship availability, location, reputation to the school, and program curricula are all factors that may influence your decision (though that is NOT an exhaustive list). Think back on the values and interests discussions from earlier in the semester; these will no doubt have an effect on your graduate school preferences. Thinking about *why* certain programs appeal to you will assist you in preparing your personal statement.

C. Personal Statement

After conducting your research, write a personal statement for your favorite graduate program out of the three that you looked at. You will base your personal statement on either the prompt listed on the program's website, or from a prompt discussed in class. Your personal statement should be about 2 pages in length, unless otherwise specified by the school.

7. Final Exam (100 points)

The final is cumulative and will be based on lectures given during class, information presented by guest speakers, and the course readings.

PAPER & ASSIGNMENT SPECIFICATIONS:

Please use the following specifications for all papers in this course:

- 1 inch margins
- 12-point font
- Double-spaced
- Times New Roman

All assignments are due in-class (paper copy) on the stated due date, unless otherwise indicated.

COURSE GRADING

ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS POSSIBLE
Myers-Briggs Assessment	20 points
Enneagram Assessment	20 points
Self-assessment Reflection	40 points
First Draft of Résumé & Cover Letter	40 points
Final Résumé & Cover Letter	40 points
Mock Interview & Reflection	60 points
Career/Graduate School Exploration Project	80 points
Final Exam	100 points
TOTAL	400 points

**Remember, each unexcused absence (beyond your one freebie) will result in a 2-point deduction from your FINAL grade.

GRADING SCALE:

A	360 - 400 points
B	320 - 359 points
C	280 - 319 points
D	240 - 279 points
F	below 240 points

*"You have brains in your head, you have feet in your shoes,
You can steer yourself any direction you choose."*

- Dr. Seuss

FALL 2012 CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Class Topic	Readings/Assignments Due
Mon, Aug. 20	Introductions & Overview	
Wed, Aug. 22	Career Planning Process	Read: Pollak - Introduction & Chapter 1
Mon, Aug. 27	Myers-Briggs GUEST SPEAKER	Myers-Briggs Results due Read: Pollak Chapter 3
Wed, Aug. 29	Myers-Briggs, Continued GUEST SPEAKER	
Mon, Sept. 3	Labor Day - NO CLASS	
Wed, Sept. 5	Assessing Your Skills & Values	
Mon, Sept. 10	Enneagram GUEST SPEAKER	Enneagram Results due
Wed, Sept. 12	Enneagram, Continued GUEST SPEAKER	
Mon, Sept. 17	Résumés	Read: Pollak Chapter 7
Wed, Sept. 19	Cover Letters	Self-assessment Reflection due Read: Pollak Chapter 6
Mon, Sept. 24	Job & Internship Search Strategies Networking & Informational Interviewing	Read: Pollak Chapters 4-5
Wed, Sept. 26	Job & Internship Search Strategies, Continued *BRING LAPTOP TO CLASS*	1st Draft of Résumé & Cover Letter due via email Read: Pollak Chapter 8
Mon, Oct. 1	NO CLASS	
Wed, Oct. 3	NO CLASS	
Mon, Oct. 8	Graduate School v. Workforce	
Wed, Oct. 10	Graduate School Admissions GUEST SPEAKER	Read: <i>Applying to Graduate School</i> (will be sent via email)
Mon, Oct. 15	Alumni Job Search Panel	
Wed, Oct. 17	Personal Branding, Online Identity, & Social Media	Read: Pollak Chapter 2
Mon, Oct. 22	Interviewing	Read: Pollak Chapter 9
Wed, Oct. 24	Interviewing, Continued GUEST SPEAKER	
Mon, Oct. 29	Accepting Job Offers, Negotiating, & Benefits GUEST SPEAKER	
Wed, Oct. 31	Budgeting & Financial Planning GUEST SPEAKER	Final Résumé & Cover Letter due via email
Mon, Nov. 5	Organizational Culture: The 4 Frames	
Wed, Nov. 7	Organizational Culture: The 4 Frames, Continued	
Mon, Nov. 12	The Multigenerational Workplace GUEST SPEAKER	Mock Interview Reflection due
Wed, Nov. 14	Business Etiquette & The First Year on the Job	Read: Pollak Chapter 10
Mon, Nov. 19	Thanksgiving Break - NO CLASS	
Wed, Nov. 21	Thanksgiving Break - NO CLASS	
Mon, Nov. 26	Review for final & course wrap-up	Exploration Project due
Wed, Nov. 28	Final Exam	