

Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies 295C Career and Life Choices Spring 2012

Mondays 2:30-3:45

2 credits

Mandatory Pass/Fail

Keep This Syllabus for Future Reference!

Karen Lederer

208 Bartlett Hall

545-1922

lederer@wost.umass.edu

Course Description: How can you live the values you have discovered while you have been in school? What are the options if you want to help the world and have a reasonable life besides? How can you use your well honed research skills to find options for life after college? The first part of the semester is self awareness, and the second part of the semester focuses on workforce information and practical job search skills. The class is particularly focused on career questions for Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies students.

This is a challenging class, while non-traditional academically. The class requires commitment, thought, and **mandatory** attendance. This course will give you the chance to do the things you know you need to do as a senior: write resumes, create a budget, and research a particular career. You will clarify your values and goals, and through that process, prioritize what is most important to you.

Requirements

Note: All assignments must be turned in on paper. Do not email assignments.

Job Notebook: Get some type of folder or notebook that allows you to add and remove pages. You will be given exercises in class to complete and place in your notebook. Bring it to every class meeting. Print out ads from online listings and look through the want ads at least once a week and clip out jobs in which you have some interest. Be sure to vary the newspapers you look in—choose large city Sunday papers like the Boston Globe, New York Times or the Washington Post. If you know what area you want to live in, search in that city's newspaper listings. Also utilize large on-line bulletin boards, (idealist.org, indeed.com, feminist.org job listings, wetfeet.com, monster.com are a start) and ads in professional journals for the fields that interest you. **Make notes** on what is *specifically interesting* about the jobs, what is *challenging* about them, things *you don't like* about them, further *training* necessary for you to do the jobs, and any other thoughts or feelings you have about them. Any other information you gather about jobs from people you meet or research you do (www.bls.gov has great information, including the occupational outlook handbook with up to date career info) can be kept in this notebook. If you hear about a great job from a friend, or see someone on television with an improbable but fascinating job, make a note! Please bring your notebook to class regularly as periodically we will take a few minutes of class for people to share what they have gathered. **The first set of ads and comments is due at the 2nd class. Another set due by April 9.**

Budget: A budget form must be filled out and turned in. This budget is the projected realistic budget for the lifestyle you hope to have once you finish your education, and are in a job and location you want. **Due February 27.**

Research and Presentation: In the first part of the semester you will identify a particular job or field you want to research. You will research the field in the second part of the semester, culminating in a brief presentation to the class on your findings coupled with a reflective paper. You can work in pairs, but as a class, we will aim for a spread of fields to enhance the knowledge of the group. Presentations and research can be done in pairs, informational interviews and the reflective paper must be written individually. The research should include:

-Facts about the field, training and qualification needed, state of the field today (is it growing? shrinking?) different types of organizations in this field or different populations served, etc. This research can be done in the library, and through professional organizations and career websites. Be sure to cite your sources, and be wary of advertisements disguised as information.

-Informational interviews about the field. Each student **must** conduct at least one interview with a person working in this field in the career the student wants to explore. The purpose of the interview is to gather information about what it is actually like (good and bad) to work in such positions, skills needed and possible career paths. Additional interviews **strongly** encouraged. Handout available in class.

Each presentation should be 10 minutes plus questions and answers. We will make the presentation schedule in class, presentations will take place at the end of the semester. Use handouts or visuals if they will assist your classmates in learning about the field. After the presentation, turn in a brief reflective paper on your thoughts on the field as a result of your research. Is this career a viable option for you? Did you find out facts that changed your mind? Be specific about your conclusions. 2-3 pages.

Topic by March 5. Presentations as scheduled in class, April 17 or April 23.

Papers due April 23.

Resume and Cover Letter: Using information about yourself gathered during the self awareness section of the class and the material from the class and book on resumes, create a resume for a position selected from your job notebook or for a current position you are interested in. Write a cover letter as part of your application for that position.

Turn in the ad with resume and cover letter plus 2 additional copies of each on March 26. Meet, call or email to share your feedback to your partners. Final copy due to instructor April 2.

Career Event paper. Attend a career event such as career fair or workshop and write a 1-2 page reflection. **Due April 17 at the latest.**

Integrative Paper/Action Plan: This paper is your statement of conclusions and next steps. Throughout the course you will be collecting information about yourself in relation to work and life preferences and career/job opportunities which match your needs. This paper is a discussion of what you have learned about your values, politics, skills, work environment preferences, life style, career, etc. Synthesize the insights gained from the exercises, readings, assignments, and group work. What is most important to you? Where are you willing to compromise? What is next? Include an action plan in which you discuss the concrete steps you will take to pursue the career you have chosen, or to further clarify your choice. The action plan can be written as prose, a list, a timeline or in some other format. 3-7 pages.

Paper due at last class or to my office by May 7.

Optional Additional Assignments: This course can be customized to your needs. If you would like to submit graduate school application materials, a networking journal, a resume/cover letter for an actual position, or business plan, please see Karen.

Evaluation

Successful completion of this course depends on class participation and written work. It is essential that you complete the required exercises when they are due as we will be processing them in class. You are expected to be a productive member of your small group, giving careful feedback to other members of the class.

To pass the course you must turn in **all** the assignments in hard copy, do a presentation and attend class. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated.**

ATTENDANCE AT EACH CLASS IS **MANDATORY**---MORE THAN 3 ABSENCES RESULTS IN FAILING GRADE. *Note:* Continual tardiness will be counted in the absence calculation.

Books

Every college senior should have a good basic career planning book.

Pollak, Lindsey. Getting From College to Career, Ninety Things To Do Before You Join the Real World. Collins. Harper Collins Publishers. New York, NY, 2007. Do the assignments as distributed in class.

This book is available at Food for Thought Books, 106 N. Pleasant St., Amherst. Please support local business.

There are many career books available. Another helpful book is Zen and the Art of Making a Living by Laurence Boldt.

For career information: www.umass.edu/careers or visit career services in 511 Goodell.

The W.E.B. Du Bois Library also has great resources on careers and organizations. Be sure to utilize the library's resources in your career investigation.

Attend Career Events

Career Blast 2012:

Campus Wide Job and Internships Fair

Wednesday, February 8, 2012 10am – 3pm Campus Center Auditorium

There are several career fairs, check career services website for details.

Not-For-Profit and International Career Fair

Friday, March 9, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Keefe Campus Center, Amherst College

All students interested in learning more about working in the not-for-profit sector or in working abroad are invited to attend this career fair. Refreshments will be served.

Course Outline Spring 2012

Reading assignments are due on the day they are listed, exercises will be distributed in class with instructions. Bring your notebook to class. **Handouts/links on SPARK.**

1 January 23. *Why Career Planning?*

2. January 30. Getting From College to Career, Introduction, and pages 1-27.
Start Career Notebook. Turn in at least 2 ads for jobs you are drawn to *with comments*, one position you could get upon graduation, one for 5 years down the road. **Interest Exercises Due.**

3. February 6. **Skills Exercises Due.**
Guest speaker, Caroline Gould, Career Services
Getting From College to Career, Chapter 3, pages 46-61.

4. February 13. **Values Exercises Due.** Read "Changing the World and Getting Paid to Do It" from Idealist, article on SPARK.

no class 2/20 Holiday

5. February 27. *Money*. **Budget is Due.**

****attend career events on campus/write paper**

6. March 5. *Wrapping up Self Awareness*. Establish Research Projects Schedule.
Getting From College to Career pages 62-83, 129-168. **Bring everything to class.**

7. March 12. *Resume and Cover Letter Writing*. Getting From College to Career, pages 28-45, 193-212.

Spring Break—Good time for informational interviews

8. March 26. *Interviewing Skills*. Getting From College to Career pages 84-107, 238-274. **Respond to ad with a resume and cover letter. Bring in 2 copies of job/resume/letter for peer review. Give feedback on resumes by April 2.**

9. April 2. *Workforce Issues. Wage Inequity, Occupational Segregation Affirmative Action and more.* Getting From College to Career pages 213-237. "The Pressure to Cover" by Kenji Yoshino (article on SPARK.) **Resume/Letter Due.**

10. April 9. *Work and Family; Graduate School. Action Planning. Stress Management.* Getting From College to Career pages 107-128, 169-192. **2nd set of Ads due**

11. April 17. **Presentations by class members. Event paper due**
Tuesday is a Monday schedule

12. April 23. **Presentations by class members. Research paper due**

13. April 30. *Last class/wrap up* Getting From College to Career pages 275-278 and resources. **Final Paper today or by May 7 to 208 Bartlett Hall.**