

**Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies 295C Career and Life Choices Spring 2015**

Wednesdays 2:30-4:00 Bartlett 274

2 credits

Mandatory Pass/Fail

*Keep This Syllabus for Future Reference!*

Karen Lederer

208 Bartlett Hall

545-1922

[lederer@wost.umass.edu](mailto: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:** Set up a file or notebook that allows you to add/remove or print pages. You will be given exercises in class (also on Moodle) to complete and place in your file. Bring it to every class meeting. Examine ads from online listings at least once a week and select jobs in which you have some interest. Be sure to vary the cities you look in—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 listings. Also utilize large on-line bulletin boards, (idealist.org, indeed.com, feminist.org job listings, 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](http://www.bls.gov) has great information, including the occupational outlook handbook with up to date career info) can be kept in this file. 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 file to class regularly as periodically we will take a few minutes for people to share what they have gathered. **The first set of ads and comments is due at the 2nd class, a second set may be required. The class may share ads on Moodle.**

**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 11.**

**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 done 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 in class and on moodle.

Each presentation should be 5-10 minutes plus questions and answers. We will make the presentation schedule in class, presentations will take place at the end of the semester. These are informal presentations, but making a 1 page handout is recommended to assist your classmates in learning about the field. You can email the handout to the instructor to be duplicated. 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 February 25. Presentations as scheduled in class, April 8 or April 15. Papers due April 15.**

**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 11. Meet, call or email to share your feedback with your partners. Final copy due to instructor March 25.**

**Career Event paper.** Attend a career event such as career fair or workshop and write a 1-2 page reflection. **Due April 15 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 4.**

*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: This does NOT mean take off up to three classes.* 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, (revised edition) Harper Business, HarperCollins Publishers. New York, NY, 2012.

This book is available at Amherst Books, 8 Main Street in Amherst. Please support local business. This book and related books are also on reserve in the library.

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](http://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**

#### **Diversity Career Fair**

Tuesday February 24, 2015 1-5pm Student Union Ballroom

#### **Career Blast 2015**

Wednesday February 25, 2015 10am-3pm Campus Center Lower Level

#### **Service & Leadership Career and Internship Fair**

Non-profit, government, education and camps

Tuesday, March 3, 2015 1-4pm Student Union Ballroom

look for departmental career events/alumni panels and more

## Course Outline Spring 2015

Readings are due on the day they are listed, exercises will be distributed in class with instructions. Bring notebook and exercises to class. **Handouts/links on Moodle.**

1. January 21. *Why Career Planning?*

2. January 28. Getting From College to Career, Introduction, and pages 1-28. **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 4. **Skills Exercises Due.**  
Getting From College to Career, Chapter 3, pages 49-64.

4. February 11. *Money. Budget is Due.*

5. February 18. **Values Exercises Due.** Read "Changing the World and Getting Paid to Do It", "The Pressure to Cover" and "For Yale's Money Man A Higher Calling" articles on Moodle plus pages 65-88. **Guest speaker, Caroline Gould, Assistant Director of Career Planning, Career Services** **\*\*attend career events on campus/write paper**

6. February 25. *Wrapping up Self Awareness. Establish Research Projects Schedule.* Getting From College to Career Chapter 5, pages 137-181.  
**Bring everything to class. Guest speaker, Margaret Arsenault, Assistant Director, Workplace Learning and Development.**

7. March 4. *Resume and Cover Letter Writing.* Getting From College to Career, Chapter 2, pages 29-48; Chapter 7, pages 209-232.

8. March 11. *Interviewing Skills.* Getting From College to Career Chapter 4, pages 89-136, Chapter 9, pages 263-305.  
**Respond to ad with a resume and cover letter. Bring in 2 copies of job/resume/letter for peer review. Give feedback on resumes before next class.**

**Spring Break—Good time for informational interviews**

9. March 25. *Workforce Issues. Wage Inequity, Occupational Segregation Affirmative Action and more.* Getting From College to Career, Chapter 8, pages 233-262.  
**Resume/Letter Due.**

10. April 1. *Work and Family. Graduate School. Action Planning. Stress Management.* Getting From College to Career, Chapter 6, pages 182-208.

11. April 8. **Presentations by class members. Event paper due.**

12. April 15. **Presentations by class members. Research paper due.**  
**no class April 22, Wednesday is a Monday schedule**

13. April 29. *Last class/wrap up* Getting From College to Career pages 307-321 and resources. **Final Paper today or by May 4 to 208 Bartlett Hall.**