

Geography 399: Professional Development in Geography

Draft-Subject to change

Instructor: Dr Leslie McLees

Office: Condon 107D

Tues & Thurs 9:00-9:50

Condon 106

Course Website: canvas.uoregon.edu

Course Description

This course is designed to provide geography students with resources and opportunities to critically reflect on their individual career development pathways and to describe their accomplishments, interests, values and personal characteristics in professional situations. The course will emphasize the importance of skills students have gained in geography classes and how they can translate those skills in professional situations. We will focus on applying concepts that geographers use, such as scale, place, globalization, and human-environment interactions, in professional environments in way that reflect the critical thinking gained from geography and a liberal arts education. This will allow students to reflect and articulate the benefits of a geographical approach in different professional settings.

This course will also focus on the importance of understanding a persons' individual strengths to better-prepare them for finding a job suitable to their particular characteristics. In a job economy where the current generation of graduates is expected to change jobs every three to four years it is important to be able to understand how a student's personal interests and skills can be applied in a variety of ways. This require critical reflection of those interests and skills, and their potential application in different professional settings.

Throughout the course, there will be lessons on logistical aspects of developing a career such as writing resumes and cover letters, the art of interviews and networking. The course will also provide an overview of the types of jobs geographers are suitable for through textbook readings and through a guest speaker series. Students will prepare resumes, cover letters, an online portfolio and conduct interviews and networking exercises as practice for the logistics of getting a job. They will also participate in an interest and personality test to provide an opportunity to examine the different strengths that a person can bring to a particular job.

Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and critically reflect on the skills, values and interests that students have gained through their life and academic experiences;
- Articulate the skills and values that they have, and how those translate into career options;
- Understand how a geographical approach and education enhances their career
- Connect skills to long-term personal and professional goals and development a pathway of steps necessary to reach those goals;

- Understand how to see themselves outside the structure of college requirements, beginning to independently make decisions about career pathways;
- Identify and prioritize what is important in their personal and professional goals so that when life circumstances change, they are better able to adapt.
- Create an online portfolio that moves students beyond courses and articulates them as a geographer

Estimated Student Workload

Students will be expected to spend a significant amount of time outside the classroom engaged in work for the course. They will be expected to keep up with readings from the course and reflect weekly on discussions in a journal. This is to help students keep track of and reflect upon the issues presented in class and the texts and how they might incorporate them into an evolving vision of career development. By the end of the term, students will also have developed a career pathway map which will be a visual representation of what a student wants to do, an analysis of the skills and experiences they bring to a career, factors in their life that influence the way they will get there, and what steps they need to take to achieve that goal.

The first few weeks, focus will be on critical reflections about individual skills and experiences within the context of Geography, and specifically on what geographers bring to professional situations. This will include readings, discussions, a brief online personality test, and class exercises on gauging their interests. Other assignments include; searching for job ads, creating a resume and cover letter, conducting an informational interview, creating an online portfolio, etc. These will build upon each other throughout the term to create a completed job application.

How grades will be determined

Assessment type	% grade	Description
Attendance & participation	30%	Coming to class and engaging in discussion
Weekly journal	15%	Response to themes in discussions and readings
Online portfolio	15%	Online resource for employers and students
Career path map	10%	Students will build this over the course of the term
Final job application	25%	Inclusive of draft and final resume, cover letter, etc
Informational interview write-up	5%	
TOTAL	100%	

A note on assignments:

This course is about professional development. Like any class, make sure you follow the guidelines and hand in professional quality material. As such;

- Marginal work will earn a marginal grade;
- Any assignment that is late will receive 10% off for each day it is late;
- There is no opportunity for extra credit in this class.

Course Schedule

	Monday	before next class	Wednesday	before next class	Journal
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1	Introductions , course overview, thoughts on jobs in geography	<i>Ch. 1 & 2 in Solem et al. Pgs 1-26;</i>	Why geography? Career Dev't map discussion.	<i>Take online Myers Briggs, register for DuckConnect Inventory; ch 1 & 2 in in Pollack, pgs 1-45</i>	Reflections on why geography?
2	Personalities, skills, values and interests: In class discussion of test with career center.	<i>ch 14 & 15 in Solem et al. Pgs 174-196</i>	RAISEC test; discussion of portfolio assignment	<i>Find a website to host your online portfolio. Ch 3 in Pollack, pgs 46-83</i>	Personalities, skills & interests contribute to a workplace?
3	'Getting a job' vs. developing a career pathway: Start career path map in class; how to search for jobs. Introduce resume and cover letter.	<i>Find five distinct jobs. Bring descriptions to class and be ready to discuss; Ch 7 in Pollack, pgs 193-212.</i>	Due: six job ads to class: Deconstructing a job ad: How would I frame my interests, skills, personality to an employer? Informational interview assignment.	<i>ch. 3 & 4 in Solem et al. Pgs 27-58. Chose a job to apply to and begin constructing a resume and cover letter geared to that position</i>	How did the jobs you find appeal to you after in-class discussion?
4	Internship or, grad school? What do I need to achieve my goal? How do I find an internship/ grad school?	<i>Search of grad schools or internships that might fit your needs;</i>	Internships (purpose), grad school, intro cover letters and resumes (remind: info interviews and pick a job)	<i>ch 5 in Solem et al. Pgs 59-72. Ch 4 in Pollack: 84-128. Due on Sunday: journals weeks 1-4</i>	What experiences do you need to achieve your goal?
5	Networking: Guest speaker from Career Center	<i>Finish a draft of cover letter and resume. Reading on informational interviews.</i>	draft of cover letters and resumes. peer review.	<i>ch 6 & 7 in Solem et al. Pgs 72-95.</i>	Do you network? Are you good at it? How has your idea of networking changed?
6	Internship presentation (?), grad student, discussion of gov't careers	<i>Using biographies of guests, come up with questions for speakers. Ch 8 in Pollack, pg 213-237.</i>	Careers in government: Guest speaker	<i>ch 8 & 10 in Solem et al. Pgs 97-107 & 122-134.</i>	What are the pros and cons of a career in government for you?
7	Business career opportunities	<i>Using biographies of guests, come up with questions for speakers; Ch 6 in Pollack, pgs 169-192.</i>	careers in business & consulting: Guest speakers	<i>ch 9, 11 & 12 in Solem et al. Pgs 108-121 & 135-157.</i>	What are the pros and cons of a career in business or consulting for you?

8	Non-profit and education careers	<i>Using biographies of guests, come up with questions for speakers</i>	Due: Informational interview write-up. Careers in non-profit and education.	<i>ch 13 in Solem et al.. Pgs 159-172. Complete a draft job application</i> Due on Sunday: journals weeks 5-8	What are the pros and cons of a career in non-profits or education
9	Interviewing: Guest speaker from the career center. Due: Completed resume & cover letter	<i>Think of interview questions and how you might answer them for next class. Ch 9 in Pollak, pgs 238-274</i>	In-class interview exercises. Due: links to draft portfolios	<i>Complete career development map. Ch 16 in Solem et al. Pgs 198-209; Ch 5 in Pollack, pg 129-168.</i>	What are your strengths and weaknesses as an interviewee? How can you improve?
10	Lifelong Professional Development. Present career development maps		Due: Career development map Lifelong Professional Development. Present career development maps.	<i>Ch 10 in Pollack, pgs 275-278</i>	How has your career development map changed over the course of the term? What aspects do you include now and how have they helped you map out a potential career path?
Finals week	Due: Weekly journals in-class presentation of online portfolios		Due: online portfolios		

Useful links

<https://career.uoregon.edu/>

- Click on upper-right link to connect to DuckConnect and create an account in week 1

Academic Integrity Code

All students are expected to complete assignments in a manner consistent with academic integrity. Students must produce their own work and properly acknowledge and document all sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases). Students can find more complete information about the University of Oregon's Policy on Academic Dishonesty in the University of Oregon Student Handbook. Find links on the Blackboard to clarify what is meant by plagiarism and to find proper ways of using sources.

If you are found to have plagiarized (copied) off a classmate or from other materials for a test or an assignment of any sort, your first warning will be a zero on the assignment. Your second incident will result in an F in the course.

Disability Statement

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me at the beginning of the term if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu .

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is an important part of a student's educational experience. Students are expected to attend every meeting of their classes and are responsible for class attendance. Regardless of what reasons there may be for absence, students are accountable for all academic activities, and I reserve the right to require special work or tests to make up for the missed class or classes.

Etiquette

This course requires a significant amount of in-class participation, discussion and reflection. All students are expected to be engaged and share experiences. Please address each other respectfully and keep any unnecessary electronics stowed unless we are using them for class purposes.