PSY 397 – Careers in Psychology
Winter 2012

Time: Wednesday 3:00-3:50
Location: AW 305
Instructor: Todd Haskell
Office: AI 486
Office hours: M 1-2, Tu 10-11, F 10-11
Student Advisors: Matt Burrows
Chelsea Harrington
Shannon Malmborg
Kelsi Messling
E-mail: wwupsychedup@gmail.com
Class web page: http://courses.wwu.edu (Blackboard)

Course Description

Overview of career options for psychology majors. Students will research psychology-related careers, learn how to find research and volunteer opportunities, and engage in hands-on practice for applying to jobs or graduate school.

Course Objectives

In this course we will ...

- Discuss the various career options that are available to psychology majors
- Learn where to find information about psych-related jobs and graduate school programs
- Explore your interests and your strengths, and consider how to find a career that is a good match for you
- Engage in hands-on practice of skills needed when applying to jobs or to graduate school

Course Format

This course will involve very little formal lecturing. Instead, class time will primarily be spent on small-group discussions and activities. The instructor will be assisted by upper-class psychology majors who have extensive knowledge of the topics we are covering. This format is designed to provide students with a significant amount of one-on-one attention and individualized assistance. In return, it is important for students to be fully engaged in the class. Hopefully this shouldn’t be difficult – after all, it’s your life we’ll be talking about!
Readings

There is no assigned textbook for this class. From time to time relevant readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Course Requirements and Grading

Grading Criteria

This course is graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. In order to achieve a satisfactory grade, you must do the following:

- **Attend and actively participate in all class meetings.**
  - It is recognized that sometimes you may be unable to attend a class meeting due to illness, car breakdowns, weather, etc. For this reason, you may miss one class meeting without consequence.
  - If you miss a second class meeting, you must either notify the instructor in advance, or provide documentation of the reason you were not able to attend class and were unable to notify the instructor. You must also arrange to do an alternative assignment to make up the missed class time. Failure to meet these requirements will result in a grade of unsatisfactory for the course.

- **Complete all the required assignments.**
  - There are several assignments for the course; brief descriptions of these assignments are provided below. Each assignment is evaluated on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis.
  - If an assignment is determined to be unsatisfactory, you will be asked to revise and resubmit that assignment, at which point it will be evaluated again. You must receive a satisfactory on all assignments by the end of the quarter in order to receive a grade of satisfactory for the course.
  - You may submit one assignment up to 24 hours late without consequence. If you submit a second assignment late, you must either notify the instructor in advance, or provide documentation of the reason you were not able to submit it on time and were unable to notify the instructor. In either case, you must submit the assignment by the next class meeting after it was due. Failure to meet this requirement will result in a grade of unsatisfactory for the course.

Assignments

Brief descriptions of each assignment are given below. Complete descriptions of each assignment will be provided during the course.

**Assignment 1: Finding a best-fit career** - Write a short document describing three things which you would like to find in a future career, and three characteristics or abilities which represent “strengths” that you can offer a future employer. Then, identify two or three different careers that sound like they would be a good fit with your interests and abilities. Research those careers, and write a brief description of each career, along with an explanation of why you think that career would be a good fit for you.
Assignment 2: Networking – Identify either a professor or a person working in a field that interests you, and make an appointment to meet with them to learn more about their field. Submit a written description of the information you learn.

Assignment 3: Researching and applying to graduate programs – Find a graduate program that sounds interesting to you, and answer a series of questions about that program (e.g., program type, program requirements, application deadline, tuition and fees). You will also write a personal statement as if you were applying to this program.

Assignment 4: Searching for and applying for a job – Find an ad for a job you would be interested in. Research the employer, and prepare a cover letter and resume as if you were going to apply for that job.

Assignment 5: Service – Students will be given 3-4 psychology-related volunteer opportunities they can choose from. Each opportunity will involve working with a group of your fellow students to plan and implement an event in the community. Following the volunteering, you will submit a written reflection on the experience.

Academic Integrity

It is expected that all students will follow Western Washington University’s Academic Dishonesty Policy and Procedure. Because academia relies on a free exchange of ideas, students are encouraged to discuss readings and assignments with anyone they wish. However, unless otherwise indicated, the actual assignments must be the student's own work. Furthermore, written work should clearly distinguish between the student's own words and/or ideas, and words and/or ideas taken from someone else, using quotation marks and citations as appropriate. When in doubt, consult the instructor.

Note that penalties for academic dishonesty can be very severe, including a failing grade for the assignment or even the entire course.

Students with Disabilities

Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability should make their request through disAbility Resources for Students (DRS). DRS is located in Old Main, room 110. They can be contacted via e-mail at drs@wwu.edu or by phone at (360) 650-3083.

Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th>Finding a Good Career</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W 1/4</td>
<td>- Types of work environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tangible and intangible rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Time &amp; cost of training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Work/life balance and geographic mobility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 2</th>
<th>Researching Careers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W 1/11</td>
<td>- Career Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- O*Net</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- APA resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### M 1/16
**BEST-FIT CAREER ASSIGNMENT DUE**

### Class 3
**W 1/18**
**Networking and Building Professional Relationships**
- Connecting with your peers: Psych Club and NeRDS
- Building relationships with professors
- Conferences and other events
- Contacting professionals in your field: Informational interviews and job shadowing

### Class 4
**W 1/25**
**Obtaining Relevant Volunteer, Work, or Research Experience**
- Finding volunteer opportunities
- Psychology-relevant part-time jobs
- Working in a professor’s lab

### Class 5
**W 2/1**
**Graduate Programs for Psychology Majors**
- Masters Level Programs: Mental Health Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy, School Counseling/School Psychology, Social Work, Experimental Psychology
- Doctorate Level Programs: Clinical/Counseling Psychology, Research-Oriented Degrees
- Other Graduate Programs: MBA, Law School, Medical School, Education

### M 2/6
**NETWORKING ASSIGNMENT DUE**

### Class 6
**W 2/8**
**Applying to Graduate School**
- GRE
- Letters of recommendation
- Personal statement
- Financial aid

### M 2/13
**GRAD SCHOOL APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT DUE**

### Class 7
**W 2/15**
**Guest Speaker**

### Class 8
**W 2/22**
**Identifying and Marketing your Skill Set**
- What skills does a psych major provide you with?
- Getting past the stereotypes
- Articulating what you know how to do

### Class 9
**W 2/29**
**Applying for Jobs**
- Finding jobs
- Cover letters
- Resumes

### M 3/5
**JOB APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT DUE**

### Class 10
**W 3/7**
**Other Options**
- AmeriCorps
- Teach for America
- Internships & other short-term positions

### M 3/12
**SERVICE ASSIGNMENT DUE**