

Course Development Note: At the request of Debra Modellmog, Chair of the Ohio State Department of English, Ruth Friedman, the department's Career/Internship Advisor, developed the following course syllabus in Spring 2015. Jenny Patton, Senior Lecturer, taught the first offering of the course in Fall 2015 using a modified version of this syllabus. Patton taught the course again in Spring 2016 and is scheduled to teach it in Fall 2016 as well. We hope our colleagues at other institutions will find the original syllabus useful. Should you or your department draw on the contents here to develop your own course syllabus, we ask that it include an acknowledgement of this original version. See the footer below for an example acknowledgement.

Career Preparation for English Majors
Department of English
The Ohio State University

Class Meetings Once weekly for 165 minutes DAY/TIME/LOCATION	Instructor(s), Contact Information, and Office Hours NAME, PHONE, EMAIL Office Location: XXX Denney Hall, Office Hours: DAYS, X:XX – X:XX
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Description

This three-credit-hour course is designed for English majors interested in exploring and preparing for their post-graduation career options. We will begin by reflecting on individual students' strengths and preferences and thinking about job activities and careers that might complement these. We also will examine specific work environments (e.g., corporations and non-profits); the value of attending graduate or professional school; and the role that internships, undergraduate research, and networking play in career development and advancement. In addition, we will look at how to organize and manage an internship/job search; how to put together strong resumes, cover letters, and portfolios; and how to interview well over the phone, via Skype, and in person.

Materials and Texts

We will post all required course readings on Carmen (carmen.osu.edu). Students will be expected to have these readings with them for reference during class discussions.

Requirements

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| Regular attendance (see policy below) | Resume Assignment (15% of final grade) |
| Active class participation (20% of final grade) | Cover Letter Assignment (15% of final grade) |
| Weekly readings/writing assignments/quizzes (20%) | Interview and Thank You (30% of final grade) |

Meeting Schedule and Assignments

08/31/2015 – Introductions, Course Goals, and Syllabus Review

In class: We will introduce ourselves to one another and talk through the goals and requirements of this course. Students will complete a pre-course survey designed to tell us where you are in your undergraduate career; the kinds of extracurricular, work, and leadership experiences you've had; the jobs and careers with which you're already familiar; and the jobs and careers about which you'd like to know more.

Assignment 1 of 2: Complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator online. Post your MBTI results on Carmen no later than **11:59 PM on Thursday, September 10th**. Review and print out your MBTI report, and bring this report with you to class on 9/14/2015.

Assignment 2 of 2: Interview a family member or friend currently working in a full-time position. Record or take notes on their answers to the following questions:

- What is the person’s job title and for what organization do they work?
- Where does the person work? What kind of office set-up do they have?
- What does this person spend the workday doing (e.g., answering emails, drafting memos, fielding phone calls, sitting in meetings, leading meetings, researching concepts and preparing summaries, or filling out paperwork)? How much time do they typically devote to each of these tasks/activities (e.g., 2 hours answering emails or 3 hours attending meetings)?
- Who decides what the person spends their time doing each day?
- What does the person like about their current position? What do they wish was different?
- Does the person feel that this position is a good match for them? Why or why not?

Prepare a one- to two-page summary (single-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman) of the above information and upload it to Carmen no later than **11:59 PM on Sunday, September 13th**.

09/07/2015 – Labor Day, no class, university closed

09/14/2015 – Thinking About Your Future: What Will You Need on a Daily Basis to Succeed at Work?

In class: We will begin with a small-group exercise designed to jumpstart our discussion of the MBTI, its helpfulness, and the value of examining and remaining aware of your skills, preferences, and interests when deciding whether to pursue a particular internship, job, or career. Some of you will be invited to talk more about the daily work life of your family/friend interviewees and whether these positions appear to match their skills and preferences.

Assignment 1 of 2: Read Chapter 7: “Freelancing for a Living” (pp. 138-154), Chapter 8: “Going Corporate” (pp. 155 – 182), and Chapter 9: “Other Options” (pp. 183-206) of Tim Lemire’s *I’m an English Major—Now What?* (Writer’s Digest Books, 2006). All readings will be available on Carmen. Be prepared to complete a **short quiz** on this material at the beginning of class on 09/21/2015.

Assignment 2 of 2: Access the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* managed by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and available at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>. Using the “Search Handbook” field, **pick two** jobs or career fields about which you want to know more (e.g., librarian, communications, public affairs, high school teacher, or editor). Read through all the information available about your two jobs/career fields by clicking on the following tabs: “Summary,” “What They Do,” “Work Environment,” “How to Become One,” “Pay,” “Job Outlook,” “Similar Occupations,” and “More Info.” Post the following information about each of your two jobs on Carmen no later than **11:59 PM on Sunday, September 20th**: (a) job title, (b) level of education needed, (c) brief description of work environment (sentence or two), (d) pay range (lowest to highest), and (e) how employment in this job/career is expected to grow from 2012-2022 and whether this projected growth is slower or faster than the average for all occupations.

09/21/2015 – Thinking About Your Future: Where Could You Work? What Could You Do for a Living?

In class: Students will complete a short quiz on the readings taken from Lemire’s *I’m an English Major*. We will then talk about the info available through the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* before engaging in a lengthier discussion of the Lemire readings and the advantages and drawbacks of working for corporations, non-profits, government organizations, universities/colleges, and other kinds of institutions.

Assignment: Read Chapter 3, “Higher Ed: Nobody Goes Back to School” (pp. 43 – 65) of Tim Lemire’s *I’m an English Major—Now What?* (Writer’s Digest Books, 2006); Cecilia Capuzzi Simon’s “R.O.I.” (New York Times, 22 Jul. 2011); and Stephen Burt’s “Should You Go to Grad

School?” (*Slate*, 8 May. 2014). Readings also will likely include selections from *Should I Go to Graduate School: 41 Answers to an Impossible Question*, edited by Jessica Loudis, Boško Blagojević, John Arthur Peetz, and Allison Rodman (Bloomsbury, 2014). Be prepared to complete a **short quiz** on this material at the beginning of class on 09/28/2015.

09/28/2015 – Thinking About Your Future: What About Graduate School?

In class: Students will complete a **short quiz** on the assigned readings. We will then discuss the value of graduate and professional school both in terms of career exploration, career advancement, and future earning potential. We’ll also talk briefly about the materials, experiences, recommender relationships, and test scores needed to put together a strong application. During the last 50 minutes of class, we’ll hear from a panel of graduate students currently enrolled in the following kinds of programs here at Ohio State: English PhD, MFA in Creative Writing, MEd in English Education, Law School, and Master’s in Social Work. *Note:* This visitor list will likely be tweaked to reflect students’ career interests as indicated on the pre-course survey.

Assignment 1 of 2: Imagine that you decide to pursue a graduate degree in the future and that you need three recommendation letters, at least two of which must be written by faculty members who can comment on your ability to do graduate-level work. Create two half-page summaries (single-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman), one for each of your two faculty recommenders. Each summary should address the following questions: Who is the faculty recommender? What is their rank (i.e., are they an assistant, associate, or full professor or an auxiliary faculty member)? How does this faculty member know you (i.e., which class(es) have you taken with this person)? What kind of student were you in the class? What grade did you receive? What is the faculty member likely to say about you and your work? What materials will you give them to help them remember you and your work? Post your summaries on Carmen no later than **11:59 PM on Sunday, October 4th**.

Assignment 2 of 2: Read Hart Research Associates’ “It Takes More Than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success” (Washington, DC: AAC&U, 2013); Thomas L. Friedman’s “How to Get a Job at Google” (*New York Times*, 22 Feb. 2014) and “How to Get a Job at Google, Part 2” (*New York Times*, 19 Apr. 2014); and Guy Raffa’s “What the Head of Hiring at Google Doesn’t Understand About Skills” (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 28 May 2014). Be prepared to complete a **short quiz** on this material at the beginning of class on 10/05/2015.

10/05/2015 – Thinking About Your Future: Internships, Undergraduate Research, and Soft/Hard Skills

In class: Students will complete a **short quiz** on the assigned readings. We will then talk at length about the value of internships and undergraduate research projects to students’ career exploration and advancement. We will have at least two visitors—the first a young English major alumna/us with a full-time job who completed internships and the second an English major alumna/us currently in graduate school who was involved in an undergraduate research/creative project—join us for part of this discussion. Our conversations with these visitors will lead us to a concluding discussion of the soft and hard skills that students need to develop and strengthen in order to better prepare themselves for their future careers.

Assignment 1 of 2: Think about the conversation we’ve just had regarding the value of internships and undergraduate research. Complete just one of the following two tasks: (1) Find at least three internship/job postings or internship/job programs online that interest you and create a half-page summary that includes the internship position and organization, deadlines for applying, responsibilities, and application materials requested. (2) Find at least three Ohio State faculty members online whose teaching and research interests relate to a research or creative project that you’d like to pursue and create a half-page summary that explains why each of these

people and their work dovetails with your imagined project. Upload your summary to Carmen no later than **11:59 PM on Sunday, October 11th**.

Assignment 2 of 2: Create a comprehensive list of your current soft and hard skills using the example list you received in class. Then, develop a list of soft and hard skills that you don't have but feel like you'll need. Upload your lists to Carmen no later than **11:59 PM on Sunday, October 11th**.

10/12/2015 – Thinking About Your Future: Informational Interviews, Networking, and Online Research

In class: We'll begin class by talking about the soft and hard skills that you have and how you can strengthen/develop those that you don't. We'll also talk about how difficult it was to locate internship/job postings and faculty profiles online; this will lead us into a discussion of the importance of online research skills to all jobs and professions. We'll then move on to talk about informational interviews—what they are, why they're useful, and how to request and conduct one—and watch an example informational interview together. We'll conclude with a discussion of online and in-person networking.

Assignment 1 of 2: Locate someone online (or through your in-person network) whom you'd like to email about setting up an informational interview. Using a Word document, draft an email requesting an informational interview with this person (**DON'T SEND IT YET**) and include the person's name, title, organization, and email address at the top of the document. Upload this document to Carmen no later than **11:59 PM on Sunday, October 18th**.

Assignment 2 of 2: Using the sample resumes provided, create/revise/update your resume. Do not use any kind of resume template; instead, use a blank Word document. Your resume will likely fit on a single page; however, if you need to go onto a second page to fully capture your experience, that's fine for now. Once your resume is complete, save it as a PDF file. Upload this file to Carmen no later than **11:59 PM on Sunday, October 18th**.

10/19/2015 – Prepare for the Search: Resumes

In class: We will begin by looking at some of your posted resumes together and discussing best practices for strengthening and polishing these documents. We'll also talk about how to tweak your resume depending on the type of positions to which you're applying. Later, we will break into pairs and go through one another's resumes line by line, correcting mistakes, asking questions, and providing feedback as appropriate.

Assignment 1 of 2: Revise your resume in keeping with our best practices discussion and the feedback you received from your peer reviewer. *Important note:* Creating a well-written and coherent resume takes time, thought, and attention to detail. You will be using this resume (or versions of it) to secure internships/jobs in the future, and I encourage you to put together the strongest document possible. Once your resume is fully revised and polished, save it as a PDF file. Upload this file to Carmen no later than **11:59 PM on Sunday, October 25th**.

Assignment 2 of 2: Now that you've polished your resume, create and polish an account for yourself on the ASC Career Services FutureLink jobs and internship database (<http://asccareerservices.osu.edu/futurelink>) and on LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/>). You may, of course, choose to make your LinkedIn account private or public. Print out copies of both your FutureLink and LinkedIn accounts and **bring those with you to class** on 10/26/2015.

10/26/2015 – Prepare for the Search: Cover Letters and Portfolios

In class: We will begin by talking about the role that cover letters do (and don't) play in organizations' recruitment processes. We'll also look at example cover letters and discuss best

practices for putting those letters together, particularly at this early stage in students' careers. We'll also watch a video showing someone reading through and responding to cover letters in real time. We'll conclude with a discussion of portfolios and the materials that work best as part of portfolio submissions.

Assignment 1 of 2: Create a cover letter that responds to the entry-level job description that you were given in class. Do not use any kind of letter template; instead, use a blank Word document (single-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman). Your letter will likely fit on a single page; however, if you need to go onto a second page, that's fine for now. *Important note:* As with the resume, creating a well-written and coherent cover letter takes time, thought, and attention to detail. You will be using this cover letter (or versions of it) to secure internships/jobs in the future, and I encourage you to put together the strongest document possible. Once your cover letter is fully revised and polished, save it as a PDF file. Upload this file to Carmen no later than **11:59 PM on Sunday, November 1st**.

Assignment 2 of 2: Now that you've received feedback on the draft of your email requesting an informational interview, go ahead and revise that draft and send the email out to the person with whom you want to meet. Print out the email showing the sent date/time and **bring it to class** on 11/02/2015.

11/02/2015 – Prepare for the Search: Polish Your Online Presence, Secure References, Develop Narratives

In class: We'll begin by talking briefly about some of your cover letters and how to further improve them. From there, we'll talk about the importance of maintaining a professional presence online and the process of selecting and securing references. We'll then engage in several small-group exercises designed to help students begin to create professional narratives/stories about their work histories, skills, and interests that they can use during the interview process.

Assignment 1 of 2: Make sure that your online presence is professional and appropriate. First, determine what a potential supervisor or employer could find out about you through Google (be sure to look through all the results), Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, etc. Then, revise your privacy settings across all these social media and communications platforms so that only appropriate information remains publicly available. Complete your clean up no later than **11:59 PM on Sunday, November 15th**.

Assignment 2 of 2: Create a references document for use in your internship/job hunt. Three references should be listed, and each entry should include the person's name, job title, employer name, work mailing address, email address, and phone number. Be sure to contact these individuals to confirm that they are available and willing to serve as references for you in the future.

11/02/2015 – The Search: Interpret Postings, Complete Online Applications

In class: We'll begin with a presentation on where and how to find job and internship postings online and how to organize your search. We'll also look at a variety of postings together so that you have a better sense of what employers are seeking and whether or not you should apply for certain positions. We'll discuss the difference between required and desired qualifications and how to determine whether you meet these. We'll then break into small groups and review several mock job applications before coming back together to discuss what does and doesn't work among these samples.

Assignment 1 of 2: Find 20 jobs/internships of interest to you. Create a listing for each job in a Word document that includes the job title, the organization, a link to the online posting, and a

brief explanation (1 – 3 sentences) about why the job interests you and why you're qualified to apply. Upload this document to Carmen no later than **11:59 PM on Sunday, November 8th**.

Assignment 2 of 2: Don't forget to watch out for a response from the person you emailed about an informational interview. If you receive a response, go ahead and schedule that interview, and be prepared to share this information with me in class on 11/09/2015. If you haven't received a response, let me know during class on 11/09/2015, and we'll come up with an alternative contact.

11/16/2015 – The Search: Phone, Skype, and In-person Interviews

In class: We will begin with a discussion of the challenges involved in locating 20 jobs/internships of interest to you (assignment due last night) and also review together some of these postings. From there, we'll move to a presentation on interviewing—the kinds of questions asked by potential employers, best practices for responding, and what candidates should and shouldn't ask. We'll also talk about practices for performing well during phone, Skype, and in-person interviews. We'll then engage in some interview role-play before concluding the class with a discussion of thank you letters and other forms of post-interview follow up.

Assignment 1 of 2: Write our your answers to 7 of the 10 interview questions you were given in class. *Note:* These questions were designed for candidates applying for an entry-level administrative position in the Ohio State Department of English. Your answers should include specific narratives that reveal to the reader who you are, your skills and experiences, and what kind of employee you would be. Post the document containing your answers on Carmen no later than **11:59 PM on Sunday, November 22nd**.

Assignment 2 of 2: A selection of readings on interviewing and work cultures will be assigned and available on Carmen. Be prepared to complete a **short quiz** on this material at the beginning of class on 11/23/2015.

11/23/2015 – On the Job: Work Cultures

In class: Students will complete a **short quiz** on the assigned readings. We will begin by discussing several of your responses to the assigned interview questions and how these answers could be strengthened. Then, we'll draw on today's readings as we examine the concept of a work culture and how to succeed in a variety of workplaces. We'll conclude with a presentation of situations that students are likely to encounter during their first days on the job. We'll engage in some role-play and discussion as we think about how to respond to these kinds of situations.

Assignment 1 of 2: Prepare three questions for the panelists who will be participating in our class on 11/30/2015. Post your questions on Carmen no later than **11:59 PM on Sunday, November 29th**.

Assignment 2 of 2: Write up a one-page summary (single-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman) about what you learned during your informational interview. Include information about the person's career, current job, daily work responsibilities, and work environment. Also, let us know how you feel about this job/career field after this conversation. Post your summary on Carmen no later than **11:59 PM on Sunday, November 29th**.

11/30/2015 – On the Job: Advice From Area English Major Alumni

In class: During our final class, we will hear from several English major alumni working in various sectors throughout the Columbus area. You will have an opportunity to ask one or more of the questions you prepared for these individuals, and all students will be expected to participate in the conversation. We will also talk more about on-the-job situations and your final projects, which

will consist of an hour-long mock interview. Students will complete end-of-course evaluations as well.

Assignment: Prepare for your mock interview. Remember to have copies of your cover letter, resume, and references with you at the interview and to wear appropriate attire.

12/07/2015 – No class/Mock Interviews

Final Project: Students will participate in their scheduled **one-hour mock interviews** sometime between 12/07/2015 and 12/14/2015. Sign-ups will operate on a first-come, first-served basis. Note that appropriate interview attire is required. Students must upload a **post-interview thank you letter** to Carmen **within 24 hours of completing their interview**.

Course Policies

Attendance

Your attendance at each class meetings is required. Each absence will result in a five-point reduction of your overall grade for the course. You will be counted absent if you arrive more than 10 minutes late to, or leave early from, class.

Participation

Participation in class discussions and small-group activities is required, not optional: complete the appropriate reading and related assignments and come to class ready to discuss them. Participation is 20% of your final grade. In order to be able to judge student participation, we must have some record to consider—it is impossible to compare something to nothing. Hence, I reserve the right to call on people during class. Anything that prevents you from being able to participate in or engage with the activities of the class—sleeping, texting, browsing the web on a laptop—will negatively affect this aspect of your grade. Remember that just being present in class is not the same thing as *participating*: just attending every class but not contributing would earn you roughly a “C” for the participation component of your grade.

University Policies

Grading Scale

A 93+	B 86-83	B- 82-80	C 76-73	D 69-60
A- 92-90	B- 82-80	C+ 79-77	C- 72-70	E 59-

Academic Integrity

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>. If you have any questions about academic integrity, please contact me, or consult the COAM’s helpful website (oaa.osu.edu/coamfaqs.html).

Disability Services

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.