SENIOR SEMINAR IN GEOGRAPHY, FALL 2013, GEO 4930

Instructor: Joann Mossa, Ph.D., Associate Prof. and Undergrad. Coord.
Class Time: F-Per. 5 (11:45-12:35 PM.), Turlington Hall 3012
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Office Hours: MWF 9-10:30 A.M., 1-2 P.M. or by appointment

Objectives: To learn how academic training in geography is applied in varied careers, and to help transition to a different situation (varied careers, graduate school) following completion of your bachelor's degree.

GRADING CRITERIA

Class Attendance: 30 points, (apprx. 2 points off for each class missed). Cancellations will be announced in class. Make-up assignments may replace additional missed classes with valid excuse.

Participation: 10 points. Ask questions of our guest speakers and show involvement

Capstone ALC/SLO exam: 15 pts., 40 questions. Testing knowledge of learning in the major
http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/programs/majors/alc/geographyba.html
http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/programs/majors/alc/geographybs.html

Capstone Portfolio: 15 pts., Demonstration of your communication and critical thinking skills in the major. Save best content from past and current classes, internships, jobs to demonstrate your background. Rubric with more guidelines forthcoming (Due Week 12 or 13)

Assignments: 10 points each, total 30 points, First listed + 2 others (your choice, from list below). Length of other assignments is typically 2-3pp double-spaced. (Due Weeks 3, 6 & 9)

*Resume, Due Week 3
-Graduate School: Perception vs. Reality, Thoughts and Interviews
-Graduate School Application with Related Information
-Career Fair or Showcase Review
-Answers to 10 Interview Questions
-Work World: Perception vs. Reality, Thoughts and Interviews
-Work World: Two Cover Letters and Applications
-Work World: Compilation of Employment Possibilities in a Region
-Work World: Business Plan
-Book review: Interviewing/job hunting/prof. development/Geog. careers
-Another creative or relevant project meeting Instructor’s approval

Grading for each of the 10 pt. Individual assignments:
Was it thorough and complete (2 pts.)?
Did it follow the guidelines listed as described (2 pts.)?
Was it well-organized, with subheadings, fonts, etc. (2 pts.)?
Was it free of typos and grammatical errors (2 pts.)?
Was a hard copy turned in on time (2 pts.)?

Total Points: 100 (30% attendance; 15% ALC test; %15 Portfolio, 10% participation; 30% other assignments)

GRADING SCALE
A = 90 or above; A- = 88-89.9; B+ = 86-87.9; B = 80-85.9; B- = 78-79.9; C+ = 76-77.9;
C = 70-75.9; C- = 68-69.9; D+ = 66-67.9; D = 60-65.9; D- = 58-59.9; E = < 58
https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx

NO CLASSES: Friday October 4; November 8: Homecoming; November 29: Thanksgiving
INDIVIDUAL COURSE ASSIGNMENTS (Resume and two of remaining projects)

Effective Resume and Self-Evaluation. Include some background personal information, career objectives, education, work experience, special skills, leadership/service and contact information for references. Seek a good source to assist you, such as a book (Job Hunting for Dummies, a Resume Book, or a web site about resumes. If you lack experience in the field or obvious marketable skills, write a critique of your weaknesses and how you plan to improve these or would discuss these in an interview.

Graduate School: Perception vs. Reality. Part 1: Your thoughts and perceptions on what graduate school in Geography would be like and how you might fit in that world; Part 2: Interview a minimum of 2 current or former graduate students about their graduate study experience (in Geography or a related area). Quote them and discuss how your original thoughts and awareness have changed during the course of the interviews. These are supposed to be different from class panelists.

Applying to Graduate School. Get information and an application from one University that is a good fit for your interests in Geography (see www.aag.org web site). Include for EACH school: 1) a half-page explanation of why and how you came to choose this institution: 2) the application: 3) a letter of intent; and 4) names of individuals you would ask for letters of recommendation and why you are selecting these individuals. Appropriate content for the letter of intent can be found at our class website in the Power Point presentation. Your letters will likely be similar for the different institutions, but should reflect your research of faculty specializations at that institution and how they fit your academic interests.

Your Experience at Career Fair or Showcase: A short (2-3 pp.) write-up on your preparation of employers you planned to talk with, what you wore, one minute infomercial about yourself, your visit, which employers you met, which were the most promising, your follow up, etc.

The Work World: Perception vs. Reality. Part 1: Your thoughts and perceptions on what working in Geography would be like and how you might fit in that world. Some domains in the work world include planning, environmental consulting, mapping, military careers, K-12 teaching, Peace Corps service, university professor, etc. Part 2: Interview and quote a minimum of 2 current/former employees in this area about their work experience and discuss how your original thoughts about this work have changed during the course of the interviews.

Interview Preparation: Compile a list from varied sources of 10 questions frequently asked at interviews and write an individual response for each of those questions. Where possible, draw from your academic background and career experiences. Cite your sources for the questions. Included should be an answer to: Tell me about yourself? and What questions do you have for us?

Complete the Application Process for 2 Jobs that interest you. The employers should be a good fit for your interests and background. Include a half-page explanation of why and how you came to choose these places and what you have learned about them. For each, attach a cover letter introducing yourself and why you think that you are a worthy applicant. Seek a good source to assist you, such as a book (Job Hunting for Dummies or a web site about letters of application. If you are looking for a job in cartography or GIS, include a small portfolio showing samples of your work. Discuss how your class projects/academic background connect with the skills and knowledge required in the job.

Work World-Regional Job Sources: Develop a descriptive list of job sources in a region (e.g. southeast Florida). List employer information (company name, size, type of business, types of positions available, contact information of human resource personnel) for several companies/agencies that employ geographers. Restrict your list to those you qualify for now, or sort them for those you qualify for now with a few examples of those you might qualify for in 5 years or so. Organize appropriately. At least 8-10 employers should be listed.

Work-World-Business Plan: Some of our majors have started their own business (travel agencies, leading adventure tours, consulting firms, wine shops, bike shops, etc.) Develop a business plan according to standard procedures. Sections might include: Executive Summary, Vision and Mission,

Book review: Interviewing/job hunting/professional development/Geographic careers:
Read and review a book that concerns either interviewing, job hunting, professional development or geographic careers written in the past 10 years (earlier books may be individually approved with instructor’s permission). I have books that you can borrow, but am also willing to consider a variety of relevant options. Consult instructor if you are uncertain whether your book is appropriate. Summarize the book, including the important take-home messages, and describe what was especially meaningful or helpful to you and whether you think it would be helpful to others. Also, critique and discuss any problems and if/how this book did not meet your expectations.

Interview Preparation: Compile a list from varied sources of 10 questions frequently asked at interviews and write an individual response for each of those questions. Where possible, draw from your academic background and career experiences. Cite your sources for the questions. Included should be an answer to: Tell me about yourself?; and What Questions do you have for us?

Alternative project: Other project relevant to careers in geography (instructor’s approval required).

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (May change depending upon the availability of speakers)
Week 1: Introduction to Class, Policies, Classmate Introductions
Week 2: Graduate School in Geography, Part 1
Week 3: Internship Experience Presentation
Week 4: Graduate School in Geography, Part 2
Week 5: Forum with Graduate Students, Part 3
Week 6: Overview of the Work World and Careers in Geography
Week 7: Career Planning Center
Week 8-14: Various panelists and alumni guest speakers knowledgeable about the following: Geographic Education, International Teaching, Environmental Consulting, Peace Corps, Regional and State Agencies, Water Management Districts, City and County Agencies (esp. Planning and Public Works), Nonprofits, Federal Agencies, Business World, etc.

Given this semester’s Friday scheduling, the capstone exam is likely to be on November 15 or 22

HONOR CODE: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/scrr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor of this class.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND OTHER CONCERNS
“Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Please take care of your health and be aware that the University Counseling Center (392-1575, http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx), the Student Health Care Center (392-1161) and Student Mental Health (392-1171) can assist students as they work through personal, academic and social issues. Provide advance notice and obtain documentation for excused absences where possible. If needed, University Police Department can be contacted at 392-1111 or Dial 9-1-1 for emergencies. Please minimize distractions to yourself and others during class time (cell phones off, no ancillary conversations, quiet typing only).
EVALUATIONS: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results.

SOME GUEST SPEAKERS FROM PAST SEMESTERS

Career Resource Center: Nadene Reynolds, Monica Rosier, Kevin Tate, Priyanka Raut, Rew Woodruff, Farouk Dey, Elaine Casquarelli


Envt. Consulting: Justin Scheidt (Parsons Brinckerhoff, Tampa), Ryan Taylor (Environmental Services, Inc., Jacksonville)

Peace Corps: Amy Panikowski (recruiter). Becky Williams (Central America), Jocelyn Peskin (Central America), Janet Puhalla (Africa), Ann Foster (Pacific Islands)

Planning/Utilities: Lisa Walsh (City of St. Cloud, Marion Co. Planning Dept.), Heidi Lannon (Gainesville/GRU), Blake Smith (GRU)

K-12 & Outdoor Ed: Liz Smith (FSU, grades 7-12, Marion Co.), Bryson Beddell (social studies, middle school), Jocelyn Peskin (teaching abroad), Amber Zappia (outdoor education)

Public Works: Sally Adkins/Mike Deffenbaugh (Gainesville), Caroline Dillingham (City of Orlando)

County & City Agencies: Caroline Dillingham, Josh Jensen (Polk County), Kevin Stover (City of Melbourne), Fay Walker (Alachua County Fire Rescue E-911), Jennifer Carpenter & Dan Anderson (Alachua Co. Property Appraisers)

Business Geography: Michael Gil (the Shopping Center Group, Orlando), Juliaan Doppen-McCosker (Gainesville Council for Economic Outreach)

Real Estate: Barrett Webber (appraisal, Sarasota area)

M. Olga Danescu (associate, Pensacola area)

Non-Profits: Sally Adkins (River Network), Melanie Metal (Greenpeace), Tamara Paul and others (Teach for America & Student Conservation Association), Amber Zappia & Hillary Smith (Frontera, various)

Water Mgmt. Districts: David Botelho, Mike Bowman (St. Johns River WMD)

Federal Agencies: Nalini Torres (U.S.A.C.E.), Carlos La Torre (U.S.A.C.E.), Ann Foster (USGS-BRD), Anonymous (CIA)

Defense Contractors: Aaron Young (varied), Kevin Stover, Chris Cleasby, Kevin Howald (Harris Corporation)

Geospatial Companies: Sarah Johnson (Earth Eye), Kim Nale (E-Map, Dewberry), Tom Felsenmeier (HAD), Jennifer Martinez (MapSource), Justin Carasick (3001)