Even before the travails of the current economy, students majoring in political science have wondered, What does one do with a major in political science? It turns out that this is not such an easy question to answer, since there are so many concerns that are implicit in it. In our experience, not only do students want to know about the kinds of careers that majors in political science pursue, but they also want to know about the job skills they acquire. They also want to know about how to go about getting a job and about the value of extracurricular experiences like studying abroad, participating in student organizations, and internships to employers. Also tied up in this question is whether political science (or any other major) provides entry to jobs that students will want. As the job market has tightened over recent years, concern about these questions has increased. This course is meant to answer these questions. We hope that by doing so, students will be more secure in their choice of major and more confident and skilled about the job search process.

Course expectations:

Although this course is a one credit course, please do not be fooled! If you are going to get the most out of this course, you will need to do the readings and assignments and come prepared to every class. We have included several activities in the course to help with career planning. These include:

- Engaging in reflection on the skills that are acquired through the major and through a liberal arts degree;
- Exploring and researching various career areas by making use of career/interest inventories, learning how to research careers and organizations (including library resources and informational interviews), and discussing the value of extracurricular activities such as service learning and internships;
- Acquiring concrete career skills (e.g., resume and cover letter construction and writing, interview skills, business etiquette, etc.).

Through participation and completion of course activities, students should achieve the following course objectives:

- Understand the value of their liberal arts degree and the Political Science major and be able to articulate them to employers;
- Investigate library and internet informational resources, social media and informational interviews to gather career information;
- Identify possible career paths and graduate school options;
- Identify and cultivate relationships crucial to academic and career success;
- Discuss career strategies and opportunities with UW-Madison alumni in the political, policy, business, and nonprofit sectors.

These goals will be achieved through completion of course readings, reflection on the readings and course discussion through journal entries and thoughtful participation in discussions, and timely completion of the assignments.

Assignments: You will be expected to complete one journal entry every week. The journal entry will be based on a question or topic posed for that week. The best entries will weave in insights and comments that you have gained from the readings and/or class participation and presentations. The journal entry is due by email to both Dave and me by Monday morning at 9 AM. We will review your entries and return
them with comments to you by Wednesday morning. The purposes of the journal are to ensure that you have done the readings, which should improve discussion, and to get you to think about how the points in the readings apply to defining and achieving your own personal and career goals. You will be asked to print out and hand in all your journal entries with their comments at the end of the course as part of your portfolio, so DO NOT discard them.

There are also weekly assignments that you will need to complete in preparation for each class. These are outlined in the schedule below. These assignments and your journal will be compiled in a portfolio that will be due at the end of the course and will constitute a major part of your course grade.

As part of your portfolio, we expect that you will attend at least one career fair and one career information event and write a one page memo about your experience. The memo will identify the events you attended and will be a report about each event. More details will be provided about this assignment. A list of events and dates will be provided at the first class.

Grading Policy:
Students in this course will receive a letter grade based on the following class requirements:

- Attendance, journal entries, and class participation: 30%
- Assignments: 25%
- Portfolio: 30%
- Presentation: 15%

CALENDAR
All readings and assignments must be completed before the start of class meetings.

January 29: What is the value of liberal arts education?
Goals and activities:
- Integrating the liberal arts curriculum with career and internship experience
- Review of university career resources
- Guest lecturer from the library on career information resources and how to evaluate the credibility of career information sources

Readings (You should read and come prepared to discuss these before class):
- Tugend, Alina. “Vocation or Exploration? Pondering the Purpose of College.” [Link to article]
- Bissonette, Zac. “Your College Major May Not Be As Important as You Think.” [Link to article]
- National Public Radio. A Lack of Rigor Leaves Students ‘Adrift’ in College. Listen to Podcast at [Link to podcast]
- Gehlaus, Diana. What Can I Do with My Liberal Arts Degree? [Link to article]

Assignments due on First Day of Class:
(1) Complete one page response memo (first journal entry): Provide a definition of “liberal arts,” discussing the possible skills/knowledge gained with a liberal arts major and provide at least ONE example of how a liberal arts major can be a strength in a future career.
(2) Fill out CAR Statements Worksheet distributed via email. Work on and bring it in to class. Email completed assignment to Liane and David by Friday, Feb. 1 at noon.

Feb. 5 Week 2– Paths to Careers in Political Science
Goals and activities:
- Alumni panel on “What I did with my political science major”
- Discussion of skills and knowledge specific to the political science major and their career value

Readings:
Assignments:
(1) Contact L&S Career Services to arrange to take Myers Briggs Interest Inventory.
(2) Please complete a journal entry about what you would say to a relative who asks you what you will do with a political science major.

Feb. 12 Week 3 – Exploring Options—Internships, Extracurricular Activities, Study Abroad
Goals and activities:
• Review personality/professional assessment results
• Designing a career and internship search: moving beyond listings
• The value of internships—Why get one? How to make the most of the experience
• Guest speaker on international internships and career opportunities and study abroad

Readings:
  http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/the-camp-counselor-vs-the-intern/
• Hansen, Randall S. “Making the Most of Your Internship(s)
  http://www.quintcareers.com/internship_success.html
  o Chapter 2 – The Developmental Process of Career Decision Making
  o Chapter 3 – Assessment of Personality Traits

Assignments:
(1) Complete Myers Briggs Strong Interest Inventory and bring results to class with a one page response memo
(2) Journal entry on what you learned about yourself from the Myers Briggs. Identify one thing that you expected to find and one thing that surprised you. Did the inventory results cause you to change or expand your career plans? Why and how?

Feb. 19 Week 4 – Resumes, Cover Letters, Writing Samples and Networking
Goals and activities:
• Presentation by the Writing Center on resume and cover letters; peer evaluation
• Discussion of using course work and internships to develop writing sample(s) for graduate school and/or employment
• Networking with people you know, sort of know, and want to know
• Informational interviewing
• Guest speaker from Wisconsin Alumni Association

Readings:
• L&S, How to Write a Resume
• L&S, How to Write a Cover Letter
• L&S, The Anatomy of a Bullet
• Granovetter, Mark. The Strength of Weak Ties.
• Lees, John. Crack the Hidden Job Market
• Quintessential Careers. Informational Interviewing: A Powerful Tool for College Students.
  http://www.quintcareers.com/student_informational_interviewing.html
**Assignments:**

1. Complete Transforming CAR Statements into Accomplishment Statements
2. Bring in resume and draft cover letter that has been critiqued by L&S Career Services Office or the Writing Center
3. Journal entry about the challenge of writing a cover letter and resume. What was the hardest thing to do? The easiest? What did you learn that was surprising?

**Feb. 26 Week 5 – Interview Strategies**

**Goals and Activities (Come prepared to participate in a mock interview!):**
- Understanding and using the CAR Method of Interviewing
- Speed interviewing with UW-Madison alumni

**Readings:**
- Behavioral Interviewing: The basics of the CAR method
- L&S Interviewing Tips
- Washington State University. *Dress to Impress: A Guide*
  [http://amdt.wsu.edu/research/dti/](http://amdt.wsu.edu/research/dti/)
- Michigan State University Career Services Network. *Dress for Success*
  [http://careernetwork.msu.edu/prepare/interviews/dress-for-success](http://careernetwork.msu.edu/prepare/interviews/dress-for-success)

**Assignments:**
- Complete a written critique of classmate’s resume and cover letter
- Complete an informational interview and write a journal entry describing the experience and lessons learned. We will talk about this during class, so be prepared to share your experiences.

**Mar. 5 Week 6 – Implementing Your Plan**

**Goals and Activities:**
- Integration of career strategies and action steps
- Portfolio presentations. Plan to speak for five minutes and address the following questions:
  - What are your current career plans?
  - What questions do you need to answer?
  - How will you leverage internships and/or other experiences to achieve your goals?
  - What resources will you take advantage of on and outside of campus?

**Assignment:**
- Submit career portfolios. These should include:
  - Resume
  - Sample cover letter
  - Internship, volunteer and career goals for remainder of undergraduate education
  - Academic goals for remainder of undergraduate education
  - Writing sample(s) and other demonstrations of effectiveness
  - Areas for career exploration
  - Networking contacts (people you know, sort of know, and want to know)
  - Contacts for informational interviews
  - List of UW-Madison career resources and how you plan to utilize them
  - List of potential references (career and academic)
  - Journal entries
  - Career fairs/ events report