Students majoring in political science have often wondered, What does one do with a major in political science? 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. By doing so, students should become 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 approximately 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 me by Monday at 12:00 noon. 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.
Grading Policy:
Students in this course will receive a letter grade based on the following class requirements:
- Attendance, journal entries, and class participation: 25%
- Assignments: 25%
- Portfolio: 30%
- Presentations: 20%

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

September 10: 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
- Preliminary discussion of CAR

Assignments due on First Day of Class:
- Fill out CAR Statements Worksheet distributed via email. Work on and bring it in to class. Email completed assignment to me by Friday, September 13 at noon.

September 17: Exploring Options—Internships, Extracurricular Activities, Study Abroad
Goals and activities:
- MBTI Presentation by the Exploration Center
- Designing a career and internship search: moving beyond listings
- The value of internships—Why get one? How to make the most of the experience

Readings: (You should read and come prepared to discuss these before class):
- Bissonette, Zac. “Your College Major May Not Be As Important as You Think.”
- National Public Radio. A Lack of Rigor Leaves Students ‘Adrift’ in College. Listen to Podcast at
- Gehlaus, Diana. What Can I Do with My Liberal Arts Degree?
- Hansen, Randall S. “Making the Most of Your Internship(s)

Assignments:
- Take MBTI at the Exploration Center before by Friday, September 13th

September 24: 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:
- American Political Science Association. Median Earnings By Major Group
  [http://cew.georgetown.edu/whatsitworth/](http://cew.georgetown.edu/whatsitworth/)
- Carnevale, Anthony P., et al., “The value of a social science degree,” from What’s it worth? The economic value of college majors, Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce, May 24, 2011
- UW, Madison. What Can I Do With A Major in Political Science?

Assignments:
- Complete a journal entry about what you would say to a relative who asks what you will do with a political science major. Be sure to reference the readings from the last two weeks in your response.
Remember, response memos are due to me via email by 12:00 noon on the Monday before each class.

October 1: Resumes, Cover Letters, Writing Samples and Networking

Goals and activities:
- Writing a Resume and Cover Letter
- Discussion of using course work, internships, and outside activities 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

Readings:
- L&S, How to Write a Resume
- L&S, How to Write a Cover Letter
- L&S, The Anatomy of a Bullet

Assignments:
- Bring in your edited resume and cover letter
- 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?

October 8: Interview Strategies

Goals and Activities (Come prepared to participate in a mock interview!):
- Understanding and using the CAR Method of Interviewing
- Informational Interviews

Readings:
- L&S Interviewing Tips

Assignments:
- Complete a written critique of classmate’s resume and cover letter. Email edited resume to classmate by 12:00 noon on the Friday before class.
- Incorporate your classmate’s comments on your 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.

October 15: 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 and present on career portfolios and six week networking plans. These should include:
  - Internship, volunteer and career goals for remainder of undergraduate education
  - Academic goals for remainder of undergraduate education
  - Your plan for networking and research in a given area over the next six weeks
  - Resume
  - Sample cover letter
  - 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) and how you will develop and broaden them
  - Journal entries

November 26: Final Presentations

- Be prepared to present for six to ten minutes about your experiences in implementing your networking goals over the last six weeks.
  - What have you learned about the fields you have researched?
  - Have you developed a full list of contacts in your fields and geographic targets?
  - How many informational interviews have you conducted? What have you learned and have any new opportunities come from these meetings?
  - Talk about what you have achieved over the last six weeks in qualitative and quantitative terms.
  - What will you do next?