Students majoring in political science have often wondered: What can I do with a degree 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 skills and experiences they can acquire during their academic program such as completing one or more internships, participating in campus organizations, publishing in student journals, and studying abroad. As the job market has tightened over recent years, concern about these questions has increased. This course is meant to address these questions. By doing so, students should become more secure in their choice of major and more confident and skilled about their career exploration and job search strategies.

Course expectations:

Although this 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. I 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, 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, professional etiquette, etc.).

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

- Understand the values of their liberal arts degree and the Political Science major and be able to articulate them to employers;
- Investigate 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 (starting week 2). 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 5:00 pm. The purposes of the journal
are to ensure that you have done the readings and/or reflected on a particular course activity, which should improve discussion, and to get you to thinking about how to apply course learning to the ongoing task of refining 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 and class participation/professionalism: 10%
- Journal reflections and activities/write-ups, incl. drafts of resume/cover letter: 25%
- Career interview write-up: 15%
- Portfolio including updated resume and general cover letter, elevator statement, writing sample, and contacts, etc.: 40%
- Presentations: 10%

Late assignment submission will result in an initial 5 point deduction. Further delay in submission will result in an additional 2 points deduction per day.

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

**WEEK ONE January 20:**
The Values of a Liberal Arts Education in General, and Political Science Specifically

**Goals and activities:**
- Integrating you liberal arts and political science curricula with career and internship experience.
- Completion of interests and academic/professional goals questionnaire.
- Exploring ‘career competency’.
- Review of university and other career resources.
- Discussion of importance of ongoing self-assessment of personal and work values and skills.

**Next week Assignments/Readings:**

1. **Read** UW Madison “What can I do with a major in Political Science.”
2. **Complete** self-assessment of your personal and work values and skills, and submit in Dropbox by 5pm, January 26. Come to class on Jan. 27 prepared to discuss your values and skills assessments.
3. **Read** “The Art of Employment: How Liberal Arts Graduates Can Improve Their Career Prospects.” Read pp. 1-8, skim rest of report. Come prepared to discuss supplemental skills and work experiences you have had and/or could develop while you are a student at UW-Madison.

**WEEK TWO January 27:**
Exploring Various Careers Paths That Can Stem Your Political Science Program

**Goals and activities:**
- Discussion of skills and knowledge specific to the political science major and their career value.
- Discussion of personal and work values and skills self-assessments.
- Review of job and internship search strategies for opportunities on campus and off.
- Discussion of salary data for political science and related fields.
- Basics of job application materials: resumes and cover letters.
Next week Assignments/Readings:

1. Read and apply ‘resume’ and ‘cover letter’ basics, at L & S Career Services at
   http://careers.ls.wisc.edu/resume-and-cover-letters--students.htm
   http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/14/opinion/david-brooks-the-agency-moment.html?_r=0
   . Come to class prepared to discuss in relation to your career and overall life exploration.
3. Read, Hansen, Randall S. “Making the Most of Your Internship(s)
   http://www.quintcareers.com/internship_success.html
4. Complete Journal Reflection #1 on your personal and work values assessment. (Due in Dropbox Feb. 2
   at 5pm.)
5. Identify and analyze key requirements of 3 desirable (for you!) entry-level jobs and/or internships
   currently being advertised. (Due in Dropbox, Feb. 2 at 5pm.)
6. Draft a basic, one-page resume for yourself, and bring a paper copy for peer feedback next week.

WEEK THREE February 3: Exploring Your Options—Internships, Extracurricular Activities,
Study Abroad, etc.

Goals and activities:
- The value of internships—Why get one? How to make the most of the experience
- Designing a career and internship search: moving beyond listings
- Values of other experiential opportunities including study abroad, service projects, workshops, and
  directed study or student/faculty research collaborations
- You, Inc.
- Peer review or resumes

Next week Assignments/Readings:

1. Draft a cover letter for one of the jobs or internship positions you identified in last week’s
   assignment. Bring a paper copy for peer review next week.
2. Complete Journal Reflection #2 on identifying and analyzing 3 job or internship listings. (Submit to
   Dropbox by Feb. 10, 5pm.)
   http://www.quintcareers.com/student_informational_interviewing.html

WEEK FOUR February 10: Building Your Academic and Professional Networks

Goals and activities:
- What is networking and how can you become good at it?
- Using LinkedIn for networking and other academic and career goals.
- Using course work, internships, and outside activities to develop writing samples and other portfolio.
  artifacts for employment, fellowships, graduate school, etc.
- Informational interviewing.
- Cover letter peer review.

Next Week Assignments/Readings:

1. Complete Journal Entry #3 about the challenge of writing a cover letter and resume, and having it
   reviewed by someone else. What was the hardest thing to do? The easiest? What did you learn that
   was surprising? (Due in Dropbox February 16 at 5pm)
2. Read ‘Behavioral Interviewing: The basics of the CAR Method’
   http://amdt.wsu.edu/research/dti/
WEEK FIVE February 17: Internship and Job Interview Strategies

**Goals and Activities:**
- Understanding and using the CAR Method of Interviewing
- Opportunities and pitfalls of phone and in-person interviews
- Group practice/discussion of common interview questions
- Developing your ‘elevator statements’

**Next Week Assignments/Readings:**

1. Incorporate your classmate’s feedback on your resume and cover letter.
2. Journal Entry #4 compile a list of 3 categories of people (8 people each); those you know (and who know you) well and consider part of your current network, those you kind of know but want to get to know better, and those you don’t know but want to try to know them. Be specific about their job or other titles if you have them. Also discuss potential strategies you might employ to further engage people in your #2 category.
3. Request and schedule an ‘informational interview’ with someone you sort of know to learn about her or his current position and career path.

WEEK SIX February 24: Pulling it all together: Career strategies for now and beyond

**Goals and Activities**
- Networking, an acquired art.
- Integrating 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 still need to answer?
  - How will you leverage internships and/or other experiences to achieve your goals?
  - What resources will you take advantage of here at UW Madison and beyond?

**Next Week Assignments/Readings:**

1. Complete your informational interview and write a career interview report and assessment due by Mon. March 2 at 5pm (to also be included in your final portfolio).

WEEK SEVEN March 3: Pulling It All Together: Looking Backward, Looking Forward

**Goals and Activities:**
- Discussion of your career interviews and the write-up process.
- Portfolio presentations. Plan to speak for five minutes and address the following questions:
  - What are your current career plans?
  - What questions do you still need to answer?
  - How will you leverage internships and/or other experiences to achieve your goals?
  - What resources will you still take advantage of here at UW Madison and beyond?

**Remaining Assignment:**

1. Final Portfolios, hard copies due Tues. March 10 at 4pm in North Hall 306

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