

Professional Development Seminar

Professor Merrill Cole
M-Cole@wiu.edu / 298-1410
<http://faculty.wiu.edu/M-Cole/>

English 376, Section 001
Spring Semester 2010

Office: Simpkins 115
Hours: TTh, 1:00-2:00; W, 3:00-5:00

M, 5:30-8:00 p.m.
Simpkins 20

Course Description

The Professional Development Seminar, English 376 is a junior-level preparatory experience for the English major. This course tutors majors in how to apply for internships and jobs, to make key career decisions, and to prepare an application to graduate school. The junior year is the ideal time for students to consider these questions, in order to take advantage of the fall of the senior year to finalize the applications prepared as juniors. For those taking this course as seniors, there is still tremendous benefit and even more immediate rewards (i.e., employment). These are skills that will help you throughout your professional career.

This class focuses on the preparation of a job letter, a résumé, and a personal statement that clarifies professional possibilities and goals. This course aims to make students reflect seriously on personal and professional goals, as well as on how the major prepares for these goals.

This semester we will meet five times as a class to share our professional interests, our experiences in the major, and our goals for the future. We will discuss how what we have done in English studies translates into other areas of work and interest; we will learn how to prepare an effective dossier; and we will, ultimately, work together at building up a strong portfolio that accurately reflects both our work in the past and our goals for the future. With these larger goals in mind, this class will be tailored to each individual student. Diversity of experience and career paths will be emphasized in our discussions and in our approaches to the real purpose or end-goal of our meetings: gainful and satisfying employment or study after graduation.

Students will sign up for an individual conference with the faculty member of their section between April 5th and 16th. Students must submit completed drafts of all portfolio documents to the faculty member at least 48 hours in advance. The conference will focus on necessary revisions for the portfolio documents. Students cannot submit a final portfolio without attending an individual conference.

Course Objectives

- Students will identify marketable skills acquired in the English major.
- Students will articulate and package these desirable job skills in well-written, flawlessly *edited* letters of application and resumes.
- Students will explore career and graduate school opportunities.
- Students will assemble a portfolio based upon a cover letter, a résumé, and a personal statement.

Please see <<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/student/>> for student rights and student responsibilities.

Final Portfolio

On April 23th, students will submit their final portfolio in a manila folder (not an envelope) with a typed label indicating the student's name, semester and year. The portfolio will include:

1. A four-page narrative on professional goals, related experience, skills both gained in the major and outside of it, and a plan of steps to take to achieve the goals.
2. A sample résumé.
3. One of the following options:
 - a cover letter written in response to a specific (included) job advertisement.
 - a statement of intent for a graduate or professional program and a "screen shot" of the program.
 - an application to an internship and a "screen shot" of the program.
4. Rough drafts of documents from individual conferences.

Grading

Your grade in this course will be based on the individual conference, final portfolio, class attendance, and class participation.

This course is required to graduate with a degree in English. Given the small number of class meetings, they are all required, except for a documented medical excuse. One-letter grade deductions will be made for each absence.

This course will be comprised of guest speakers and workshops. Students are expected to participate regularly by asking questions of both the faculty members and the guest speakers, and to remain active and engaged during the workshop portions. Failure to maintain regular participation will negatively affect your final grade.

Visiting My Office

Please take the opportunity to meet with me during my office hours, or by appointment, to talk about the readings, or your writing. *I very much appreciate any kind of feedback about the course.*

Students with Disabilities

In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), I will make academic accommodations for any student who notifies me of the need. For me to provide the proper accommodation(s), you must provide me documentation from Disability Support Services. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to my attention, as I am not legally permitted to ask. Students who require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e., fire, tornado, etc.) should tell me the most appropriate procedures to follow. Please contact Disability Support Services at 298-2512.

Schedule

January 25

Introduction to the Seminar. Discussion of the Portfolio. Reflecting on your experience of the Major: Skill Identification and Conceptualizing Strengths

February 8

Professional Development Seminar: Preparing the Business Resume & Job Letter.

Guest Speaker: TBA.

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February 22

Cover Letter and Résumé Workshop.
Guest Speaker: TBA.

March 8

Professional Development Seminar: Applying to Graduate Programs.
Guest Speaker: TBA.

March 29

General Workshop
Guest Speaker: TBA.

April 5 - April 16

Individual Conferences.

April 23

Final Portfolios Due.