LS 110: Career Exploration in the Life Sciences
Hybrid course Spring 2020

Instructor: Rachel Kennison, MSW, PhD
Pronouns: She, her, hers

Course Details: Zoom see CCLE for Meeting link Tuesday’s at 4pm Weeks 1, 6-10
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The top 5 reasons why I love teaching this class

1) It works. There is a method to career exploration/development that involves self-reflection applied to a systematic process and there is nothing more satisfying then teaching content that I know if you continue to use it, you will benefit.

2) There is something for everyone. You might not be interested in every topic, or every speaker, but if you put the work in, you will get something out of it. If you are willing to stay open and do the work, you will end up in a different place from where you started.

3) I get to teach you tools you will (should) use for the rest of your life.

4) This is not a traditional lecture class; this is a learning community. You learn from each other and I learn and get inspired by you.

5) It’s fun! I’m pretty sure you haven’t taken a class like this. We have a good time learning and most students report that even when they were challenged, they had fun in the process.

Course Description

We know that many pre-med and life science students change majors by the time they graduate and leave STEM. Many complain about feeling discouraged by the competitive nature of classes, feeling inadequate and feeling anonymous. In addition, many students report general lack of confidence in how to figure out what the “right” path is, or even being aware of what one can do with a science degree beyond medicine or research. This class was created to help you explore yourself AND a diversity of options as life science majors - and there is so much good news!

1. Government projections of employment growth [suggest] heightened need for qualified STEM workers with highly specialized skills and with general knowledge of STEM concepts.
2. STEM jobs are growing at 1.7 times the rate of non-STEM jobs, and the U.S. is simply not producing enough candidates to fill them.
3. 74% of college graduates with STEM degrees are pursuing careers in everything from healthcare and law to education and social work.
4. STEM graduates are highly sought after and earn higher wages than their non-STEM counterparts, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Course Goals
1. Students will initiate a career development process that will be part of life-long learning towards development as an emerging Life Science professional.
2. Students will understand that the career exploration process includes consistent self-assessment, networking and research.
3. Students will become aware of the diversity of STEM career options by listening to guest speakers in a variety of careers and performing a career search related to their goals.

Learning Outcomes
1. You will apply your values, skills, interests and personality traits to career options by using standardized career assessment inventories and self-reflection exercises.
2. You will research current print, web, and labor market trends with an emphasis on the fields of Life Science.
3. You will produce a resume and cover letter tailored to your specific career goals
4. You will practice interviewing and networking skills
5. Through classroom discussions, you will be able to verbalize your career path and create a portfolio and plan to achieve these goals while applying feedback from classmates and the instructor.
6. You will be exposed and analyze a variety of career options by interacting with alumni guest speakers

Course Materials
- **Course Packet** is required for this course. Purchase the LS 110 Packet for $9 using this link: [https://ucla.redshelf.com/book/1545565](https://ucla.redshelf.com/book/1545565)
- **MBTI and Strong Assessments** – these are required. The cost of the MBTI and Strong is $27.20. The instructions on how to access and pay for the assessments are in the assessments folder and you will need to complete them by **Friday, April 10th**. If you have any financial hardship or other type of concern about paying for the assessments, please contact me by the end of the first week so we can make an alternative plan.
- **CCLE website**: You will be expected to use the CCLE website for the readings and assignments. Please ask if you do not know how to use CCLE.

Teaching and Learning in the time of COVID 19

Our learning environment has drastically changed. We are having to adjust to new distractions, challenges and barriers that may not have been there before. With that, there are also many opportunities. I have learned more about zoom then I ever imagined was necessary to do my job. It’s a great lesson in flexibility and adaptability - I think I’ll add that to my resume! I want to encourage you all, despite the challenges, to see what can be gained by this experience. I’ve provided you with some basic resources on our CCLE site, and also want to make sure you have seen the [Center for the Advancement of Teaching](https://ucla.redshelf.com/book/1545565) website which was created with the needs of students in mind.
The most important thing is to communicate with me. I have tried to create a course that maximizes our ability to connect – but it may not work for all of you. Please let me know how it’s going and if there is anything I can do to help.

**Class expectations:**

I place an extremely high value on class participation, because talking to your peers and is the proven factor from education research that enables deeper learning. In the context of career exploration, it is also a way to practice the critical skill of networking. With a hybrid course you will be able to actively connect with me and your peers during our live zoom sessions (synchronous sessions). In addition, when the class is asynchronous (meaning you work on your own for the week completing assignments and watching videos), you will be interacting through discussion boards each week, which will be counted as your participation points. Weeks 6-9 we will have guest speaker panels for our live zoom sessions, and your participation with these panels is also another way for you to network and connect.

- **Course Format: Weeks 1 and 6-10** will take place synchronously (we will all meet at 4 pm) using Zoom for ~1.5 hours. There will also be additional assignments that will be required outside of class time. **If there are technical difficulties and you get kicked out of the room, wait one minute and try to join again and/or email one of the graduate students.**

- **Accessibility:** We understand that there will be a need for leniency, especially in regards to everyone having remote access to the tools they may need. Some people may have issues accessing the internet, may not have adequate technology, or may be joining from different time-zones entirely. I will record every zoom session, so if you are not able to attend the synchronous meetings you will be able to watch the video and answer questions in order to get your participation points. That being said, watching the video is not the same is being there. If you have the choice to be on zoom, it will help motivate you, keep you engaged and interested and it’s more fun!

- For any other accommodations or needs related to ability or access, please contact me or the graduate students to make sure your needs are met.

- **Mental Health and General Well-being:** Along with everything else, this mode of working can be quite isolating. You are not alone. You are part of a community. Now more than ever it’s important to take care of yourself. Take breaks and get some fresh air! Stay positive! **Write down one thing you are grateful for every day!** Reach out! Eat well and sleep well!

**Structure and Time management**

As I say throughout the quarter, you get out of the course what you put into it. The assignments are not meant to be busy work, they are for you to take the time to reflect and work on skills you may not otherwise take the time for. In fact, the most important aspect of the “grading” for this class is really about the quality of the feedback given to you by well-trained graduate students who have been chosen for this job because they are interested in mentoring and supporting you, rather than the number of points.
Each week, there are a set of videos, discussion boards and assignments to complete. The number of each of those vary. Some weeks are more video heavy, other weeks are more assignments. Most assignments (with a few exceptions) should not take more than 30 minutes (some will take significantly less). I have done my best to estimate on CCLE the amount of time each “module” or week’s lesson plan should take.

Did you know UCLA Policy is that 1 unit = 3-4 hrs of work? This is a 2-unit P/NP class, which means you are expected to work for 6-8 hrs/ week (including class time). As I said, you can spend as much or as little time on these assignments, but the more you put into it, the more you get out of it. Since many of the assignments are self-reflective in nature, I urge you to take the time out of your day to reflect. It’s good practice for your professional and personal life to process things you are learning. That’s what this class is about.

My advice is to set aside 1hr/day that you will be working on LS 110. However, you may put more time into the assignments like the resume and cover letter revision and Informational Interview.

Here are some deadlines to keep in mind:

- Most assignments are due at **Tuesday’s at 4 pm** so put that reminder on your phone!
- Exceptions – **deadlines Friday at midnight**:
  - Most Discussion Boards, which are your participation points, require you respond to some prompts, read your peer’s responses and respond to them. **Your responses to the prompts are due Friday’s at midnight**, giving you the weekend to read your peer’s answers. **You need to respond to your peers by Tuesday at 4pm.**
  - The MBTI and Strong SELF-Assessments
  - Guest Speaker questions

**Grading**

This class is out of a total of 240 points. The points are divided into Participation and Assignments. The Assignments are intended to help you achieve the learning outcomes for each week, while participation is intended to help you stay engage and deepen your learning. As such there are certain assignments and number of participation points needed to pass.

In order to Pass you need 75% of participation points and 75% of assignments with these caveats:

**Requirements in order to pass:**
- **Class Participation** (75%) = 78 pts (comprised of Discussion boards and Guest speaker questions)
- **Final Portfolio Assignment** = 30 points
- 1 30 min **virtual office hour** = 5 points
- **Assignments** = It obviously best that you complete all of the assignments but you need to complete at least 75 points worth of the assignments, not including the final project or office hour to pass.
PRO TIP: Our study of this class has shown that 90% of students complete all the assignments and report that doing so really helped increase their confidence and motivation to do career research, apply and get a job or interview and have the tools to help them figure out the best match for their career path.

Assignment breakdown:

Reflective Journal Assignments
- Reflective “Values” Journal (10 pts)
- Reflective “Personality” Journal (10 pts)
- Reflective “Interests” Journal (10 pts)

Worksheets and Activities:
- The worksheets are found in your packet and will require you to either recreate on a word doc and upload to CCLE or complete in your packet if you print it, and take a picture to upload to CCLE. These comprise a total of 36 pts throughout the quarter.

Resume/Cover Letter Assignments:
There are 3 drafts of resume/cover letter submissions, so that you are given opportunities to incorporate feedback from your peers and instructors.
- Draft #1 - Resume & Cover Letter (10 pts)
- Draft #2 - Revised Resume & Cover Letter (10 pts)
- Final Draft – Targeted Resume & Cover Letter (points included in final portfolio assignment)

Participation
- Weekly Discussion Boards (80 pts)
- Guest Speaker Questions (24 pts)

Informational Interview Report (15 pts)

Final Career Portfolio (30 pts)
There are 3 sections to your portfolio. You may upload them as one pdf or word doc, or as separate files on CCLE.
- Section I relates your goal to your career research and self-assessments (10 pts)
- Section II is your Targeted Resume and Cover Letter (10 pts)
- Section III – LinkedIn and Handshake Profiles (10 pts)

Required Office hours: (5 pts)
Office hours are an opportunity to go over your assignments, and for us to get to know each other. It is also a great way to practice networking and meeting with professors, which is why I require you come to at least one 30 minute OH during the quarter (you are welcome to sign up for more, but please wait until after the end of week 2 so that everyone has a chance to sign up first). I welcome this time to explore your goals and aspirations more deeply. Don’t wait until the end of the quarter to let me know if you are struggling (with anything, career/major or other)!

Office Hour expectations: Office hour sign-ups are for groups of 7 students, max. I expect everyone to contribute to the conversation! I will ask you each to talk about:
1) Why you are taking the class (your goal)
2) What you hope to get out of it and how you think it might help you
3) The questions you have about a specific career, or about the class content

You are also welcome to ask me anything about my career path or professional development. You will learn a lot from your peers as well.

If you have a specific concern or something you want to discuss privately, please send me an email requesting a separate 20 min appointment. When asking for an appointment, always give me multiple blocks of time you are available. My schedule is very tight but I will work to make sure to see you as soon as possible.

Sign up for at least 1 office hour by the end of week 2 using this link: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Xb9mCPoTFLWlSIfHrmRFFp7wpB1OO5n6H4LSWeGrGY0/edit?usp=sharing

This is a shared google sheet, so please be careful not to delete or move anyone! If you can’t find a time that works for you, please let me know and we will find an alternative time.

Self - Assessments:
You will be completing 4 self-assessments in the class, which are the gateway to your career research and life-long career exploration process. They include two online assessments: Personality - Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Interests – Strong Interest Inventory (SII) and two in your packet: Values and Skills.

The MBTI and SII require a fee because we the instruments are based on decades of research and have been shown to be accurate in terms of statistical reliability and validity. Along with the results, you will receive a professional interpretation by a certified MBTI and SII practitioner (me). These interpretations cost hundreds of dollars if done privately. Assessments are a widely used and an integral part of the career development process. However, the completion of these assessments are voluntary. If you choose to not complete the assessments, you will be required to do two alternative writing assignments. Arrangements for alternative assignments need to be made during the first week of class. If you have already taken the assessments elsewhere and have your results, please contact me. If you in financial need, please contact me to make an appointment and discuss your situation during the first week of class.

LS 110 Partners: Career Center and Alumni Guest Speakers
I work very closely with Christian Chavez, Associate Director of Partnership UCLA as well as Krisztina Kecskei, Career Center counselor. Throughout the quarter I will post events and trainings sent by the career center counselors. Christian brings wonderful alumni guest speakers to the class. He works closely with them to make sure the speakers provide a variety of experiences, backgrounds and knowledge about career pathways in the life sciences. He is also available as a resource to help you find specific people to talk to for your informational interview.

A note about Guest Speaker panels weeks 6-9:
Christian and I will be bringing you live online guest speaker panels and presentations about other opportunities at UCLA. We expect you to play an important role and participate by asking questions and networking. Even though you may look at a job title for a Guest Speaker and see they don’t represent careers you are interested in, **feedback from students is that there is always something to learn from each speaker in general about finding a career that is**
**best for you.** We will leave time for you to network with individual speakers in a private zoom room, which is a way for you to practice networking skills. So even if you do not find the particular job title appealing, you can practice talking to someone about yourself and your goals and will most likely learn something new.

**Our Inclusive Learning Environment**

**Graduate Students Readers (GSR):** The GSRs will be reading/grading and giving you feedback on all of your assignments. They are instructed to make sure I am alerted to any student who seems to be struggling or in need of specific guidance. We encourage your feedback at any time throughout the quarter. Please communicate with us if there are ways that we can improve the course to better support your learning.

**Personal Challenges:** I understand that especially now, in this particular time, it may be difficult to focus on schoolwork. If you are having a personal challenge that affects your participation in this course, please talk to me to create a plan. Please do not wait until the end of the quarter to share any challenges that have negatively impacted your engagement and academic performance. **The sooner we meet, the more options we will have available to us to support your overall academic success.** If you are not comfortable speaking with me directly, please utilize the other student resources provided below in order to understand how to best approach success in this course given your personal needs as soon as possible.

**Students needing academic accommodations** should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) at (310) 825-1501 or present in person at Murphy Hall A255. CAE will assess all requested accommodations and communicate appropriately with us (your instructors). Any students with CAE approval for proctoring arrangements during exams will need to please inform us (or your TA) prior to the date of the exam. When possible, students should contact CAE within the first two weeks of the quarter to allow reasonable time to coordinate accommodations. For more information, please visit the CAE website: [http://www.cae.ucla.edu](http://www.cae.ucla.edu).

Resources are available to foster the well-being of all UCLA students as they pursue their academic goals. Any student who finds themselves in immediate distress, please call Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) to speak directly with a counselor 24/7 at (310) 825-0768, or please call 911. For more information, please visit the CAPS website: [http://www.counseling.ucla.edu](http://www.counseling.ucla.edu). **UCLA has a multitude of resources available to all students. I have included these resources on CCLE>Articles/Handouts**