BUS 303: DEVELOPING YOUR PROFESSIONAL SKILLS – ADVANCED ELEMENTS

Course Information:
Course Title: BUS 303: Developing Your Professional Skills – Advanced Elements
Class Dates/Times: Online, Asynchronous, Virtual Group Meetings
Course Webpage: http://courses.gmu.edu

Faculty Information:
Instructor: Gretchen Hendricks
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or virtual meetings by request
Office Location: Enterprise Hall, Room 034, Fairfax Campus
Email: ghendri2@gmue.edu (preferred method of contact)
Office Phone: 703-993-3386 (please schedule a time to speak on the phone)

Course Description:
In this course, you will continue to develop your professional skill set. Topics covered include understanding the modern work environment, business ethics and professional responsibilities, and professional judgment. You will also continue to hone your professional writing and presentation skills, prepare for the job search process, and develop professional development plans. This is a required course in the undergraduate Business program.

Prerequisite Course:
BUS 103

Course Outcomes:
1. Students will increase self-awareness by evaluating their interpersonal skills and the ability to influence the decision-making processes.
2. Students will evaluate various business trends, issues, and industries to inform their professional perspectives.
3. Students will research, analyze, and create information to assist with their career readiness.
4. Students will analyze and improve their ability to effectively organize and communicate ideas through oral and written expression.

Undergraduate Business Program Learning Goals:
Goal 1: Our students will demonstrate an understanding of the social, global, ethical, and legal contexts of business and will be able to reflect on the role of the individual in business.
Goal 2: Our students will demonstrate an understanding of and the ability to apply knowledge of professional skills necessary for success in business including effective business writing.
Goal 3: Our students will demonstrate technical and analytic skills appropriate for success in business.
Goal 4: Our students will demonstrate an understanding of and the ability to apply knowledge of core business disciplines including accounting, finance, information systems, management, marketing, and operations management.
Goal 5: Our students will demonstrate knowledge and skills appropriate for specialization in their majors.
Goal 6: Our students will demonstrate an understanding of how research in the business disciplines contributes to knowledge and how such research is conducted.

Instructional Methods and Materials:
This is an asynchronous online course that uses a combination of preparation through reading, videos, and online resources as well as graded active learning assignments every week. Students will use Blackboard
to access course materials (there is no required textbook), engage in weekly course activities, and complete major assignments. Students are expected to complete all pre-work prior to attempting their major graded assignments and fully participate in all class and group discussions and presentations. Utilize the Course Calendar to stay on track. Professional behavior is expected throughout the course as defined in course materials.

**Course Grading and Major Assignments:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: Business Press Synthesis Presentation and Web Publication</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2: Employment Package (Résumé, Cover Letter, &amp; Job Posting with Analysis)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 3: Informational Interview Report</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 4: Training Proposal and Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 5: Professional Training Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 6: Reflection and Projection</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation: (Discussion Boards, Journals, and Other Graded Activities)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignment Descriptions:**

**Assignment 1: Business Press Synthesis Presentation and Web Publication**

This *group* assignment is designed to give you experience reading, analyzing, and discussing material from the business press. It provides an opportunity to practice working in small groups and to develop professional speaking skills. It also allows you to practice rhetorical awareness by communicating about a single topic to different audiences using different mediums. There will be a draft and final version.

**Assignment 2: Employment Package (Résumé, Cover Letter, & Job Posting with Analysis)**

This *individual* assignment will teach you to critically read job/internship descriptions and demonstrate a fit with a particular position. It provides an opportunity to create an effective resume that is tailored to your career field and industry and an effective cover letter that is tailored to a specific position.

**Assignment 3: Informational Interview Report**

An informational interview is a meeting with a working professional who can give you an inside view of an occupation, organization, and/or industry that is of interest to you. For this *individual* assignment you will identify an appropriate interviewee; research their industry; schedule an interview; build a list of appropriate questions; conduct an in-person interview and take notes; send a thank you note; and write a reflective report about what you learned and how it applies to your professional future.

**Assignment 4: Training Proposal and Annotated Bibliography**

For this *group* assignment you will develop a well-researched and engaging training program and write a training proposal. The goal is to show that you know a great deal about the training topic and that you can deliver a valuable training experience for a specific group of a selected company’s employees. The proposal should be persuasive and include an annotated bibliography showing the research you’ve done and the sources you’ve found.

**Assignment 5: Professional Training Presentation**

This *group* assignment requires you to deliver the training you wrote about in your persuasive proposal (Assignment 4). You will prepare an instructive and interactive 15-minute formal training video presentation for the audience you identified in the proposal. You will deliver the training to your classmates, who will act as your target audience. The goal is to provide an engaging training experience that enhances your audience’s knowledge of the topic.
Assignment 6: Reflection and Projection
This *individual* assignment gives you the opportunity to both reflect on what you’ve learned this semester and project forward to envision your future self.

All major assignments will be graded on a 100 point scale.

**Grading Scale:** Note that final grades will NOT be rounded up—please don’t ask.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest</th>
<th>Lowest</th>
<th>Letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100.00 %</td>
<td>93.00 %</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92.99 %</td>
<td>90.00 %</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>86.99 %</td>
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<td>60.00 %</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59.99 %</td>
<td>0.00 %</td>
<td>F</td>
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</table>

**Discussion Board** posts are a part of your participation grade for the course. Your active participation online is critical for effective learning to take place. You will be required to view and reply to the discussion posts of your peers. Remember this course simulates a professional work environment and is a collaborative space. Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.

Discussions will run from Monday to Sunday, after which discussion postings will not count. You should make a minimum of one initial response (no later than Wednesday 11:59 p.m. EST) AND then also make a minimum of two additional replies to your peers (no later than Sunday 11:59 p.m. EST). Points will be based on **quality** rather than **quantity**. Posts will be graded according to the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Required posts were submitted on time; postings were well distributed throughout the week.</td>
<td>Required postings were submitted on time but were not distributed throughout the week.</td>
<td>Required postings were submitted late and were not distributed throughout the week.</td>
<td>No discussion post was submitted.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2 points)</td>
<td>(1.5 points)</td>
<td>(1 point)</td>
<td>(0 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Post</td>
<td>Content was clearly understood and incorporated into the initial post to support arguments/views.</td>
<td>Some reference to content to support arguments/views.</td>
<td>Little or no reference to content to support arguments/views.</td>
<td>No initial post was submitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4 points)</td>
<td>(2.5)</td>
<td>(1 point)</td>
<td>(0 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reply Posts</td>
<td>Two or more responses add</td>
<td>Responses added moderately to the</td>
<td>Responses are non-substantive</td>
<td>No reply posts were</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BUS 303: Developing your Professional Skills – Advanced Elements
Adapted from Dr. Ayesha Sadaf, UNCC

Journal posts are expected to be reflective and are due by Sunday at 11:59 p.m. EST. They will be assessed according to the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Outstanding (5 points)</th>
<th>Proficient (3-4 points)</th>
<th>Basic (2-3 points)</th>
<th>Below Expectations (0-1 points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Journal was submitted on time.</td>
<td>Journal was submitted 1 day late.</td>
<td>Journal was submitted 2-3 days after due date.</td>
<td>Journal was submitted 3 or more days after due date or not at all.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Content was insightful, analytic, and offered synthesis.</td>
<td>Content was general and lacked evaluation.</td>
<td>Content was vague and/or not clear.</td>
<td>Content made no connections or was off topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Reflection</td>
<td>High quality connections were made between content and real-life learning/experiences.</td>
<td>Made some connections between content and personal learning.</td>
<td>Little evidence of personal connection or examples need further explanation.</td>
<td>Lacked connections to personal life, superficial.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All other assignments have designated point values in Blackboard to earn towards your course participation grade.

Course Calendar on Blackboard:
To help you manage your schedule and time to complete the assignments in this course, please follow the recommended time line outlined in the course calendar found in the left hand navigation for your course.
You can expect to work 8-10 hours per week on assignments for this course with weeks running Monday to Sunday. If you have a question or concern or encounter a problem with an assignment, please contact me directly by email so we can discuss and work out a resolution.

**Technology Requirements:**

**Hardware** – You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband Internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. For the amount of Hard Disk Space required taking a distance education course, consider and allow for: the storage amount needed to install any additional software and space to store work that you will do for the course.

**Software** – This course uses Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the myMason Portal. Log in to myMason to access your registered courses. Online courses typically use Acrobat Reader, Flash, Java, and Windows Media Player, QuickTime and/or Real Media Player. Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software for free here.

Students owning Macs or Linux should be aware that some courses may use software that only runs on Windows. You can set up a Mac computer with Boot Camp or virtualization software so Windows will also run on it. Computers running Linux can also be configured with virtualization software or configured to dual boot with Windows.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

**School of Business Standards of Behavior:**
The mission of the School of Business at George Mason University is to create and deliver high-quality educational programs and research. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni who participate in these educational programs contribute to the well being of society. High-quality educational programs require an environment of trust and mutual respect, free expression and inquiry, and a commitment to truth, excellence, and lifelong learning. Students, program participants, faculty, staff, and alumni accept these principles when they join the School of Business community. In doing so, they agree to abide by the following standards of behavior:

- Respect for the rights, differences, and dignity of others
- Honesty and integrity in dealing with all members of the community
- Accountability for personal behavior

Integrity is an essential ingredient of a successful learning community. Ethical standards of behavior help promote a safe and productive community environment, and ensure every member the opportunity to pursue excellence. School of Business can and should be a living model of these behavioral standards. To this end, community members have a personal responsibility to integrate these standards into every aspect of their experience at the School of Business. Through our personal commitment to these Community Standards of Behavior, we can create an environment in which all can achieve their full potential. If these Standards of Behavior are violated, then students may be required to complete additional learning activities assigned by the instructor.
Honor Code Statement:
The Honor System and Code adopted by George Mason University will be enforced for this class: https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated in the School of Business. In your work on all written assignments, keep in mind that you may not present as your own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgement. You also may not borrow the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgement. In this course, you are expected to use APA style citations and reference lists.

Faculty are obligated, without exception, to submit any Honor Code violations or suspected violations to the Honor Committee. See the last page of this syllabus for information about Honor Code sanctions.

Timely Submissions:
All assignments are due by their due date/time and should be posted to Blackboard unless otherwise specified. Late work will be penalized at the discretion of the instructor.

Formatting Guidelines:
Please follow each assignment’s guidelines for formatting. Use APA style to cite and reference all sources. Specific instructions for in-text citations and referencing are found in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition or at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/.

Course Communication via Email:
Email communication for this class is professional correspondence. Use this opportunity to practice professional writing, including proper grammar and tone, complete sentences, correct spelling and capitalization, salutation and closing, etc. Generally, emails will be responded to within 24-48 hours except on weekends or during travel. University rules preclude instructors from communicating with students through private email addresses; use your Mason email address for all course communication.

Peer Reviews, Collaborative Writing, and Group Work:
Students will engage in frequent small-group activities in this course. During peer reviews, other students may be asked to read, review, and respond to your work. In addition, you will have the opportunity to evaluate the work of others. This component of the class mirrors professional workplace situations that require giving and receiving feedback, and these evaluations will count toward your individual grade. For students who do not contribute sufficiently to their group assignment, instructors have the discretion to reduce their grades accordingly.

Diversity and Student Rights:
The University values diversity, as supported by the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Multicultural Education (ODIME) https://odime.gmu.edu/ and seeks to create and sustain inclusive learning environments. Mason also values student privacy and FERPA rights https://registrar.gmu.edu/ferpa/.

Religious Absences:
If you will miss class for religious reasons, inform the instructor of the anticipated absence as soon as possible. The Mason University Life religious holiday calendar is available here https://ulife.gmu.edu/religious-holiday-calendar/.
Additional Resources:

**Accessibility and Accommodations**
If you need academic accommodations for special needs, contact Disability Services at 703-993-2474 and inform the instructor of any special needs as soon as you have your paperwork. Note that accommodations are not retroactive. More information is available at [https://ds.gmu.edu/](https://ds.gmu.edu/).

**Library Resources**
Should you need assistance with library resources, contact Business and Economics Liaison Librarian Jo Ann J. Henson, MLIS: jhenson3@gmu.edu. Also, there is a library InfoGuide for this course: [http://infoguides.gmu.edu/busfoundations](http://infoguides.gmu.edu/busfoundations).

**Career Services in the School of Business**
Career Services is located in Suite 042 in Enterprise Hall (lower level). Walk-in appointments are available Monday and Tuesday from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Thursday and Friday from 10:00 a.m. – 12 p.m. You can also call 703-993-2140 or email mycareer@gmu.edu to set up an appointment. Review the career events calendar at [http://business.gmu.edu/component/eventcalendar/](http://business.gmu.edu/component/eventcalendar/).

**University Career Services**
For University Career events, visit [https://careers.gmu.edu/events](https://careers.gmu.edu/events).

**Counseling Services**
George Mason University’s Counseling and Psychological Services can provide assistance if you find yourself overwhelmed by life, want training in academic or life skills, or just need to talk to a professional counselor. For more information, visit [https://caps.gmu.edu/](https://caps.gmu.edu/), call 703-993-2380 or stop by their office in Student Union Building 1, Room 3129.

**The Writing Center**
The Writing Center provides peer-to-peer writing support. Writers at all levels benefit from sharing their work with a helpful and knowledgeable peer tutor or consultant. To schedule an appointment, visit [https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/](https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/), call 703-993-1200, or stop by Robinson Hall B, Room 213. Schedule appointments in advance; the center gets booked up very quickly each semester.

**Inclement Weather and Campus Emergencies**
Information regarding weather-related changes in the University’s schedule (e.g., closing or late opening) will be provided on the GMU website and via Mason Alert. Students can sign up for the Mason Alert system to provide emergency information of various sorts at [https://ready.gmu.edu/masonalert/](https://ready.gmu.edu/masonalert/). An emergency poster in each classroom explains what to do in the event of a crisis.

**Upcoming Career Events:**
Spring Career Fair 2019, February 20 and 21, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. – Johnson Center, Dewberry Hall

The *Ask the Professionals* career panels and networking series hosted by the School of Business Career Services:

**Spring 2019 ATP Dates**
- **ISOM** – Thursday, January 31 – 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- **Marketing** – Thursday, February 7 – 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- **Management** – Wednesday, February 27 – 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- **Finance** – Monday, March 4 – 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- **Entrepreneurship** – Thursday, March 28 – 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Government – Tuesday, April 9 – 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Accounting – Tuesday, April 23 – 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

*All ATPs are held in Research Hall, Room 163 on the Fairfax Campus

School of Business Events Calendar:
http://business.gmu.edu/component/eventcalendar/

Business Buzz Blog:
http://business.gmu.edu/blog/buzz/
## Honor Code Sanctions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violation</th>
<th>First Offense</th>
<th>Second Offense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plagiarism</strong></td>
<td>1. Failure to cite/attribute sources</td>
<td>An F in the class; referral to Writing Center; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Representing someone else’s work as the student’s own (e.g., copying and pasting)</td>
<td>An F in the class; referral to Writing Center; Academic Integrity Seminar completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cheating</strong></td>
<td>1. On a minor assignment (e.g., homework, quizzes)</td>
<td>An F in the class, Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Cheating on a major assignment or exam, submitting course work from another course as original work</td>
<td>An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion, and at least one semester suspension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lying (e.g., providing fraudulent excuse documents, falsifying data)</strong></td>
<td>An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion, and at least one semester suspension</td>
<td>An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one semester suspension or expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Egregious Violation (e.g., stealing an exam; submitting coursework from another class as original work across multiple courses; lying to an employer about academic performance, false identification or posing as another, in person or online)</strong></td>
<td>An F in the class, Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and at least one year suspension</td>
<td>An F in the class; Academic Integrity Seminar completion; termination from the School of Business; and expulsion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Academic Integrity Seminar used by Office of Academic Integrity costs $100. George Mason University