

SENIOR SEMINAR IN GEOGRAPHY, FALL 2008, GEO 4930

Instructor: Joann Mossa, Ph.D., Associate Prof. and Undergrad. Coord.
Class Time: F-Per. 5 (11:45 A.M.-12:35 P.M), Turlington Hall 3012
Syllabus: <http://www.geog.ufl.edu>

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Objectives: To learn how academic training in geography is applied in varied careers, and to help transition to a different situation (varied careers, graduate school) following completion of your bachelor's degree

GRADING SCALE

A: 90-100%, B+: 87-89.9%, B: 80-86.9%, C+: 77-79.9%, C: 70-76.9%, D+: 67-69.9%, D: 60-66.9%, E: <60%

GRADING CRITERIA

Class Attendance 35 points, (2.5 points off for each class missed). Cancellations will be announced in class. Make-up assignments may replace additional missed classes with valid excuse.

ALC/SLO exam: 15 pts., 30 questions. Testing knowledge of learning in the major

Participation: 10 points. Ask questions of our guest speakers and show involvement with class activities.

Assignments: 10 points each, total 40 points, First two listed + 2 others. Length of other assignments is typically 2-3pp double-spaced.

- *Resume and Self-Evaluation (required for all), Due Week 3
- Graduate School: Perception vs. Reality, Thoughts and Interviews
- Graduate School Application with Related Information
- Career Fair or Showcase Review
- Work World: Perception vs. Reality, Thoughts and Interviews
- Work World: Two Cover Letters and Applications
- Work World: Compilation of Employment Possibilities in a Region
- Work World: Business Plan
- Book review: Interviewing/job hunting/prof. development/Geog. careers
- Another creative or relevant project meeting Instructor's approval

Grading for each of the five 10 pt. Individual assignments:

Was it thorough, complete and professional (6 pts.)?

Are there typos and grammatical errors (2 pts.)?

Was it turned in on time (2 pts.)?

Due Dates: Resume due Week 3. Other assignments are due on Weeks 6, 9, and 12. Unless specified, you can choose what to submit for those weeks otherwise.

Total Points: 100 (35% attendance; 15% ALC test; 10% participation; 40% assignments)

No classes: Homecoming: October 24; Business Travel: Nov 7; Thanksgiving: Nov. 28

INDIVIDUAL COURSE ASSIGNMENTS (Resume and three of remaining projects)

Effective Resume and Self-Evaluation. Include some background personal information, career objectives, education, work experience, special skills, leadership/service and contact information for references. Seek a good source to assist you, such as a book (Job Hunting for Dummies, a Resume Book, or a web site about resumes such as <http://web.clas.ufl.edu/users/creed/Engineering/resumerules.html>). If you lack experience in the field or obvious marketable skills, write a critique of your weaknesses and how you plan to improve these or would discuss these in an interview.

Graduate School: Perception vs. Reality. Part 1: Your thoughts and perceptions on what graduate school in Geography would be like and how you might fit in that world; Part 2: Interview a minimum of 2 current or former graduate students about their graduate study experience (in Geography or a related area). Quote them and discuss how your original thoughts and awareness have changed during the course of the interviews.

Applying to Graduate School. Get information and an application from one University that is a good fit for your interests in Geography (see www.aag.org web site). Include for EACH school: 1) a half-page explanation of why and how you came to choose this institution: 2) the application: 3) a letter of intent; and 4) names of individuals you would ask for letters of recommendation and why you are selecting these individuals. Appropriate content for the letter of intent can be found at our class website in the Power Point presentation. Your letters will likely be similar for the different institutions, but should reflect your research of faculty specializations at that institution and how they fit your academic interests.

Some Resource Materials and Books:

Association of American Geographers. 20XX. Guide to Programs in Geography in the United States and Canada, (updated editions come out every year).

Your Experience at Career Fair or Showcase: A short (2-3 pp.) write-up on your preparation, your visit, which employers you met, which were the most promising, etc.

The Work World: Perception vs. Reality. Part 1: Your thoughts and perceptions on what working in Geography would be like and how you might fit in that world. Some domains in the work world include planning, environmental consulting, mapping, military careers, K-12 teaching, peace corps service, university professor, etc. Part 2: Interview and quote a minimum of 2 current/former employees in this area about their work experience and discuss how your original thoughts about this work have changed during the course of the interviews.

Complete the Application Process for 2 Jobs that interest you. The employers should be a good fit for your interests and background. Include a half-page explanation of why and how you came to choose these places and what you have learned about them. For each, attach a cover letter introducing yourself and why you think that you are a worthy applicant. Seek a good source to assist you, such as a book ([Job Hunting for Dummies](#) or a web site about letters of application. If you are looking for a job in cartography or GIS, include a small portfolio showing samples of your work. Discuss how your class projects/academic background connect with the skills and knowledge required in the job.

Work World-Regional Job Sources: Develop a descriptive list of job sources in a region (e.g. southeast Florida). List employer information (company name, size, type of business, types of positions available, contact information of human resource personnel) for several companies/agencies that employ geographers. At least 8-10 employers should be listed.

Work-World-Business Plan: Some of our majors have started their own business (travel agencies, leading adventure tours, consulting firms, wine shops, bike shops, etc.) Develop a business plan according to standard procedures. Sections might include: Executive Summary, Vision and Mission, Present Situation, Goals, Objectives, Company Overview, Legal Business Description, Management Team, Board of Directors, Strategic Alliances, Product Strategy, Current Product, Research and

Development, Production and Delivery, Market Analysis, Market Definition, Customer Profile, Competition, Risk, Marketing Plan, Sales Strategy, Distribution Channels, Advertising and Promotion, Public Relations, Financial Plan, Assumptions, Financial Statements, Capital Requirements, Conclusion

Book review: Interviewing/job hunting/professional development/Geographic careers:

Read and review a book that concerns either interviewing, job hunting, professional development or geographic careers written in the past 10 years (earlier books may be individually approved with instructor's permission). Consult instructor if you are uncertain whether your book is appropriate. Summarize the book, including the important take-home messages, and describe what was especially meaningful or helpful to you and whether you think it would be helpful to others. Also, critique and discuss any problems and if/how this book did not meet your expectations.

Sample Books:

Bolles, R. N. annually. *What Color Is Your Parachute?: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career-Changers*. Ten Speed Press. (updated editions come out every year)

Kenzer, M.S. 1989. *On Becoming A Professional Geographer*. Merrill Publishing Company.

Messmer, Max, 1995, *Job Hunting for Dummies*, IDG Books Worldwide, Foster, City, CA, 372 pp.

Phillips, E.M., and Pugh, D.S., 1994 (2nd ed.), *How to get a Ph.D.: A handbook for students and their supervisors*, Open Univ. Press, Buckingham, UK, 203 pp.

Interview Preparation: Compile a list from varied sources of 10 questions frequently asked at interviews and write an individual response for each of those questions. Where possible, draw from your academic background and career experiences. Cite your sources for the questions. Included should be an answer to: Tell me about yourself?; and What Questions do you have for us?

Alternative project: Other project relevant to careers in geography (instructor's approval required).

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (May change depending upon the availability of speakers)

- W 1: Introduction to Class, Policies, Classmate Introductions
- W 2: Graduate School in Geography, Part 1
- W 3: Discussion and Forum with Graduate Students, Part 2
- W 4: Wrap-up of Graduate Study in Geography, Part 3
- W 5: Overview of the Work World and Careers in Geography
- W 6: Career Planning Center
- W 7-14: Various panelists and alumni guest speakers knowledgeable about the following: Geographic Education, International Teaching, Environmental Consulting, Peace Corps, Regional and State Agencies, Water Management Districts, City and County Agencies (esp. Planning and Public Works), Nonprofits, Federal Agencies, Business World, etc.

Honor Code: Students are expected to abide by the UF honor code and ethical conduct, listed on the following website: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/stg/>

Students with disabilities: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Other Concerns: Please be aware that the University Counseling Center (392-1575), the Student Health Care Center (392-1161) and Student Mental Health (392-1171) can assist students as they work through personal, academic and social issues

SOME GUEST SPEAKERS FROM PAST SEMESTERS

Career Resource Center:	Rew Woodruff, Farouk Dey, Elaine Casquarelli
Graduate School:	Ed Borden, David Coley, Heidi Lannon, Noelle Mecoli, Jose Torres, Andres Guhl, Kevin Stofan, Matt Marsik, Annant Dhillon, Ken Whalen, Kwadjo Owusu, Robert Lopez, Jim Rasmussen, Keith Yearwood, Saemi Lederman, Amy Daniels, Amanda Wolf, Lin Cassidy
Envt. Consulting:	Justin Scheidt (Parsons Brinckerhoff, Tampa), Ryan Taylor (Environmental Services, Inc., Jacksonville)
Peace Corps:	Amy Panikowski (recruiter), Jocelyn Peskin (Central America), Janet Puhalla (Africa), Ann Foster (Pacific Islands)
Planning/Utilities:	Lisa Walsh (City of St. Cloud, Marion Co. Planning Dept.), Heidi Lannon (Gainesville/GRU), Blake Smith (GRU)
K-12 Education:	Liz Smith (FSU, grades 7-12, Marion Co.), Bryson Beddell (social studies, middle school), Jocelyn Peskin (teaching abroad)
Public Works:	Sally Adkins/Mike Deffenbaugh (Gainesville), Caroline Dillingham (City of Orlando)
County & City Agencies:	Caroline Dillingham, Josh Jensen (Polk County), Kevin Stover (City of Melbourne), Fay Walker (Alachua County Fire Rescue E-911), Jennifer Carpenter & Dan Anderson (Alachua Co. Property Appraisers)
SCA:	Tamara Paul
Business Geography:	Michael Gil (the Shopping Center Group, Orlando)
Real Estate:	Barrett Webber (appraisal, Sarasota area) M. Olga Danescu (associate, Pensacola area)
Non-Profits:	Sally Adkins (River Network)
Water Mgmt. Districts:	David Botelho, Mike Bowman (St. Johns River WMD)
Career Resource Center:	Rew Woodruff, Elaine Casquarelli, Farouk Dey
Federal Agencies:	Nalini Torres (U.S.A.C.E.), Carlos La Torre (U.S.A.C.E.), Ann Foster (USGS-BRD), CIA
Defense Contractors:	Aaron Young, Kevin Stover, Chris Cleasby, Kevin Howald (Harris Corporation)
Mapping Companies:	Jennifer Martinez (MapSource), Justin Carasick (3001)