



Maxine Goodman Levin School of Urban Affairs

LEVIN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND EDUCATION

UST 306: Professional Development for Urban Affairs

Course Format: Web Asynchronous (100% online)	Credits: 2
Instructor: Elaine Suarez, MPA	Office Hours: Check BlackBoard
Office Location: By appointment	Office Phone: (216) 253-9408
	Email: e.suarez@csuohio.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the skills, attributes, and materials needed for a successful transition from student to emerging professional in urban affairs.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

UST 306 is an online professional development course for students enrolled in urban affairs degree programs, also for or related majors. There are no class meetings, but assignments are due online to Blackboard weekly. This course provides awareness of [career readiness competencies](#) expected from students graduating with a four-year degree according to the [National Association of Colleges and Employers \(NACE\)](#) and [CSU's Office of Career Development and Exploration](#).

Career readiness is defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers as “the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace” (2022). The competencies are:

- **Critical Thinking/Problem Solving:** Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual can obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.
- **Oral/Written Communications:** Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.
- **Teamwork/Collaboration:** Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure and can negotiate and manage conflict.

- **Digital Technology:** Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals. The individual demonstrates effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.
- **Leadership:** Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. The individual can assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.
- **Professionalism/Work Ethic:** Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image. The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind and can learn from his/her mistakes.
- **Career Management:** Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals and identify areas necessary for professional growth. The individual can navigate and explore job options, understands, and can take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understands how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace.
- **Global/Intercultural Fluency:** Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. The individual demonstrates openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals' differences.

COURSE MATERIALS

There is no textbook for this course. All instructional materials will be provided at no cost through Blackboard.

CSU OFFICE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND EXPLORATION

The CSU Office of Career Development and Exploration (OCDE) offers several professional development opportunities each semester like Resume Rx, a personalized review of your resume by a professional volunteer, mock interviews, and one-on-one assistance with professional materials and seeking employment. It has employment liaisons for each college. Please check the [OCDE Liaison](#) webpage to find out who your program's liaison is. The OECD is also available to graduates!

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Each week's assignment is a professional portfolio item; personal statement, career objective statement, resume, references, co-curricular and/or extra-curricular activities, professional associations, professional code of ethics, professional references, online professional profiles, job searching, cover letters, informational interviews and interview tips including professional etiquette. The term "portfolio" does not denote a specific format. It is a way to describe all the materials, kind of like a packet.

Each portfolio item is a graded assignment, with a due date. Students receive feedback from me personally. Points are deducted for late submissions (5% per day late), incomplete

and/or incorrect responses (% deduction varies), writing errors and formatting errors (typos, spelling, and grammatical mistakes), % deduction varies. The good news is that you can revise and resubmit assignments for additional credit (the last day of classes is the last date to resubmit any assignment)! Late points cannot be recouped.

This is a practical course based upon professional expectations, meaning the products from this course directly apply to employment and/or continuing education. We want you to be gainfully (hopefully happily) employed in a position you are ready for after 4 years of undergraduate education.

ASSIGNMENTS

This course does require students to complete weekly assignments. Below is a summary of assignments with the credit for each.

Welcome & introductions – 3 pts

Personal statement – 10 pts

Career Objective/Summary Statement – 5 pts

Skills – 5 pts

Samples of work – 10 pts

References – 6 pts

Extracurriculars – 5 pts

Professional Associations – 5 pts

Resume – 10 pts

Professional Ethics and Conduct – 10 pts

Online professional profiles (CSU Handshake and LinkedIn) – 10 pts each

Job Searching – 5 pts

Sample cover letter – 10 pts

Elevator pitch – 15 pts

Benefits & perks – 3 pts

Informational Interview – 50 pts

Total Points: 187

GRADING & EXPECTATIONS

Students receive feedback on their professional materials highlighting student strengths and suggestions to improve professional materials.

The grade for this class is based on the accumulation of points divided by the total number of points possible. No grading curve is applied.

Full credit is awarded for:

- On-time submissions,
- Accuracy of response/following instructions,
- Quality of writing,
- Professional format.

Credit is deducted for:

- **Late submissions**. I accept late assignments, but please be aware that **the late submission policy for this class is a 5% deduction per day late**, beginning one minute after the assignment due date & time. Alternative arrangements are possible for most assignments in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Please contact the professor to discuss your situation.
- **Inaccurate response**: Your assignment is incorrect, irrelevant, and/or incomplete.
- **Grammatical and other writing errors**. I evaluate your writing mechanics and deduct credit for incorrect syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. For help with grammatical and other writing errors, consider [Grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com)'s free proofreading app. I may recommend you make an appointment with the [CSU Writing Center](#) if I find that your writing needs significant improvement for college-level expectations. The recommendation is not to make you feel bad. It is to help you get better! Professional writing is a hallmark of a four-year degree and a skill you will use often in your professional life.
- **Unprofessional format or unacceptable file**. The format of the submission is unacceptable for academic purposes or I am unable to read your submission because of the file type (Blackboard doesn't accept every file format). Assignments should be submitted typed as .pdf, .doc, or .docx file types and meet specified word counts (if applicable).

You will be able to see your grades and my written feedback about your work in your Blackboard grade center within a few weeks of the due date.

The CSU undergraduate grading scale used for this class is (in %):

A: 95-100 A-: 90-94 B+: 86-89 B: 83-85 B-: 80-82 C+: 75-79 C: 70-74 D: 60-69 F: 0-59

Incomplete Grade: The "I" grade is given when the work in a course has been generally passing, but when some specifically required task has not been completed through no fault of the student.

According to CSU policy, an "I" grade can only be assigned by the instructor when all three of the following conditions are met:

1. Student is regularly attending/participating in the class and has the potential to pass the course;
2. Student has not completed all assignments and has stopped attending/participating for reasons deemed justified by the instructor;
3. The student has notified the instructor prior to the end of the grading period.

ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL SUPPORT SERVICES AT CSU

CSU offers several free academic and personal support services. These services are helpful if students encounter academic and personal challenges.

[CSU Tutoring and Academic Success Center \(TASC\)](#). TASC offers Free academic support for all undergraduate students at CSU. TASC uses research-based strategies and approaches for learning to help students achieve their academic goals and ultimately, graduate. TASC

does this in an informal, student-centered environment that assists students in not only achieving academically but also socially integrating into college life.

The CSU Writing Center. Writing is an important skill for all students, teachers, and professionals of every kind. As a student at Cleveland State University, you will find that classes in every discipline use writing to help students explore, create, and communicate ideas. Student writing can take many forms, from lab reports to research papers, group projects to journal entries.

CSU Counseling and Academic Success Clinic (CASC). The Counseling & Academic Success Clinic is a free, confidential, supportive counseling and coaching center available to students of Cleveland State University. The clinic provides support and guidance in navigating the typical concerns of today's busy college student. CASC seeks to provide excellent care, guided by identifying the unique strengths of each student, while supporting the development and utilization of positive coping skills to enhance and promote both personal and academic success.

Lift Up Vikes! Resource Center and Food Pantry. Lift Up Vikes! offers a convenient, dignified, and compassionate process through which CSU students are connected to resources that supplement nutrition and other basic human needs as they strive to earn a college degree.

The CSU Community Assessment Response and Evaluation (CARE) Team. The goal of the CARE Team is to work collaboratively to support the wellbeing and safety of students, faculty, staff, and to promote a culture on campus that encourages reporting of concerns. Care Management may be useful if:

- You want to know more about support services offered at the university.
- You would like information on how to connect with medical and mental healthcare providers.
- You would like to withdraw from your classes for personal or medical reasons and want more information on your options.
- You're feeling stressed about school and finding it difficult to cope.
- Your life outside of the classroom has become more difficult to manage.
- You're feeling overwhelmed and want to find help, but you're not sure where to start.

STUDENTS WITH ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Educational access is the provision of classroom accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of their disability. Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at (216)687-2015. The Office is located in MC 147. Accommodations need to be requested ***in advance*** and will not be granted retroactively. If you have an Accommodation Memo from ODS or would like to discuss another special circumstance, please make an appointment with me to discuss your situation.

STATEMENT FROM THE CSU OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY

Federal law, including Title IX, and University policy requires that CSU address discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence and enable students affected by these issues to have the same opportunity to succeed as other students. To do this, the CSU Office for Institutional Equity (OIE) provides information, identifies resources (counseling, medical, advocacy, safety planning), issues academic accommodations (excused absences, extended deadlines, late withdrawals, alternative assignments) and other accommodations (No Contact Directives, changing living arrangements). Any student affected by discrimination, harassment, and/or sexual violence and seeking assistance, should contact OIE, reached by email at OIE@csuohio.edu, or by calling 216-687-2223. The OIE is physically located in the CSU Administration Center, Room 236.

RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES (CONDUCT & ETHICS)

Students have the right to be fully informed of course requirements, grading procedures, and receive prompt and helpful feedback on assignments. The instructor treats criticisms and questions with the respect they deserve, applies rules equally, returns graded work with feedback in a reasonable time frame, and provides a quality course experience.

The [CSU Code of Conduct](#) is the student's guide to acceptable behaviors as a student at this university. The Code of Conduct describes infractions and states the penalties for unacceptable behavior. Please be respectful of the CSU Code of Conduct.

The most common infraction related to coursework is [Academic Misconduct](#) - cheating, plagiarism, and tampering. These infractions have consequences from losing credit on an assignment (minor infraction) to failing the course (major infraction) to including notations of misconduct in your student file. Please review the Academic Misconduct policy to be clear. My suggestion is to ask if you are not clear about what is considered academic misconduct.

The [American Association of University Professors Statement on Professional Ethics](#) is my guide to professional responsibilities in the Academy; to students, colleagues, and the institution of higher education. The [American Planning Association's Ethical Principles in Planning](#) is my guide to professional standards as an urban planner, and as a professional in the field of [Public Service](#).

SCHEDULE

The following schedule shows a brief description of the weekly topics for the semester. Assignment due dates and details are posted and collected using Blackboard. The schedule is subject to change, but students are provided with reasonable notice of changes if they occur.

Week One: January 17-January 20. Assignments due January 22 by midnight

- Review the course syllabus and online Blackboard course
- Introductions Discussion Board post

Week Two: January 23-January 27. Assignments due January 29 by midnight

- Personal Statement: What do you hope to accomplish professionally and how have you prepared to meet your goals?

Week Three: January 30-February 3. Assignments due February 5 by midnight

- Career Objective: What kind of position are you seeking? What kind of organization do you want to work for? What do you hope to accomplish professionally?

Week Four: February 6-February 10. Assignments due February 12 by midnight

- Samples of work: What tangible products have you created as a student? What skills did it take to complete or what new or sharpened skills resulted from the experience?

Week Five: February 13-February 17. Assignments due February 19 by midnight

- Work Experience and Extra/Co-curriculars: What positions have you held (paid and unpaid)? What clubs or activities have you participated in? Did you gain specific technical or transferable skills through these experiences?

Week Six: February 20-February 24. Assignments due February 26 by midnight

- Professional Associations: What professional associations relate to your degree?

Week Seven: February 27-March 3. Assignments due March 5 by midnight

- Resume: Does your resume include all relevant information?
- References: Who can speak to your professional qualities? What is your relationship to the reference? Do you have their permission to be used as a reference? Are they a current reference?

Week Eight: March 6-March 10

- Ethics and Conduct: Professional standards and legally binding workplace policies.
- Professional Etiquette: Organizational culture

Week Nine: March 12-19 SPRING RECESS

Week Ten: March 20-March 24 Assignments due March 26 by midnight

- Online Professional Profiles (CSU Handshake and LinkedIn)

- Job searching: Job posting sources, keyword searches and setting up “job alerts”
- Relevant position descriptions

Week Eleven: March 27-March 31. Assignments due April 2 by midnight

- Cover letters: Format, contents, and what to save for interviews

Week Twelve: April 3-April 7. Assignments due April 9 by midnight

- Elevator pitch
- Preparing for an interview

Week Thirteen: April 10-April 14. Assignments due April 16 by midnight

- Job offer: Understanding salary and benefits
- Perks and other benefits

Week Fourteen: April 17-April 21. Assignments due April 23 by midnight

- Informational Interview: Ask a professional to describe their work
- Any previous week's late submissions & resubmissions due by December 4 at midnight. One-week grace period for informational interview.

Week Fifteen: April 24-April 28. Final Grading in Progress

- Final grading in progress
- Informational interview not accepted after December 11 at midnight.

Exam Week: May 5-9. No exam.

- Grades submitted to the registrar by May 16 by midnight.