Career Development in Psychology  
(The Junior Seminar)

If we all did the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves. – Thomas Edison

Catalog Description: (Prerequisites: Junior standing; Psychology major) This seminar entails studying, discussing, and applying information on academic planning, career development, and graduate school. Course requirements include attendance at several academically related department events or psychologically related university presentations. Fall only.

Student Learning Objectives:

1. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of academic planning for psychology majors as evidenced by satisfactory completion of quizzes, a career plan, and group discussions.
2. Students will develop career development skills, specifically on preparing for graduate school and obtaining employment with a baccalaureate in psychology, as demonstrated in completion of multiple quizzes and graded assignments (informational interview, CV/resume, mock interview, cover letter or personal statement).
3. Students will establish realistic career goals as judged by the acquisition and use of information obtained in the course (e.g., interest inventory, career plan, quiz performance).
4. Students will manifest active engagement in University life, including participation in academically related events, as evidenced by their written attendance documentation.

Faculty Information:

Instructor: John C. Norcross, PhD, Distinguished Professor of Psychology  
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Office hours: Mon 8:30 – 10:00, Tue 10:00 - 11:30, and by appointment
Office location: 224 Alumni Memorial Hall  
Web page: www.scranton.edu/faculty/norcross
Teaching assistants: 10:00 section: James C. Walsh (james.walsh@scranton.edu)  
11:00 section: Emily N. O’Connor (emily.oconnor@scranton.edu)  
1:00 section: Liliana G. Sonneborn (liliana.sonneborn@scranton.edu)

Required Texts:


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**Evaluation Process:** Your performance in this course will be assessed via 6 quizzes (including the summer reading assignment), 8 brief assignments, and your class participation. You will have either a quiz or an assignment due each class period. The quizzes will be administered at the beginning of the class; makeup quizzes are *not* permitted. Each quiz is based primarily on the assigned reading and secondarily on class material. We shall count only your five best quiz grades; you can “drop” one quiz.

The assignments are each worth a maximum of 5 points, as follows. 5 points = assignment delivered on time, in class, and excellent work. 4 points = assignment delivered on time, in class, and good work. 3 points = assignment delivered on time, in class, and satisfactory work or assignment late but excellent assignment. 2 = assignment late but good work. 1 point = late but satisfactory work. 0 points = assignment not received within 1 week of due date.

Thus, 5 best quizzes (max of 10 points apiece) 50
8 assignments (max of 5 points apiece) 40
class participation (max of 10 points) 10

100 possible points

**Course Policies:**

Regular class attendance is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. If absent from a class meeting, you are responsible for the material covered. You are responsible for all announcements made in class. Class attendance counts for approximately half of your class participation points.

Please turn off your cell phone while in class. Violation of this policy will demand punishment – though one that does not infringe on your eighth amendment rights.

Refer to the University’s *Academic Code of Honesty* (revised May 1998). Plagiarism or dishonest examination behavior on your part will result in the assignment of a grade of F for the course.

In order to receive appropriate accommodations, students with disabilities must register with the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) and provide current documentation. Students should contact Ms. Pichiarello (570-941-4039) or Dr. Catalfamo (570-941-4218) for an appointment.

**Guidelines for the Brief Assignments:**

All papers are to be typed double-spaced with one-inch margins. The papers are designed to be brief and focused; please place your name, section time, and title of the assignment at the top of your paper. You are encouraged (but not required) to print assignments on the blank side of paper previously used so that we use both sides of the paper before recycling.

For the *Interest Inventory*, complete the Strong Interest Inventory in a quiet and comfortable place. Follow the instructions and be sure to fill in all of the requested information (including all of the bubbles on page 2). Return it to class on the scheduled day. No formal paper is required if you complete and return the SII on schedule.

For the *Career Plan*, select one career path, either baccalaureate-level or graduate-degree, in or outside of psychology. Then, in numbered order, please specify or list the following elements.
1. Your desired career (and its degree level, be it BS, masters, or doctorate)
2. Undergraduate psychology courses you still need to complete the major
3. Undergraduate psychology experiences (e.g., research, lab experiences, field experience, teaching assistantship, extracurriculars) you plan to acquire in the future
4. Undergraduate courses outside of the psychology major you still need in order to graduate (include GE courses, minors, and concentrations)
5. Undergraduate experiences outside of the psychology major you plan to acquire for your desired career
6. Timeline (semester by semester, including the summer break) by which you will secure the courses and experiences identified in #2 - #5

For the Informational Interview, you are to interview, in person or by telephone, a professional in a field you are considering pursuing as a career. Please do not interview a family member. The paper will summarize, in two lengthy paragraphs, the interview. The first paragraph will specify the date of the interview, the name of the interviewee, the person’s position/profession, educational degree, and employment setting. The second paragraph will summarize what you learned about your potential career and the most valuable pieces of advice you acquired from the interview.

Questions you may ask during the information interview include:
- How did you decide to go into your current field?
- What, exactly, is the title of your position?
- What training and credentials are needed for this job?
- How did you get this job?
- Where did you go to school?
- What are the typical job duties or tasks of this position?
- What is a typical day at work like for you?
- What are the best features of your job? What are the worst?
- What are some of the pressures and stressors you face in your job?
- What is the probable salary range for this occupation?
- What is the most valuable piece of advice you can give?
- What skills did you acquire through experience that you didn’t learn in school?
- Are you still challenged and stimulated by your job?
- What was your biggest misconception about your profession?
- What do you know now that you wish you had known earlier?
- What do you think the future holds for this field?

For the CV or Resume, you will prepare one or the other. The CV will be prepared according to one of the two formats presented in the Insider’s Guide (but double-spaced between the main sections). The resume will be constructed using one of the templates on the Career Services website and then reviewed in person with one of the Career Services staff.

For the Cover Letter or Personal Statement, you will prepare either a single-spaced cover letter to accompany your resume for employment or a portion of a double-spaced personal statement required for graduate applications. Your cover letter will be addressed to a particular person and will explain your qualifications. Your personal statement will address (1) why you are pursuing graduate study in that particular area and (2) why you are applying to that particular graduate program. For both the cover letter and personal statement, please research an actual job (cover letter) or a graduate program (personal statement) and prepare your assignment accordingly. Word count for this assignment should be in the 400 to 600 range.
For the Interview Responses, you will be assigned in class three questions frequently asked during interviews. Your paper will present the questions and your responses to them. You will be asked at least two of those three questions during your Mock Interview. The length of this written assignment should be between 300 and 500 words.

For the Mock Interview, you will be assigned an interviewer for a 20-minute job or graduate interview during interview day. A formal paper is not required if you complete the mock interview as part of class. If you miss class that day, then you need to complete a videotaped mock interview at the Office of Career Services or prepare a formal paper.

For the Attendance Documentation, you will describe the two academically related department or university events you attended this semester. The events must be academic in nature; social events and club meetings do not count toward this requirement. Nor may you count an event that you are required to attend for another course. For each event, please list its name, the date, the presenter(s), and the general thrust of the presentation.

Following is a sampling of approved events:

- What’s News in Medicine, Science, & Technology
- Panel Discussions by Medical Alumni Council
- Harry Mullin Memorial Lecture
- Psi Chi Induction Dinner (invited address)
- Law School Fair (attend a presentation)
- Feminist Fair (attend a presentation)
- Recruiting/Career Expos
- Ignatian Values in Action Lecture
- Readings sponsored by a department
- Philosophy Cafe
- Neuroscience Fall Conference
- Study Abroad Forum/Fair
- Women’s Studies Forum
- Annual Henry George Lecture
- Multicultural Diversity Conference
- Criminal Justice Fall Dinner
- Health Professions talks
- Office of Fellowship Programs
## Course Calendar and Assignments:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 25</td>
<td>A Royal Welcome; Getting Started</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 1 (on Summer Reading)</td>
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<td>Sep 1</td>
<td>Labor Day; no class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 8</td>
<td>Active Engagement in the University Life Psychology Curriculum &amp; Advising Tips</td>
<td>B1, B2, K1</td>
<td>Interest Inventory</td>
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<td>Sep 15</td>
<td>Accessing University Resources: Field Trip to Career Services</td>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
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<td>Sep 22</td>
<td>Employment &amp; Grad School Selection Criteria Assessing Your Career Interests</td>
<td>N23-28, B7, B10</td>
<td>Career Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 29</td>
<td>Preparing for Your Life’s Work: Courses, Research, Experience, &amp; Extracurriculars</td>
<td>N28-38,46-48, B136-152</td>
<td>Quiz 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 6</td>
<td>Baccalaureate-Level Career Options Graduate-Degree Career Paths</td>
<td>N1, B4</td>
<td>Informational Interview</td>
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<td>Oct 13</td>
<td>Fall Break; no class</td>
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<td>Oct 20</td>
<td>Applications and CVs/Resumes</td>
<td>B8, N6, K159-163</td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
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<td>Oct 27</td>
<td>Entrance Examinations</td>
<td>N39-46 Article</td>
<td>CV or Resume</td>
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<td>Nov 3</td>
<td>Researching Positions and Selecting Schools</td>
<td>N5 &amp; B5</td>
<td>Quiz 5</td>
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<td>Nov 10</td>
<td>Cover Letters &amp; Personal Statements Letters of Recommendation</td>
<td>N90-100, K164-165</td>
<td>Cover Letter or Personal Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 17</td>
<td>Interviewing Strategies &amp; Practice</td>
<td>N7, B9</td>
<td>Interview Responses</td>
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<td>Nov 24</td>
<td>Interview Day</td>
<td>K165-169</td>
<td>Mock Interview</td>
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<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>More on Interviews Making Final Decisions</td>
<td>N8</td>
<td>Quiz 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 8</td>
<td>Let Your Life Speak; Parting</td>
<td>B11</td>
<td>Attendance Documentation</td>
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