Carroll Scholl of Management, Boston College

SYLLABUS
MB 830: Career Management and Work-Life Integration
Fall Semester, 2007

Instructors:

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Office hours: Thursday 3:00 – 4:15
Tues. and Thurs., 1:15 – 2:15
or by appointment
or by appointment

Course meetings: Thursdays, 4:30-6:45, Fulton 145


Additional Course Readings – Available on WebCT
Career Values Card Sort – link to site on WebCT
Strong Interest Inventory – Available on Career Center Website

1. Course Overview

In recent years, much has been written about the profound changes in both the workplace and the composition and needs of the workforce. The employer-employee contract has been dramatically altered as organizations have moved from practices of lifelong (or at least long-term) employment to a “free-agent” approach to managing their workforce. This has led to the establishment of a new career model which is increasingly organization-independent. As individuals depend less on the organization to provide stable career paths and job security and as
changes in the labor market call for more frequent job and even career changes, working people have come to realize that “we are all self employed.”

Navigating careers and maintaining work-life balance are necessary skills for all individuals, regardless of the sector in which they are employed. This course will look at these issues and will help students develop the critical competencies and skills to needed to successfully manage your career development and maintain work-life integration. The course will be highly experiential and will include the following components:

1. Completing a rigorous self-assessment process that will help you clarify your interests, values, skills, career goals, and aspirations in the context of your overall life. Students will use this information to formulate life themes that will help you clarify your career goals and direction.

2. Utilizing the self-assessment process as a filter and a focus to understand the labor market, career options, and employers in order to successfully define and attain your desired career outcomes.

3. Developing the knowledge and skills to manage and maintain successful career development and work-life integration over your life span.

The course will include readings that will raise student awareness of career and work-life issues in contemporary organizations. We will make extensive use of exercises and instruments to help you achieve a high degree of self-awareness and understanding, both of yourself and the world of work. Classes will rely heavily on a dialogue and discussion format rather than lectures.

2. Major assignments:

The primary objective expected for the semester is to master course concepts such that you are able to effectively manage a successful career and attain work-life balance over your lifetime. Since creating fulfilling lives is a lofty goal and difficult to measure, the surrogate will be to write two high-caliber papers: the Self-Assessment Paper and the Career Plan.

Procedure for submitting assignments: Before coming to class, please submit your assignment on WebCT (in the event you experience technical difficulty, please e-mail the assignment to harrinb@bc.edu and valcour@bc.edu) and bring two paper copies to class to hand in.

The assignments that will be required are:

1. Readings and participation: Every week there will be assigned readings that should be completed thoroughly. You should understand the content such that you are able to intelligently participate in or lead weekly class discussions. We do not assign a large volume of reading, but expect that all assigned readings will be completed. **Class participation is a major course expectation.**
2. *The Career Autobiography.* The purpose of this activity is to do a very thorough job of recounting and reflecting on the major experiences and people that have influenced your thinking, your work, and your life.

3. *Peer Coaching.* Early in the semester you will be assigned to work as a peer coach with one of your fellow students. The expectations are that you will review your partner’s data very thoroughly, provide your peer coach with a 3-4 page summary of the tentative themes you have identified, schedule and conduct a 1.5 – 2 hour session to review your partner’s results with him/her.

4. *Self-Assessment Paper.* The Self-Assessment paper is the most important deliverable of the semester. The goal of the paper is to demonstrate your ability to use an inductive, qualitative research approach to identify key themes about yourself that:

   a) have a strong bearing on your career options, choices, and aspirations  
   b) are grounded thoroughly in the self-assessment data that you have generated throughout the first half of the semester  
   c) can become the basis of your career plan

5. *Career Plan.* This assignment will illustrate how you have used the self-assessment process and your readings and research to create a realistic, practical career plan.

3. Grading:

   - Readings and class participation: 20%
   - Career Autobiography: 10%
   - Peer Coaching: 10%
   - Self-Assessment paper: 40%
   - Career Plan paper: 20%
### 4. Detailed class outline and weekly assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class number, Date, topic(s)</th>
<th>Class agenda</th>
<th>Assignments due</th>
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| **Class 1: 9/6 Introduction and Class Overview** | • Introduction to course  
• Instructor and class introductions  
• Video: *In Good Company*  
• Review of syllabus | **Read (in class):** *Quarter-life Crisis* |

### Part 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 2: 9/13 Understanding the new career</th>
<th>Class agenda</th>
<th>Assignments due</th>
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| **Class 2: 9/13 Understanding the new career** | • Three career cases  
• The changing landscape of careers  
• The new career model: The protean career  
• The self-assessment process  
• Discussion of sample Career Autobiography  
• Directions for the Strong Interest Inventory | **Read:** Harrington & Hall: Chapter 1: “Understanding the New Career”  
**Read:** Directions for Career Autobiography (syllabus)  
**Prepare:** Observations from the sample Career Autobiography – Brad Harrington (on WebCT)  
**Work on:** Career Autobiography |

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<tr>
<th>Class 3: 9/20 Career and Identity</th>
<th>Class agenda</th>
<th>Assignments due</th>
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</table>
| **Class 3: 9/20 Career and Identity** | • Discussion of students’ career autobiographies  
• Identity meta-competency  
• Video and Activity: *The Three Questions*  
*The Identities Exercise*  
• Introduction to thematic analysis  
• Directions for Career Values Card Sort | **Read:** Harrington & Hall: Chapter 2, sections on “The Self-Assessment Process” through “Identity as a Core Competence”  
**Read:** Drucker: *Managing Oneself*  
**Complete:** Strong Interest Inventory  
**Due:** Career Autobiography  
**Select Peer Coach and schedule initial meeting** |
| Class 4: 9/27 | Feedback on Career Autobiographies  
Discussion of Career Values Card Sort  
Review of Strong Interest Inventory  
Directions for *The 10-Years-Out Exercise* and Lifestyle Representation | **Read:** Harrington & Hall, Chapter 2, sections on “Clarifying Your Values” and “Understanding Your Interests and Passions”  
**Read:** Sull & Houlder, *Do Your Commitments Match Your Convictions?*  
**Read:** Boyatzis, McKee, and Goleman: *Reawakening Your Passion For Work*  
**Complete:** Career Values Card Sort |
|---|---|---|
| Class 5: 10/4 | *Lifestyle Representation* small group discussion and class presentations  
*10-Years-Out* small group discussion and class presentations  
Review: Developing Life Themes and instructions for self-assessment paper | **Read:** Harrington & Hall: Chapter 2, sections on “Lifestyle” and “Understanding Your Life Goals and Personal Vision”  
**Complete:** Lifestyle Representation  
**Complete:** 10-Years-Out Exercise  
**Exchange:** Self-assessment data with Peer Coach |
| Class 6: 10/11 | Review skills analysis  
Discuss *Interview with Significant Others*  
Review performance evaluation analysis  
Final questions on Self-Assessment Paper  
Complete *Peer Coaching Exercise* (in class) | **Read:** Harrington & Hall: Chapter 2, section on “Skills Assessment”; Chapter 3, sections on “Integrating Your Self-Assessment” and “Developing Themes from Your Data”  
**Complete:** Analysis of Performance Evaluations  
**Complete:** Interview with Significant Others  
**Complete:** Peer coaching feedback paper |
| **Part 2: Managing Your Career** | | |
| Class 7: 10/18 | *Job Search tools*  
*Developing your career portfolio*  
*The job search process*  
*Guest Speaker: Tom Jago, Managing Director, The Ward Group* | **Read:** Harrington & Hall, Chapter 4, pp. 71-86  
**Begin work on:** Career portfolio |
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<tr>
<th>Class 8: 10/25</th>
<th>Self-Assessment to Career Management and FindingIdeal Work</th>
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<th>Read: Harrington &amp; Hall, Chapter 3, section on “Developing Career and Work-Life Implications”; Chapter 4, pp. 61-71 and 87-90</th>
<th>In Class: Complete Career and Life Orientation Index</th>
<th>Due: One-page list of themes</th>
<th>Due: Self-Assessment Paper</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class 10: 11/8</td>
<td>Work, Gender and Careers</td>
<td>Gender and roles</td>
<td>Read: Harrington &amp; Hall, Chapter 6, “Work and Family” (pages 133-152)</td>
<td>Read: Fortune, “Get a Life”</td>
<td>Read: Hewlett and Luce, Off-Ramps and On-Ramps: Keeping Talented Women on the Road to Success</td>
<td>Supplemental Reading: Hewlett, Executive Women and the Myth of Having It All</td>
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5. Detailed information on written assignments

The Career Autobiography (10% of grade)

This assignment does not draw from theories learned in this course or any other. You are simply expected to construct the story of your life – a small task (ha ha.) The purpose of this assignment is to do a very thorough job of recounting and reflecting on the major experiences and people that have influenced your thinking, your work, and your life.

While we cannot attach a grade to your life, we can grade the quality and rigor of your effort to describe it. Like other papers in the course, the key will be to explore ideas and experiences with a high degree of depth. Don’t just say, for example, “My father was a stay-at-home dad, which was interesting.” Describe what it was like, how your father was in this role, how that influenced your concept of parenting or careers, how that challenged stereotypes, etc.

Unlike other assignments, we will not be “picky” about the quality of the writing (i.e., use spell check and correct grammar but don’t worry if it doesn’t read like Great Expectations.) This assignment is not a polished work, but a serious draft, a work in progress. It is the cornerstone of your self-assessment process so do not do a “once over lightly.” Questions are provided to give you a focus. Due date is the 3rd class.

Peer Coaching Activity (10% of grade)

You will act as a peer coach for another class member during the semester. In this role, you will be doing two things:

1. Practicing and improving your skills at doing qualitative analysis. This is an excellent opportunity for you to develop and refine these skills before doing your own paper.

2. Providing some highly useful assistance to a colleague that will give them objective feedback on their self-assessment process.
The expectations are that you will:

- Review your partner’s data very thoroughly
- Schedule and conduct a 1.5 – 2 hour session to review your partner’s results
- Provide your peer coach with a 3-4 page summary of the tentative themes you have identified for him/her, with some basic supporting data for each theme.

*Important*: The feedback from your peer coach then becomes another data source that should be used in developing and supporting the themes that are the basis of the Self-Assessment Paper.

**The Self-Assessment Paper (40% of grade)**

The Self-Assessment Paper is the most important deliverable of the semester. The goal of the paper is to demonstrate your ability to use a qualitative research approach, based on inductive reasoning, to create a well-developed and well-supported self-assessment paper. *Grading of this paper is very rigorous*. It will be based on how effectively you have done the exercises, developed themes that are well grounded in data, and the clarity and quality of your narrative. We are not grading your life or your values, just the rigor of your work and the clarity of the manner in which it is presented.

The Self-Assessment Paper will use as a minimum the following data sources that have developed during the first six weeks of the class:

1. The Career Autobiography (life history / experience)
2. The Identity Exercise (life roles / sub-identities)
3. The Career Values Card-Sort (values)
4. The Campbell Interest and Skills Survey (interests / skills)
5. The Lifestyle Representation (lifestyle)
6. The Ten Years Out Exercise (vision / aspirations)
7. The Interviews with Significant Others (feedback / skills)
8. The Skills Analysis from Performance Evaluations (skills - optional)
9. The Peer Coaching Exercise (feedback)

This paper will be framed around a set of “life themes” that you will develop. You will be expected to develop a minimum of 15 themes that are clearly derived from an objective review of all available data sources. Each page will have a theme label at the top of the page. Below you will list all supporting data and data sources as well as any contradictory data that you have identified (example in text.) You will then accompany your 15 pages of themes with a written paper, 5-6 pages in length, that introduces your themes and discusses the ways in which your themes influence and guide your career thinking.

**The Career Plan (20% of grade)**

The final paper is an action plan for your career in the future. It is less structured than the self-assessment paper, in part because you may be at different places in your career (i.e., some of you
are full-time students, others are happy in your present roles, others are actively involved in the job search, etc.) The career plan is not just for people looking for a job or to make a career change. It is a description/plan of what steps you will be taking in your career over the short and longer term to achieve your goal of a meaningful work life.

The components of the paper include the following:

**Part One: A short narrative** (3-5 pages) that describes the following:

- **Section A:** your implications and how those influence your next steps in your career/life plan. You should also review your career decision matrix. Comment on how you developed the options under consideration, and how you have evaluated your preferred options.

- **Section B:** How do you see your career evolving over time? Do you think you will have an organizational career or a protean career? Do you feel you will have a career that moves you up the organization or seek alternative career paths? If alternative, which one(s) sound the most likely? Finally, do you see yourself working alternative or flexible work options? If so, which ones and why?

- **Section C:** A short-term strategy for moving toward your ideal future work-life situation. If your Ten Years Out Exercise describes your long-term goals, what short-term actions and milestones do you need to accomplish to move you to your desired future state?

- **Section D:** Summary. How has going through this exercise clarified, confused, or changed your concept of a career and what kind of career will best work for you?

**Part 2: Your Career Portfolio:** Details for this will be provided

**Part 3: Appendices:** This should include the following:

- Your self-assessment themes (one page summary)

- Your career implications that were developed from your themes. Implications should cite the themes you used to develop the implication

- Your Career Decision Matrix that demonstrates the desirability of career options as they relate to your life themes

- A copy of your 5/10 Years-Out Exercise (you should consider whether this should be modified from the original in light of subsequent class activities)

- Your Ideal organization exercise

- The results of one informational interview