

**UNCP/ELHE 557.001 FALL 2020  
CAPSTONE: ADULTING  
Thursdays 4:30-6:50 pm; Campion 016**

Dr. Karen Arnold  
225 Campion Hall  
(781) 444-9234 (Landline--preferred)  
(617) 717-9071 (Cell)  
[arnoldkc@bc.edu](mailto:arnoldkc@bc.edu)

[Fall 2020 Office Hours](#)  
Wednesdays 3:00–5:00 pm  
Fridays noon–2:00 pm  
& by appointment

**ADULTING IS** ...”the assumption of tasks, responsibilities and behaviors traditionally associated with normal grown-up life, along with the implication that the individual in question does not particularly identify as an adult and that acting as one does not come naturally. *Adult*, in this context, is a verbed noun and is also used to describe forcing someone else, such as an employee, to behave like an adult” (Rouse, 2017, italics in original).

Most college students in their early 20s feel neither fully adult nor fully competent in the tasks, responsibilities and behaviors that are traditionally associated with grown-up life. In this class, students will take stock of their journey to adulthood so far and look ahead to what work, relationships, citizenship, and spirituality might look like in post-college life. Readings on the developmental psychology of young adulthood will be paired with popular media, exercises, and reflective writing to help students progress in their own “adulting” as they prepare to negotiate the transition out of college.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. To review the pattern of choices, values, and formative influences in your life so far
2. To preview long-term commitments in work/career; relationships/family; citizenship; and spirituality
3. To develop selected competencies, skills, and practices

**REQUIRED TEXTS (available at BC bookstore and on reserve at O’Neill Library)**

1. Meg Jay (2012). *The defining decade*. New York: Hatchette Group.
  2. Kelly Williams Brown (2018, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition). *Adulting: How to become a grown-up in 535 easy(ish) steps*. New York: Hatchette Group.
  3. Strongly encouraged: A blank journal that makes you happy.
- All other readings available on class Canvas website

**COVID-19 SAFETY: To keep us all safe and keep BC physically open, all students must:**

1. Wear masks and observe physical distancing at all times in the classroom
2. Sit in assigned seats
3. Attend class in person unless you have received accommodations from the [BC Office of Disability Services](#)
4. BUT... **Do not attend class if you feel ill or have tested positive** for SARS-CoV-2 without having completed the required quarantine period. If you are able, please let me know if you must miss a class or attend remotely. I will make arrangements for you to participate remotely or make up the work.

**OFFICE HOURS:**

Cultivating conversation partners is part of adulting. I encourage you to use virtual office hours to talk with me individually about the class, life, the future, or whatever's on your mind. [Sign up online for office hours by following this link](#), which is also on the home page of the Canvas site. You may also email to request an appointment outside of regular office hours if the times I have set aside don't work for you. **Please phone me at 781-444-9234 at your appointment time or if you want a "walk-in" meeting** during office hours and I'll send you an instant video meeting link. Students who have signed up will be seen first. If I don't answer the phone during office hours, I am probably talking with another student. Please leave a voice message with your phone number. For students who have signed up for an appointment, I will get back to you within a few minutes. For walk-ins, I'll either call back right away to talk or I'll text to let you know that I'm busy with pre-scheduled students and we'll arrange another time to meet.

**COURSE READINGS AND ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES** (Assignments are due by submission to Canvas by the start of class on the date they appear on the syllabus)

- Sept. 3            Introduction  
Reading for September 3  
Zander, R.S. & Zander. B. (2000). Giving an A. In R.S. Zander & B. Zander, *The art of possibility* (pp. 25-45). Harvard Business School Press.  
**Assignment due Sept. 2 (day before first class!):** [Inventory of Adulting Skills](#)
- Sept. 10          Self-Authorship  
Reading for September 10  
Pre-class short video on self-authorship  
KWB *Adulting*: Introduction and Getting your Mind Right, pp. 3-20  
MJ: *Defining Decade*: Preface and Introduction, pp. xi-xxxi; Identity Capital pp. 3-16; and The Unthought Known; My Life Should Look Better on Facebook; The Customized Life, pp. 33-65

What is self-authorship?-excerpts from Hodges, D.C., Baxter Magolda, M.B., & Haynes, C.A. (2009). Engaged learning: enabling self-authorship and effective practice. *Liberal Education*, 95(4).

**Out-of-class activity:** “36-question” conversation with assigned classmate (repeated weekly and checked in class) **REPEATED WEEKLY with a different classmate!**

**Assignment due:** “Why I got my ‘A’” letter to instructor (uploaded to Canvas)

Make an appointment to meet with Karen individually between September 9th and September 23rd (online sign-up link <http://tinyurl.com/Arnold-office-hours> or email for other times)

Sept. 17

The Ecology of Adulthood

Reading for September 17

Pre-class short video on human ecology

KWB: *Adulthood: Families* pp. 294-315.

Arnold, K.D., Lu, E.C., & Armstrong, K. (2012). *The ecology of college readiness*. Chapter 2: The Human Ecology Framework, pp. 11-18. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schlossberg, N.K. (2011). The challenge of change: The transition model and its applications. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 48(4), 159-162

Simmons, (2017, Dec. 8). How much is too much? Rachel Simmons explains academic stress. Smith College: *The Sophian*. (on perfectionism)

Issa, E.E. (2020). Gen Zers: How Americans newest adults are doing money. *NerdWallet*.

Peterson, A.H. (2019). How Millennials became the burnout generation. *Buzzfeed*.

Optional: KWB: *Adulthood: Domesticity* 15-36 and *Cooking* 27-58; *Maintenance* 175-201

**Assignment preview:** Autobiography/Life view paper overview

**Assignment due:** Happiness practice #1

Sept. 24

Work: Guest Julie Miller Redmond, Brandeis University

Reading for September 24:

KWB: *Adulthood: Get a Job*, pp. 117-150

MJ: *Defining Decade: Weak Ties*, pp. 17-31.

Short introductory tape by Julie Miller

VIDEO Bill Burnett: [Designing your Life](#) from Bill Burnett, Stanford University (25 minutes, but fabulous)

Grinberg, R. (2017). [The 3 secrets of budgeting](#). Medium.com.

OPTIONAL: Lewis, M. (2018). *When to jump: If the job you have isn't the life you want*. New York: Henry Holt. Read pp. 1-15. Feel free to skim some of the rest—stories of people who jumped from one career to another.

OPTIONAL: Strada Institute (2018). *The permanent detour: Underemployment's long-term effects on the careers of college grads*. Boston, MA: Burning Glass Technologies. Read findings pp. 7-8 and skim anything else that you want.

**Assignment due:** Autobiography Chapter 1: What matters most: Formation and Values

Oct. 1

Friendship and Love

Reading for October 1

KWB: *Adulthood*: Friends and neighbors 202-227 and Love pp. 228-267

MJ: *Defining Decade*: Love pp. 68-131

Newman 2018 How long does it take to make a friend?

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_long\\_does\\_it\\_take\\_to\\_make\\_a\\_friend](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_long_does_it_take_to_make_a_friend)

Underwood 2018. How to make friends. New York Times.

Gottman Institute (n.d.). The four horsemen of the apocalypse. (2 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1o30Ps-8is&feature=youtu.be>

Higgins, M. (2018, August 5). *Americans are terrible at small talk*. New York Times Sunday Review, p. 10.

Read or listen to one of the following sources:

OPTIONAL: Try interactive friendship calculator:

<https://mikewk.shinyapps.io/friendship/>

OPTIONAL: Kine, S. (2002, Feb. 1). Why talk? This American Life podcast (6 minutes). <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/205/plan-b/act-two>

OPTIONAL Beck, J. (2015, October 22). How friendships change in adulthood. *Atlantic*.

OPTIONAL: Demir, M., & Weitekamp, L.A. (2007). I am so happy cause today I found my friend: Friendship and personality as predictors of happiness. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 8. 181-211.

OPTIONAL: Selcuk et al. 2018; Responsiveness as a key predictor of happiness. In *Close relationships and happiness across cultures* (pp. 1-18). Springer.

**Assignment due:** Something important video and commenting in discussion on classmates' videos

Oct. 8

Emerging Adulthood with guest Adam Gismondi, Tufts Institute for Democracy and Higher Education

Reading for October 8

Pre-class short videos on emerging adulthood and (possibly) civic engagement

KWB: *Adulthood*: Fake it till you make it, pp. 78-86 (steps 100-110).

Arnett, J. J. (2006). Emerging adulthood: Understanding the new way of coming of age. In JJ Arnett & JL Tanner, *Emerging adults in America*, (pp. 3-19).

Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Read or listen to one of the following two sources:

DeWitte, M. (2018). *Instead of finding your passion, try developing it, Stanford scholars say.* <https://news.stanford.edu/press-releases/2018/06/18/find-passion-may-bad-advice/>

OR

Terri Tespicio Ted Talk: Stop Searching for your Passion (11 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MBaFL7sCb8>

Read or listen to one of the following two sources:

Chen, A. (2019, May 30). Why specialization can be a downside in our ever-changing world: David Epstein's new book *Range*, explains the benefits of taking our time and learning by doing. *The Verge*.

OR

David Epstein, author of *Range* [interview on CBS This Morning](#) (5 minutes)

**Assignment Due:** Autobiography Chapter 2: Let your life speak: Vocation

Oct. 15

Happiness

Reading for October 15

Sean Achor: The Happy Secret [Ted Talk](#) (start at minute 6)

Brooks, A. (2020). How to increase happiness according to research. *The Atlantic*.

Heshmat, S. (2015, June 13). Satisficing vs. maximizing: The downside of rationality. *Psychology Today* blog.

Stierwalt, E. (2018). Mindfulness: The science behind the practice. *Scientific American*.

OPTIONAL: Wang, S.S. (2011, March 15). Is happiness overrated? *Wall Street Journal*, D1; D6.

OPTIONAL: Stephens-Davidowitz, S. (2017, May 7). Don't let Facebook make you miserable. *New York Times* p. SR12.

**Assignment due:** Happiness practice #2

October 22 Spirituality and the meaning of life

KWB: *Adulging*: Times were tough pp. 268-293

Ware, B. (2012). *The top five regrets of the dying: A life transformed by the dearly departing*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House. Excerpt.

Christensen, C. (2010). How will you measure your life?: Don't reserve your best business thinking for your career. *Harvard Business Review*.

Rogers, F. (2002). Commencement address on the meaning of life. (16 minute video; can start at 3 minutes 50 seconds to miss Dartmouth-specific intro)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=907yEkALaAY>

**Optional assignment due:** Revision of "why I got my A" letter

**Assignment due:** Faith/spirituality/religion map

- Oct. 29 Well-being with Samia Mansour (jHub) and Samantha Vinokor-Meinrath (Jewish Education Center of Cleveland)  
Reading for October 29  
KWB: *Adulting*. Maintenance: The Body, pp. 194-201.  
Rubin, G. (2011). Be serious about play. *The happiness project* (Chapter 5 pp. 112-140). Harper.  
Brooks, A.B. (2020). Sit with negative emotions: Don't push them away. *The Atlantic*.  
Boorstein, S. (2019). Restoring the mind to kindness: Sweetheart, relax.  
Grinberg, R. (2017). [3 crucial facts about health insurance that most people don't know](#) Medium.com.  
**Assignment due:** Autobiography/Life View draft chapter 3: The Future
- Nov 5. Citizenship (Character)  
Reading for November 5  
KWB: *Adulting*: Fake it till you make it, pp. 86-116 (Steps 112-157).  
Aristotle's virtues  
Ajahn Sucitto The Ten Perfections  
Alan Morinis: Musar Introduction  
The Boy Scouts and Girl Guides: Oaths and creeds  
Catechism of the Catholic Church: The virtues (listed p. 5)  
**Assignment Due:** Adulting skill
- Nov. 12 Life Roles  
Reading for November 12  
KWB: *Adulting*: Money pp. 151-172  
MG: *Defining Decade*: Every Body pp. 175-187  
Miller, C.C. (2018, August 20). The costs of motherhood are rising, and catching women off guard. *The New York Times*, p. B1.  
OPTIONAL: [9 Things Millennials Need To Know Before Filing Their Taxes](#)  
OPTIONAL: Stanford Center on Longevity. (2017). *Shifting life milestones across ages: A matter of preferences or circumstance?*  
<http://longevity.stanford.edu/milestones/>  
**Assignment due:** Autobiography/Life View draft chapter 4: Meaning and purpose
- Nov. 19 Narrative: The Story of Your life  
Reading for November 19  
How I got into College: This American Life; Act 2: [My Ames is True](#)  
KWB: *Adulting*: Conclusion p. 316  
MG: *Defining Decade*: Do the Math and Epilogue pp. 188-201.  
Smith, E.E. (2017, Jan. 12). [The two kinds of stories we tell about ourselves](#). Ted Ideas.

OPTIONAL: Lee, S., & Oyserman, D. (2012). Possible selves theory: The Gale Group. Education.com.

Nov. 26      Thanksgiving: No Class  
**Assignment:** Relax, have fun, practice new perspective on family, try adulting skill requiring equipment or a guide unavailable at BC

Dec.3        Wrap-up and Student Presentations  
**Assignment due: Assignment due:** Autobiography/life view student presentations, group 1

Make an appointment to meet with Karen individually between December 6 and December 16 (online sign-up link <http://tinyurl.com/Arnold-office-hours>)

Dec. 10      Wrap-up and Student Presentations  
**Assignment due: Assignment due:** Autobiography/life view student presentations, group 2

**Assignment due:** Final autobiography/life view “paper” due (Check-in with Karen for formats other than a paper) Optional to give final presentation this week

**Assignments and Due Dates**

Assignment	Due
• Weekly 36 ?’s peer conversations	
• Inventory of adulting skills	9/2
• Why I got my ‘A’ letter to instructor	9/10
• Happiness practice #1 documentation	9/17
• Something important video + comments	10/1
• Happiness practice #2 documentation?	10/15
• Spirituality/Faith/Religion map	10/22
• Why I got my ‘A’ revision-Optional	10/29
• Adulting skill documentation	11/5
• Autobiography/Life View paper	
Chapter 1 Draft	9/24
Chapter 2 Draft	10/8
Chapter 3 Draft	10/29
Chapter 4 Draft	11/12
• Life View presentation	12/3; 12/10
• Autobiography/Life View “paper”	12/10

**Course Policies**

- Safety:** In the classroom, students are required to wear masks, observe physical distancing, and sit in assigned seats.
- Absences:** Students who have received accommodations from Disability Services may participate in the course remotely. **Any student who is feeling ill or has tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus should not come to class.** In such a case, students may participate remotely or arrange with Karen to make up the work. If possible, they should notify Karen in advance of the missed class. Their grade will not be affected. Students who miss class for other reasons or have not sought accommodations through disability services to participate remotely should inform Karen in advance. In such cases, the grade might be affected.
- Grading:** Students will confer with the instructor about whether they have earned the 'A' they described in their "Why I'm going to get an 'A'" paper (due in the second class and optionally revised at midsemester).
- Integrity** Boston College expects all students to adhere to the accepted norms of intellectual honesty in their academic work. Any forms of cheating, plagiarism, or dishonesty or collusion in another's dishonesty are a fundamental violation of these norms. See <https://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html> for the full academic integrity policy. Given the personal development emphasis of the Capstone course, students are also expected to treat classmates with respect and to honor confidentiality with respect to students' personal disclosures.
- Weather:** In the event of a heavy snowstorm or other emergency necessitating cancellation or delay of a class, please call (617) 552-INFO for information on an emergency closing. Announcements will also be posted on the BCInfo home page at [www.bc.edu/bcinfo](http://www.bc.edu/bcinfo) as well as the BC/Prepared website at [www.bc.edu/prepare](http://www.bc.edu/prepare). I will hold class if the university is open; however, make your own decision about how safe you feel it is to commute to campus for the class! If BC cancels classes, there will be an online asynchronous class with recorded lecture(s) and required student work during the week.
- Disability:** If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with Kathy Duggan [[kathleen.duggan@bc.edu](mailto:kathleen.duggan@bc.edu)] (for learning disabilities), or Rory Stein [<http://rory.stein@bc.edu>] (all others). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. If you have a less-formal special need, please let Karen know.



### **Class Culture: Guidelines\***

We want to do our best to create a learning community where everyone feels welcomed, safe, and whole.

1. Presume and extend welcome. It is almost always challenging, in one way or another, to be part of a group. Good news: there is no “inside” and no “outside” to this class community! Be aware, though, of such sensitivities in ourselves and in each other.
2. We are a truly diverse group. Respect difference and allow others to be fully themselves. Cultivate curiosity.
3. Know that there is genuine freedom in this class. We invite everyone to speak but we do not engage in “forced sharing.” You can and should share only in ways that you feel comfortable. *Every invitation to speak and participate is just that: an invitation.* Passing or staying quiet is perfectly acceptable
4. When in a group, whether a small group or the group as a whole, give your full attention to the person speaking. Do not engage in side conversations, including in digital forms like “chat” functions. Use “I” statements when speaking. Be aware of how much space you are taking up.
5. Each person in the circle commits to both conventional and “double” confidentiality. Conventional confidentiality means that we do not speak to anyone outside the group about what is shared in this class. “Double” confidentiality means that when a person shares a confidence that we sense makes them vulnerable, we do not raise the issue again with that person or anyone else in the group, without the invitation of the person in question.
6. Make every effort to respect the group container. Please follow COVID-19 safety protocols, and come to class punctually. If you cannot make a class or need to switch temporarily from in-person to remote attendance, please let Karen know in advance.

\*adapted from the Institute for Jewish Spirituality