Capstone UNCP551101: The Balancing Act

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Phone: 617-552-8460
Office Hours: By Appointment
Class Hours: Monday 4:30 p.m. – 6:50 p.m.
Class Location: Stokes Hall 401N

Course Summary

College students have many competing demands: Academics, friends, family, faith, service, and work all need attention. This just in—after college, it gets worse!

This course begins with students reflecting on past commitments and choices. Students will then establish personal priorities and learn strategies to become engaged in their future long-term commitments to career and community, while attending to family, friends, faith, personal well-being, and leisure. Readings will explore the changes ahead for young professionals balancing family, graduate school, and/or careers. The final assignment will be developing a personal roadmap to a full, meaningful, and balanced life.

Course Format

This course requires ongoing, consistent, and balanced student participation. Listening and building on each other’s ideas is an important aspect of student participation. Each class session will consist of a review of the readings, small group discussions, and large group activities. We'll make heavy use of Survey Everywhere and Kahoots! to learn about each other and share ideas.

Course Readings & Assignments

In addition to the four books, there will be a number of articles and videos. All of this material will be organized in Canvas by week. Assignments will be submitted through Canvas.

The assignments will consist of reflective papers that incorporate the readings and course materials. These assignments are not journal entries—they should be well-written, grammatically sound, engaging essays that demonstrate an understanding of the material and how it impacts past, present, and future life choices. Students will be charged with assessing how each topic discussed in class can be incorporated into their lives and developing ideas for how to balance demands based on their values, goals, and life conditions.
Course Material

Many college students are not prepared for life after college. In this course, we’ll take on a few practical challenges right out of the gate. This material is essential to establishing a foundation for post-college success.

The first book we’ll read is Selingo’s *There is Life After College*, which documents some of the challenges students face when entering the job market. As a second semester senior, there’s still time for you to incorporate some of these strategies now and ease what can be a difficult transition from college to the next phase of your life.

Next, we’ll attack the gnarly but essential topic of personal finance. Beth Koblinger’s book is an excellent summary and reference book. You’ll need to know this stuff: investing, retirement, insurance, saving for your own home. We’ll ease the pain by covering this quickly and each of you will read the introductory chapters, then present on one additional chapter. Keep this book, because you’ll need it at some point in your 20’s, I promise you!

Beginning in Class 5, we’ll dive into the more uplifting and engaging material as the course plots an intentional path through the topics of personal well-being, family & relationships, technology & social media, then into discernment, decision-making and civic engagement. In the final weeks, we’ll examine the concept of “Flow” and conclude with research on happiness. Throughout, you will revisit your values and goals, and evaluate the balance of life activities required to achieve your own personal definition of happiness.

Books

*There is life after college: what parents and students should know about navigating school to prepare for the jobs of tomorrow* Jeffrey J. Selingo

*Get a financial life: personal finance in your twenties and thirties*  
Beth Kobliner  
New York : Touchstone. 2017

*Heroic living: discover your purpose and change the world*  
Chris Lowney  
Chicago, Ill. : Loyola Press. 2009

*Finding flow: the psychology of engagement with everyday life*  
Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi  
Course Schedule

Class 1 - Mon Jan 14

Course Overview & Self-Assessment

- In class writing assignment

Class 2 - Wed Jan 23

Life After College

- Readings
  - Read all of Selingo except 3,4,7,8
- Assignments
  - UPENN Strengths Finder
  - Reflective Essay: Personal Strengths

Class 3 - Mon Jan 28

Your First Job

- Readings
  - Read Chapters 1,2,3 in Koblinger p.1-77
  - Read your group’s assigned chapter in Koblinger
  - 21 Things Nobody Tells You When You Graduate College (Acuff)
  - Why You Need Emotional Intelligence To Succeed (Bradberry)
  - One Year After College Graduation, This Is What I've Learned (Menta)
- Video
  - The Explainer: Emotional Intelligence (3:45)
- Assignments
  - NONE

Class 4 - Mon Feb 4

Personal Finance

- Readings
  - (Time Magazine) - Money Buys Happiness When Income Is $75,000
- Assignments
Reflective Essay: Personal Finance
Class Presentations on Koblinger
In class - budget assignment

Class 5 - Mon Feb 11

Physical & Emotional Well-Being

- Readings
  - Mindfulness (Creswell & Lindsay)
  - Building Resilience (Seligman)
  - Six reasons not to scrimp on sleep (Harvard Medical School)
  - Optimism and your health (Harvard Medical School)
  - What Is Learned Optimism? (Cherry)
  - This Is Why Our Metabolism Slows Down (Juliette Steen, Huffington Post)
- Video
  - Meditation: Wonder Drug for Our Minds (7:54)
- Assignment
  - Reflective Essay: Physical & Emotional Well-Being

Class 6 - Mon Feb 18

Relationships & Family

- Readings
  - Very happy people (Seligman)
  - Couples in Great Marriages Who Considered Divorcing (Tulane)
  - How Friendships Change Over Time (The Atlantic)
- Video
  - TED TALK: Robert Waldinger, Harvard University
    - What makes a good life?
- Assignments
  - Reflective Essay: Relationships & Family
  - Install “Moment” on your phone

Class 7 - Mon Feb 25

Technology & Social Media

- Readings
  - 15 Email Etiquette Rules Every Professional Should Follow (Inc.com)
  - Supertaskers Profiles in extraordinary multitasking ability (Strayer)
Is social media bad for you? The evidence and the unknowns (BBC)
How to Handle Other People's Bad Phone Habits (Psychology Today)
Surviving a Day Without Smartphones (MIT Sloan Management Review)
Using Your Phone At Dinner Makes You Unhappy, Science Says (Time Magazine)

Assignments
Reflective Essay: Technology & Social Media
Install “Moment”

No Class - Mon Mar 4

Class 8 - Mon Mar 11

Spirituality & Discernment

Readings
- Read All of Heroic Living Part I, II, III, IV

Assignment
- Personal Reflection Exercise & Essay

Class 9 - Mon Mar 18

Spirituality & Discernment Pt. II:
Decision Making & Finding Your Larger Purpose

Readings
- Listen to (1 hour, 25 min) or read: The Case for Reparations

Watch:
- MLK: I have a dream
- Welles Crowther: The Red Bandana

Assignments
- None

Class 10 - Mon Mar 25

Finding Flow Pt. 1

Readings
- Read Flow Chapter 1-5
• Assignments
  o None

Class 11 - Mon Apr 1

Finding Flow Pt. 2

• Readings
  o Read Flow Chapter 6-9
• Assignments
  o Reflective Essay: Flow

Class 12 - Mon Apr 8

• Readings
  o None
• Assignments
  o In Class Presentations: Your Cause

No Class - Mon Apr 15

Class 13 - Mon Apr 22

Happiness

• Readings
  o How to Be Happy (Tara Parker-Pope, New York Times)
  o Giving thanks can make you happier (Harvard Health)
  o How Gratitude Changes You and Your Brain | Greater Good Magazine
  o Lines Composed A few Miles above Tintern Abbey (William Wordsworth)
  o Why Forest Bathing Is Good for Your Health (Greater Good Magazine)
• Video
  o The surprising science of happiness | Dan Gilbert
• Assignments
  o The Gratitude Assignment

Class 14 - Mon Apr 29
**Wrap-up**

- Readings  
  - None  
- Assignments  
  - Final Paper

**Assignments & Grading**

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<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation Rubric</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Essay Rubric</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>140</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 assignments @ 20 points each</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper Rubric</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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**Academic Integrity**

You are responsible for knowing the University policy governing academic integrity, cheating, collusion, plagiarism, citation of research materials, and more.

http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html

**Students with Special Learning Needs**

If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, dugganka@bc.edu, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities and ADHD, or the Disability Services Office regarding for other types of disabilities, including temporary: disabilityservices@bc.edu or 617-552-3470.

**Canvas**

All readings will be available in Canvas.
All written assignments should be typed, single-spaced, double-spaced between paragraphs in 12 point Times New Roman typeface, and submitted to Canvas before the deadline. Late papers will be penalized by one grade per day late. All assignments should be uploaded to Canvas before the start of class on the day it is due. Do not turn in paper copies.