

BOSTON COLLEGE

Center for Work & Family

Work-Life Harmony: Navigating Career and Life

Boston College Capstone Program, Fall 2025
UNCP4610-01

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Time & Location: Thursdays 4:30 - 6:50, Stokes Hall 217N

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2 - 4 pm, alternate times by appointment.
E-mail me to set up a meeting or Zoom.

Course Overview

Crafting a meaningful life today is more complex than ever. In this course, you will have the opportunity to consider where you've been and envision where you would like to go, beyond a profession or a particular title, to finding the right work-life "fit" or harmony. As you begin your senior year at Boston College, the vision of "what comes next?" may be overwhelming and unclear. Your next steps may involve grad school or service or a job in the real world. Whichever path you take, how can the next portion of your journey help lead you to fulfillment in life?

The course assignments will provide the time and space for the deep thinking and self-reflection that we rarely have the opportunity to do. Readings, cases, exercises, small group discussions and guest speakers will help you consider common issues and decisions you will make as you navigate your life. Your final assignment will be a work-life plan based on your values, strengths, relationship and family goals, factoring in what brings you joy, and how you can use your strengths and talents to positively impact the world around you.

Texts

Life Worth Living by Miroslav Volf, Matthew Croasmun, and Ryan McAnnally-Linz (2023)

Evaluation

Preparedness & Participation Attendance, readings and weekly padlet reflections, class participation	25%
Life Story/Autobiography	20%
Self - assessment Exercises	20%
Peer Coaching	15%
Final Paper: Life Plan/Vision	20%

Major Assignments

Since creating a fulfilling life is a lofty goal and difficult to measure, the primary evaluation of your success in the course will be the two high-caliber papers you will write for the course: The Autobiography and The Life Plan paper, in addition to completing a series of self-assessment exercises and your work as a peer coach to one of your classmates. The required assignments for the class are:

Readings and participation: Each week, you should do the readings thoroughly and understand the content such that you are able to intelligently and actively participate in class discussions. A part of your class participation grade will be the result of your attendance (which is required). I will be using Padlets each work on the readings. You will be expected to do the readings and then post one comment on the Padlet corresponding to the reading and be prepared to discuss your points in class.

The 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. The Autobiography should be 15-20 pages typed, double-spaced. It is due at the beginning of class 4.

Self-Assessment Exercises: In addition to the Autobiography, you will be completing a number of other self-assessment exercises – e.g. Peak Experiences, 10 Years Out, etc. All of these should be completed thoroughly and typed. We may begin some of these during class time, but there will not be time to complete them in class.

Peer Coaching: Early in the semester, you will choose or be assigned to work as a peer coach to one of your fellow students. The expectation is that you will review your partner's self-assessment data thoroughly and provide him or her with feedback and reflections on their exercises. Note: Confidentiality of all information is strictly maintained in this class.

Life Plan Paper: This assignment will illustrate how you have used the self-assessment process and your readings and research to create a realistic, practical plan for the future. The paper will cover many facets of your life including your career, your relationships and family, your personal pursuits, and your commitment to community.

Schedule

Class 1	Date	Theme: Introduction
Readings/Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volf et al. - Life Worth Living, Introduction 	Activities (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Syllabus and class objectives • TED Talk: 5 steps to designing the life you want, Bill Burnett 	Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus review
Class 2	Date	Theme: Self-Assessment and Identity
Readings/Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volf et al. - Life Worth Living, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 • David Brooks: Is Self-Awareness a Mirage? (NYT) 	Activities (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TED Talk: The Power of Vulnerability- by Brene Brown • Peer coaching assignment and intro meeting 	Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your Turn: Self-inventory from <i>Life Worth Living</i> book • Weekly reflection
Class 3	Date	Theme: Reflecting on Your Past
Readings/Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volf et al. - Life Worth Living, Chapter 3 • Feiler, The Stories that Bind Us • Brooks, D. - How to Know a Person, Chapter 16: How do your ancestors show up in your life? • Harrington and Hall: The Career Autobiography 	Activities (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the Sample Autobiography • Video: Life Instagrammed: The life and death of Madison Holleran 	Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly reflection
Class 4	Date	Theme: Living Your Values
Readings/Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volf et al. - Life Worth Living, Chapter 4 • Hull and Holder: Do Your Commitments Match Your Convictions? 	Activities (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Values Card Sort • Peer Coaching - Career Values • Guest Speaker: Deb Gorhan, J&J CSR professional 	Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autobiography paper • Weekly reflection

Class 5	Date	Theme: Your Interests and Passions
Readings/Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volf et al. - Life Worth Living, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 • Penelope Trunk: Want a life? Plan a career that leaves room to pursue personal passions 	Activities (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video: Fr. Michael Himes, The Three Questions (Part 1: What gives you joy?) • Peak Experiences Exercise 	Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start Peak Experience Exercise • Weekly reflection
Class 6	Date	Theme: Identifying Your Skills and Unique Gifts
Readings/Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Explorer – Available on BC Career Center Website • David Brooks: The Essential Skills for Being Human (NYT) 	Activities (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video: Fr. Michael Himes, The Three Questions (Part 2: What am I good at?) • Peer Coaching - Career Explorer Results 	Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Career Explorer • Weekly reflection
Class 7	Date	Theme: Your Dreams and Aspirations
Readings/Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volf et al. - Life Worth Living, Chapters 7 and 8 • Tierney: Why You Won't Be the Person You Expect to Be • Christensen: <i>How Will You Measure Your Life?</i> 	Activities (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TED Talk: What Makes a Good Life? Lessons from the Longest Study on Happiness • Peer Coaching- Interview Reflections 	Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly reflection • Interview with 2 significant others
Class 8	Date	Theme: Adversity and Building Resilience
Readings/Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volf et al. - Life Worth Living, Chapter 9, 10, 11 • Smith: The Virtue of Hard Things 	Activities (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TED Talk: The three secrets of resilient people Lucy Hone • NPR Interview with Katherine May on Wintering 	Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly reflection
Class 9	Date	Theme: The First Years After College
Readings/Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to make the most of your twenties with Meg Jay (Podcast with Adam Grant/Transcript) • Business Insider: What Successful People Did Their First Year Out of College 	Activities (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Coaching - the BC Experience • Guest panel - BC GOLD Alumni 	Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly reflection • Key Learnings from the BC Experience

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HBR: How to Build a Meaningful Career 		
Class 10	Date	Theme: What does the World Need Me To Do?
Readings/Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video: Fr. Michael Himes, The Three Questions (part 3) • Gwen Moran: How volunteering helps your career goals and overall wellbeing • Alina Tugend: Redefining Success and Celebrating the Ordinary 	Activities (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video: Devastation and Determination in Belle Harbor • Peer Coaching - Being "A Person for Others" 	Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly reflection
Class 11	Date	Theme: Work-Life and Wellbeing
Readings/Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kendra Cherry: Surviving Your Quarter Life Crisis: Strategies and Support • Safi, The Disease of Being Busy • Baskin/Wallace: You're More Than Your Job: 3 Tips for a Healthier Work-Life Balance 	Activities (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ted Talk: Self Care: What It Really Is • Guest speaker - Employee Wellbeing 	Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Years Out Exercise • Weekly reflection
Class 12	Date	Theme: Community and Belonging
Readings/Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O'Sullivan - Loneliness Defined My 20s But Now I'm Happier Than Ever • CoQual- The Power of Belonging at Work • Stew Friedman, HBR - Work + Home + Community + Self 	Activities (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TED Talk: The Essential Power of Belonging • BCCWF Belonging: More than A Buzzword • Peer Coaching - Work + Home + Community + Self exercise 	Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly reflection • Work + Home + Community + Self exercise
Class 13	Date	Theme: Relationships, Marriage, and Family
Readings/Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pew Research Center: The share of Americans living without a partner has increased • TED Talk: Marisa G. Franco: The secret to making new friends as an adult • Fraone: 6 Ways Companies are Stepping up to Support Working Parents 	Activities (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCCWF Work and Caregiving presentation • Guest panel - Work-Life Balance/Harmony 	Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly reflection

Class 14	Date	Theme: Personal Reflections and Key Learnings
Readings/Prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volf et al. - Life Worth Living, Chapter 13 and Epilogue 	Activities (in class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Plan debrief • Class celebration 	Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Paper: Life Plan

Class Policies/Academic Expectations

Academic Integrity - All Boston College students have the responsibility to know and observe the University's **Academic Integrity Policy**.

AI Policy - Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tool Usage: AI tools can generate text, images, and other media very quickly. Since a central goal of this course is to help you become independent and critical thinkers, you are discouraged from using AI tools to create text, video, audio, or images that end up in your work (assignments, activities, responses, etc).

If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, please reach out to me for a conversation before submitting your work.

Respect for Confidentiality - This class will involve candid sharing of students in the larger class, small groups, and peer coaching. Please respect your peers' right to privacy by maintaining the confidentiality of the information they share with you.