

Capstone UNCP5511: The Balancing Act

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Office Hours	Schedule Time ↗
Class Hours	Mon 4:30 p.m. – 6:50 p.m.

Course Description

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

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.

Required Texts

[The Defining Decade: Why Your Twenties Matter—And How to Make the Most of Them Now](#) ↗
Meg Jay, 2012

[Get a Financial Life: Personal Finance in Your Twenties and Thirties](#) ↗
Beth Kobliner, 2017

[Atomic Habits](#) ↗
James Clear, 2018

[Heroic Living: Discover Your Purpose and Change the World](#) ↗
Chris Lowney, 2009

Assignments

Item	Percentage	Points
1. Class Participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Weekly contributions○ Presentations (2)○ Discussion Lead (1)	40%	120
2. Reflective Essays <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 6 assignments @ 20 points each	40%	120
3. Final Paper (15 pages)	20%	60
Total	100%	300

PART I: Work

WEEK 1: Welcome, course overview, your goals

What are your goals for this course?

Your final year of college is the start of a transition.

How have you managed major life transitions in the past?

How do you currently manage competing demands?

What does "balance" mean to you?

WEEK 2: Your First Job

In this class we'll explore the skills employers want in new graduates. Meg Jay will argue that you should seek opportunities to acquire Identity Capital.

In your first job, learning how to manage your time and become more efficient will help you accomplish tasks, while ensuring there is time left for other aspects of your life.

Readings

- There is Life After College (Selingo), Chapter 2
- The Defining Decade, Preface, Introduction, and Chapter 1: Work
- 15 Email Etiquette Rules Every Professional Should Follow (Inc.com)
- 21 Things Nobody Tells You When You Graduate College (Acuff)
- One Year After College Graduation, This Is What I've Learned (Menta)

WEEK 3: Personal Finance

If you have not learned the basics of personal finance, now is the time! First, you should understand what type of spender you are. This will help you develop a financial plan to meet your personal and professional goals.

We'll cover mortgages, insurance, investments, and saving. Even if you're a personal finance whiz, you can always improve. We'll learn common ways people waste money and discuss ways to save more.

Students will present on topics so we can learn from each other. We'll do a quick budget to see where our money goes.

Readings

- Get a Financial Life: Chapters 1,2,3 + your group's assigned chapter
- Money Buys Happiness When Income Is \$75,000 (Time Magazine) Preview the document
- The Biggest Ways People Waste Money (Chris Kornelis, The Wall Street Journal)

PART II: Relationships

WEEK 4: Relationships

Friends & Family

Who are the people that really matter to you? We'll discuss the "Dunbar number" which seeks to quantify how many relationships we can attend to. After college, how will you maintain your college friendships, reconnect with parents and family, and meet new people in your career?

Committed Relationship

Is it better to live with a girlfriend/boyfriend before marriage?

What are Meg Jay's "Big Five" and how do they impact compatibility?

Readings

- The Defining Decade: Chapter 2: Love (60 pages)
- How Friendships Change Over Time (Beck)
- The Limits of Friendship (Konnikova)
- Gottman Institute: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse
- What makes a good life? (Robert Waldinger, Harvard University)

WEEK 5: Technology & Social Media

How has technology taken over our lives? What does research tell us about the damaging impact of social media?

We'll learn about how tech companies are actively working to make tech more addicting. What can we do to reclaim our time?

What are the benefits of a digital detox?

We'll explore how to assess our tech habits to ensure they are aligned with our goals

Readings

- Surviving a Day Without Smartphones (Russo, Bergami, Morandin)
- How to Handle Other People's Bad Phone Habits (Eyal)
- Using Your Phone At Dinner Makes You Unhappy, Science Says (Time)
- Is Social Media bad for you? The evidence and the unknowns (Brown)
- The Selfish Meme (Rose)
- The Coming Commodification of Life at Home (Pinsker)
- Is social media eroding meaningful relationships in real life (The Digital Age)

- What Really Happens To Your Brain And Body During A Digital Detox (Segran)
- Five Ways to Do a Digital Detox (Davis)

PART III: Wellness

WEEK 6: Physical Wellness

Maybe you work out regularly now, take care of yourself and everything's great. But things may get hectic after college. Your metabolism changes as you age, so what you're doing today will not be enough in the future.

With a career or school and bills and errands how will you find time to work out?

And how will you manage new stresses that arise?

We'll explore tactics for maintaining good habits, eating well, and diversifying your workouts.

Readings

- The Defining Decade, Chapter 3: The Brain and Body (p.133-201)
- Six reasons not to scrimp on sleep (Harvard Medical School)
- Five reasons not to diet in the new year and what to do instead (Dennett)
- This Is Why Our Metabolism Slows Down (Steen)
- The five elements of fitness (Healthline)
- Seven Reasons to Switch Up Your Workout (Wadyka)

WEEK 7: Emotional Wellness

"Emotional Wellness implies the ability to be aware of and accept our feelings, rather than deny them, have an optimistic approach to life, and enjoy life despite its occasional disappointments and frustrations." (UCal Riverside)

How do you manage stress? We'll examine coping strategies and techniques, then discuss how these are beneficial not only in your personal life, but at work.

Readings

- Atomic Habits (p.1-100)
- Emotional Intelligence Has 12 Elements. Which Do You Need to Work On? (HBR)
- Optimism and your health (Harvard Medical School)
- Why You Need Emotional Intelligence To Succeed (Bradberry)
- Mindfulness (Creswell & Lindsay)

- Building Resilience (Seligman)

WEEK 8: Habits

Now that we understand the aspects of physical and mental wellness, how can we improve in key areas?

We'll learn about important concepts such as the **habit loop, implementation intentions, and habit stacking**.

These concepts may reaffirm positive habits you have, but will also provide opportunities for everyone to add a few new positive habits to their routine.

Readings

- Atomic Habits p.100-212

PART IV: Discernment

WEEK 9: Discernment

We have inherited a world very different from previous generations. What has changed? How will we find our way? Lowney suggests we need to examine how our world has changed in order to determine our path forward.

We will explore the Ignatian practice known as Examen. How can the Examen be applied to business challenges and personal decisions?

Readings

Heroic Living Part I & II (Chapters 1-7).
The Pocket Guide to Jesuit Education

WEEK 10: Your Larger Purpose

What are you called to do?

How will you change the world?

How can you use your talents to help others?

Lowney cites examples of “everyday people” who are changing the world. How can these people have a profound impact?

Readings

Heroic Living Part III & IV

WEEK 11: Civic Engagement

As a college graduate you are called to be part of an engaged citizenry.

What is your cause? Why does it matter to you, and why should we care about this?

How will you educate others and live out your values through this cause?

Readings

- We Locked Four Experts in a Room Until They Solved Immigration (Preston)
- Read pages 10-26 Diversity on Higher Education Websites (Olivieri)
- Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers (HBR)
- Your Children’s Yellowstone Will Be Radically Different (Holloway)

PART V: Happiness

WEEK 12: Flow

What is "optimal experience"?

We only have so much time on this earth, so how can we best spend our time?

We will examine common misconceptions concerning leisure and work, then discuss the 7 components of flow so we can better understand how we can find flow more often in our lives.

Readings: Finding Flow: Chapter 2

WEEK 13: Happiness

For centuries, we have explored what it means to be happy. Modern research on happiness sheds new light on how a balanced approach to relationships, work, emotional and physical wellness, and reflection is critical to happiness.

How can optimism, gratitude, and mindfulness enhance happiness?

Readings

- How to Be Happy (Tara Parker-Pope, New York Times)
- Very Happy People (Seligman)
- Giving thanks can make you happier (Harvard Health)
- How Gratitude Changes You and Your Brain (Wong & Brown)
- Why Forest Bathing Is Good for Your Health (Evans)
- The American Pursuit of Happiness (Kluger)
- Happiness Is Other People (Ruth Whippman)

WEEK 14: Balance & Wrap up

What does it mean to be balanced?

We will review the topics covered in class and discuss the challenges ahead.