Professionalism & Soft Skills Development

Prerequisites: None, however students may come from computer science, computer engineering, information technology, or any related technical field.

Length of Completion: 16 week semester.

Level of Instruction: This course is at an undergraduate level.

Learning Setting: In-class/face-to-face instruction, hybrid option available.

***Course Description***

Ethics in cyber is a hugely important step, but it isn’t the entire solution to developing a trusted and competent workforce. Professionalism is also critically important and much of the higher education community can improve how they prepare students for careers in the government and industry. Students need to be prepared to join the workforce with the skills required to present a professional image, including how to present themselves to senior leadership, communicate ideas effectively and succinctly and engage with multiple stakeholders from various backgrounds that hold various opinions of proper office standards. What might be acceptable at an IT company in Silicon Valley might be wholly inadequate for work in the NSA regarding dress, behavior, etc. This curriculum is designed to develop professionalism as part of preparing to enter the cybersecurity workforce.

The goal is to help students develop a clear sense of identity, establish and maintain sincere and effective relationships, participate in a wide variety of experiences to develop and affirm a sense of purpose, help them understand the skills they have, and to build on them, and prepare for all stages of the job search processes.

Working individually, each student will complete a series of progressive assignments focused on professionalism and soft skills for their chosen career. Each student must present findings in oral presentations to the class and written assignments. Each student is expected to participate actively in class.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

* 1. Clearly express their strengths and career aspirations with self-awareness. They will confidently answer questions such as “Who am I?” “What do I bring?” and “How can I be authentic?” Through assessments such as the Clifton StrengthsFinder and Strong Interest Inventory (SII), students will be able to understand how their unique set of strengths and other characteristics can be applied to their chosen work.
  2. Utilizing impactful experiences including internships, job shadowing, and service learning to affirm their chosen major and career will bring satisfaction, a sense of purpose, and the accomplishment of personal goals.
  3. Translate developed skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, teamwork, and communication to employer needs.
  4. Create and foster influential relationships to build upon students’ aspirations and goals through connections with others that help increase knowledge about careers and fields, develop networks and external relationships, and build social capital based on authentic relationships.
  5. Confidently seek out and connect with career counselors, mentors, sponsors, alumni, and others who can provide guidance, ask intentional questions, give practical advice, and share their journey and narrative of discerning a sense of purpose.
  6. Demonstrate readiness by reflecting on their experiences, honing their portfolio and interviewing skills, and cataloging their employment roadmap to identify organizations and positions of interest.

These learning outcomes are in line with the following competencies:

* + NACE Competencies: Career & Self-Development, Communication, Critical Thinking, Ethics, Leadership, Professionalism, Teamwork, Technology
  + NICE Competencies: Communication, Conflict Management, Critical Thinking, Interpersonal Skills, Strategic Relationship Management

**Materials:**

Required Books and Materials

1. O'Keefe, Sean. Launch Your Career: How ANY Student Can Create Relationships with Professionals and Land the Jobs and Internships They Want. ISBN-10:‎ 1523092688. ISBN-13:‎ 978-1523092680. Berrett-Koehler Publishers
2. O'Keefe, Sean. Launch Your Career Workbook: How ANY Student Can Create Relationships with Professionals and Land the Jobs and Internships They Want. ISBN-10:‎ 1736255800. ISBN-13: 978-1736255803.

Supplemental Books and Materials (Optional)

1. Chapter 1, Start with Why: A Primer. Excerpted from Find Your Why: A Practical Guide for Discovering Purpose for You and Your Team by Simon Sinek, David Mead, and Peter Docker (September 2017, Penguin/Portfolio).
2. “Lessons from Geese” was transcribed from a speech given by Angeles Arrien at the 1991 Organizational Development Network and is based on the work of Milton Olson.
3. WetFeet. Killer Cover Letters and Resumes! 4th ed. WetFeet, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-58207-741-3.

Information Technology-based Resources

1. Career Launch in partnership with The Career Leadership Collective - This course uses assessments from this resource:  
   https://go.careerlaunchassessment.com/access/
2. The Myers-Briggs Company - This course uses assessments from this resource:  
   https://Elevate.themyersbriggs.com
3. SkillsFirst - This course uses an e-portfolio from:  
   https://skillsfirst.com/
4. HandShake - This course uses job search and readiness from this resource:  
   https://joinhandshake.com/

**Technical Specifications:**

1. A PC, Mac, or mobile device and on any modern operating system with audio capability to listen to videos.
2. High speed internet access to download and upload large files.
3. This course is ideally presented via a learning management system in the form of weekly modules.

**Grading:**

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| --- | --- |
| **Assessment Mechanism** | **Percentage** |
| 14 weekly assignments, weighted equally | 70% |
| Weekly participation/discussion | 20% |
| Peer Reviews | 10% |
| **Total:** | **100%** |

**Course Schedule**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Lessons** | **Assignments Due** |
| Week 1 | Lifelong Learning   * Lifelong Learner concepts * Growth vs Fixed Mindset * Fears, Concerns, Anxieties. * Personal and Career Goals   Homework:   * Complete Exercises 1-4 * Your career readiness specialist should review the results with you during an appointment. | Submit:  Strong Interest Inventory Assessment  LYC Assessment  Share SkillsFirst Bio |
| Week 2 | 7 Essential Life Skills   * Define the 7 Essential Life Skills * How These Skills Facilitate Success * How to be a Person of Character   Homework:   * Complete Exercise 1 | Submit:  Reflections Paper (350-500 words) |
| Week 3 | Vision and Why:   * Articulate Your Personal and Career Goals * Build Your “Why” * What is Your Vision Statement? * Discuss “What is Your Target Internship Job?”   Homework:   * Complete Exercises 1-5 | Submit:  “Why” Video  Vision Board  Written Reflection |
| Week 4 | Procrastination and Discernment   * What is Procrastination * Overcoming Procrastination * Importance of Community   Homework:   * Complete Exercises 1-3 | Submit:  Worksheets from LYC Step 1 |
| Week 5 | Job Readiness   * Lessons for Success * Career Goals * Knowing Your Skills   Homework:   * Complete Exercises 1-3 | Submit:  Word Document Detailing 5 Internship/Job Opportunities  Show Your Instructor Your Completed Handshake Profile |
| Week 6 | Communication and Listening   * Listening Skills * Watch Your Attitude * Professional Communication Skills * How to Handle Difficult Conversations   Homework:   * Complete Exercises 1-4 | Submit:  Worksheets from LYC Step 2  Employee Contact Information  Copy of “Thank You” Email |
| Week 7 | Personal Brand   * Portray a Professional Online Presence * Articulate Your Skills, Experiences and Habits * Image Matters - Wise Internet Usage * Create a Professional Profile   Homework:   * Complete Exercises 1-3 | Submit:  Worksheets form LYC Step 3  LinkedIn Invite and Updates |
| Week 8 | Cover Letter and Resume   * Writing a Professional Cover Letter * Articulating Your Skills and Experiences on Your Resume * What is a S.M.A.R.T. Goal?   Homework:   * Complete Exercises 1-2 | Submit:  Upload Cover Letter and Resume to SkillsFirst  Student Assessment |
| Week 9 | Networking   * How to Build a Network of Professionals * Strategies and Templates for Networking   Homework:   * Complete Exercises 1-4 | Submit:  Worksheets from LYC Step 4  Customized Templates from Exercise 2 |
| Week 10 | Ethics   * What is Ethics * Making Ethical Decisions * Ethics in Profession   Homework:   * Complete Exercises 1-3 | Submit:  Responses to the 5 Questions (500-750 words) |
| Week 11 | Time Management   * Assessing Priorities * Tracking Your Time * Time Wasters * Where Did Your Time Go?   Homework:   * Complete Exercises 1-2 * Use Time Management Quadrants | Submit:  Total Time Assessment  Written Assessment of What You Learned From the Experience |
| Week 12 | Master Calendar   * How to Create a Master Calendar * Creating a To-Do List * Implementing Your Calendar * Prioritizing Your Time   Homework:   * Complete Exercises 1-2 | Submit:  Demo Calendar to Class  Screenshot of Your Current Weekly and Next Month’s Calendar |
| Week 13 | Professional Conversation & Etiquette   * Practice Professional Conversation * Asking the Right Questions * Etiquette 101   Homework:   * Complete Exercises 1-4 | Submit:  LYC Step 5 and 6 Worksheets  SkillsFirst Video  Critiques |
| Week 14 | Develop Interview Skills   * Building Relationships * Types of Interviews and Formats * Practice Makes Perfect   Homework:   * Complete Exercises 1-3 | Submit:  LYC Step 7 Worksheets and Step 8 Stories |