URBS 489 Capstone

Dr. Janet Cherrington-Cuccore

Spring 2009, M 9:00-11:45 a.m.

Office Hours: For current Office Hours go to: http://www.intech.mnsu.edu/cherrington/OfficeHours.htm

Office Location: 104 Morris Hall Phone: 389-5031

Course Overview:
This course is designed to help prepare you for the transition from undergraduate college student to professional employee and/or graduate student. It will bring together the experience, education, and personal depth of the collective college experience with professional advancement skills such as resume and portfolio writing, editing, communication and presentation skills -- all conducted in a teamwork environment with the facilitation, mentorship and supervision of faculty. This course is highly interactive and designed to be taught within an environment of shared student-faculty responsibility for learning. This course helps students build teamwork, communication, and organizational skills while practicing professional skills and techniques earned in other coursework or experienced in this course for the first time. Interaction will be informal and casual interactions, practical hands-on exercises, out of class exercises, projects, role-playing, and group discussions. This course is about the student; it is designed to help the student view her/him self in a new light that acknowledges, even embraces, a full and dynamic set of professional skills. It should be a rewarding, satisfying, confidence-building, even fun, experience.

Learning Outcomes:
Students will demonstrate competency in knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to gain employment in, and function in, the professional practice:

Team Effectiveness
1. Understand and experience problem solving in a team setting
2. Plan and implement professional projects in a team setting
3. Understand and experience the dynamics of effective communication in a team environment
4. Understand and experience the dynamics of leadership and followership in a team environment

Professional Skills
1. Application of appropriate skills on a task-by-task basis (using the right tool for the right job)
2. Crafting the most dynamic and meaningful resumes
3. Designing the most illuminating and memorable portfolios
4. Communicating with a prospective (or current) employer and crafting personal communication styles that effectively highlight talents and skills
Additionally, this course is designed to help students gain a fuller sense of their:

1. Confidence in abilities and skills in a team and individual setting
2. Confidence in ability to communicate and negotiate in a team setting
3. Perspective/expectations of working life in the “real world”
4. Ability to practice professional skills such as writing, research, problem solving
5. Ability to “think out of the box” and apply a diverse set of skills and abilities for unique solutions

Requirements:
Students are expected to actively participate and contribute positively to the learning process, both in and out of class. The nature of the project process used and the building block approach to crafting solutions makes it imperative that a student attend as many class sessions as possible. Additionally, because teamwork and teambuilding is an integral part of this course, a student cannot miss many of the class sessions and expect to do well. Each session is unique and tied to the class before it and the class after it – students should be prepared to embrace many different learning experiences, each designed to help the student not only learn and grow as a professional, but also as a person. The key requirements for this course are an open mind, a willingness to discuss new concepts, and the ability to grow.

Required Course Texts:

Course Packet (Available Through Morris Copy Shop)
8-1/2 x 11 spiral notebook

Grading:
There are 100 points for the course, divided as follows:

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Homework/ Late Assignments: Homework returned should be retained until the end of the course to resolve any submission discrepancies. All homework pages must have student’s name, assignment and assignment due date on each page and be stapled together or be subject to point reduction. Late homework will not be accepted; students can email homework before the start of class or have another student deliver it in class.

For the group participation, members of the group will rate each others’ teamwork/contribution to the presentation(s)/exercises. The individual student’s points for the activity will be based on the average of the ratings provided. This course is based on teamwork; the better the
students work as a team, the higher the individual grades. A team that works effectively and communicates well can usually expect a good grade.

100-90 = A  89-80 = B  79-70 = C  69-60 = D  Under 60 = F

Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please contact us as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and/or contact the Disability Services Office at 507-389-2825 (V) or 1-800-627-3529 (MRS/TTY).

**Cell phones/ Laptops**: No open laptops during guest speakers. Always turn off your cell phone before entering class.