

SENIOR SEMINAR

The Course's Educational Philosophy

Senior Seminar, instituted in 1995, provides transitional life resources to senior students planning to enter the job market and/or enroll in post-graduate education. The practical applications of the course material provide a balance for a well-rounded educational experience for the students. Independent living and decision-making guidance prepares them for life in the “real world” after high school. The curriculum is very interactive and includes field trips, guest speakers, and project-based learning. Every effort is made to include current occupational and life skills materials in the curriculum.

Guiding Principles

- Recognize the importance of attendance
- Respect each other
- Understand and value differences
- Appreciate a variety of perspectives
- Create a non-threatening, fun-learning environment
- Use interactive learning, such as role-playing, individual and group presentations, and games
- Hone Internet research skills
- Explore practical, everyday life management skills

SENIOR SEMINAR: COURSE #651

Course Frequency: Half-year course, five times per week

Credits Offered: 2.5

Prerequisites: None

Core Topics/Concepts/Skills

- Career Research
- Résumé Writing
- Interviewing for Jobs
- Entrepreneurship
- Personal Finance, including investments, budgeting, check books, retirement planning
- Car Purchasing
- Apartment Rental
- Trip Planning

Course-End Learning Objectives

Students will:

Career Research

- 1] Understand the process of career development.
- 2] Develop skills to make decisions.
- 3] Develop skills to interact with others.
- 4] Develop self-knowledge by assessing interests, competencies, personality, values.
- 5] Understand the relationship between work and learning.
- 6] Understand the benefits of educational achievements to career opportunities.
- 7] Recognize different types of occupations.
- 8] Develop skills necessary to locate, understand, and use career information.
- 9] Understand skills necessary to seek and keep a job.
- 10] Learn how to write an effective business (inquiry) letter.

Résumé Writing

- 1] Understand the process and importance of writing a résumé.
- 2] Know how the résumé fits into the job search and/or college application process.
- 3] Develop skills to produce an error-free résumé.
- 4] Understand the process and importance of writing a cover letter.
- 5] Develop skills to write an error-free cover letter.

Interviewing

- 1] Understand the interview process and how it fits within the overall job search process.
- 2] Develop skills and techniques to be able to effectively communicate on a job interview.
- 3] Develop an understanding of pre- and post-interview activities.
- 4] Learn how to write an effective business (thank you) letter.

Personal Finance/Investments

- 1] Develop an understanding of different types of investments: savings accounts, certificates of deposit, stocks, bonds, mutual funds.
- 2] Explore investment options and learn the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- 3] Learn about the Dow Jones Industrial Average and what it represents.
- 4] Utilize the Internet to research mutual funds.
- 5] Make smart investments by hearing a guest speaker knowledgeable in investment strategies.
- 6] Develop skills in requesting information from sources outside of school.
- 7] Select a mutual fund to follow for the duration of the course, using the mutual fund symbol to find NAV, fund gain and loss.
- 8] Develop communication and investigative skills.

Personal Finance: Checkbooks, Checking Account, Credit Cards

- 1] Investigate different checking account offerings.
- 2] Learn how to reconcile a checkbook.
- 3] Understand use and misuse of credit cards, charge cards, debit cards.
- 4] Understand and calculate interest rates on payment balances.
- 5] Equate APR into consumer language.
- 6] Understand credit reports, credit history, and options when a credit problem occurs.

Personal Finance/Budgeting

- 1] Plan a monthly budget based on entry-level salary for career path chosen in Career Research.
- 2] Recognize the limits of spending on non-essentials.
- 3] Know what is affordable for major expenses of home and car.
- 4] Recognize federal guidelines for percentages of income allocation.

Personal Finance/Retirement Planning

- 1] Understand the different options available: 401K, IRA, Pension.
- 2] Decide which approach works best for an individual.
- 3] Recognize the benefits of early planning.
- 4] Calculate the differences in early versus late planning.

Car Purchase

- 1] Know what to look for in buying a car.
- 2] Price vehicles using Internet and print media.
- 3] Learn about financing a car.
- 4] Learn about aspects of car maintenance.
- 5] Learn how to jump start a car, change a tire, check the oil.
- 6] Learn about car insurance.
- 7] Learn how to negotiate a purchase.
- 8] Research car information and statistics.
- 9] Practice investigative, research, interviewing, negotiating skills.

Apartment Rental

- 1] Investigate what to look for in a rental.
- 2] Know what's affordable.
- 3] Understand leases.
- 4] Shop for an apartment in print media and using the Internet.
- 5] Furnish a "pretend" apartment; stock the kitchen; cook simple foods; perform household maintenance.

Trip Planning

- 1] Plan a week-long trip for two people using a limited budget.
- 2] Understand recreational options for the location(s) to visit using the Internet.
- 3] Build a full itinerary.
- 4] Calculate all transportation, food, entertainment expenses.
- 5] Research travel documents needed and local goods for purchase.

Assessment

- Written analysis and summaries of material presented
- Quizzes: responses to guest speakers/field trips, Internet research
- Tests: résumé, interview with business guests, business letters, checkbook reconciliation, major projects/presentations
- Internet/Computer print outs
- Participation in both large and small group forum

Materials and Resources

- Holland Self-Directed Search Assessment
- *Real People, Real Jobs*
- *Dictionary of Holland Occupational Codes Occupational Outlook Handbook* (print and website) *Entrepreneurship, Starting Your Own Business*
- *How to Do Your Banking*
- Newspaper Classifieds

- Field Trips Guest Speakers Computer Lab
- High School Audio-Visual Department
- Educational Videos
- Work Sheets/Handouts/Current Periodical Articles
- Internet Site List