Professional Development Model Syllabus

American Philosophical Association
Non-Academic Careers Committee
2021-02-02

Introduction

The Non-Academic Careers Committee recommends graduate departments incorporate professional development into their curricula for graduate education. This syllabus offers suggested topics, readings, and classroom exercises that could be used in three different ways: (i) as an individual self-study guide for interested parties, (ii) as a list of readings for an informal discussion group among graduate students or faculty, or (iii) as the basis for a formal professional development course offered by a department to its graduate students.

Course Objectives

The focus of the course is on building "cross-over" professional skills that are broadly applicable to a range of careers, including both academic *and* a non-academic careers. We encourage students, groups, and departments to tailor the topics and course activities to their own interests and to take advantage of their distinctive strengths.

The course has four primary objectives:
- To teach a number of important professional skills
- To encourage students to adopt a thoughtful, strategic approach to career planning
- To prepare students who want to go on in academia to participate in the "business" side of professional philosophy, including work on committees, organizing and preparing budgets for conferences and events, and so on
- To introduce students who want to leave academia to the 'lingo' of the professional workplace to help them develop versatility in framing their academic work experience for job applications in a variety of fields

The syllabus is built around a 15-week schedule. If a group desires an abbreviated 10-week schedule instead, we provide an asterisk (*) beside five topics that could be omitted. We also encourage instructors and groups to tailor the course topics to the interests of the participants. We have provided a number of suggested readings according for each topic, but we recommend that groups choose a *selection* of these readings in order not to consume too much time.

Potential Enrichment Activities

In the suggested discussion topics below we attempt to identify exercises and activities that may be useful. But departments could also consider substituting or augmenting their professional development offerings with additional activities such as:

- A panel of alumni who work in non-academic careers could discuss their transition out of academia, the kind of work they do now, and how their philosophical training has helped them in their professional roles in a variety of fields
- A discussion on how to create a resume for non-academic jobs, perhaps facilitated by the campus job placement office
- A panel discussion on professional networking in academia and beyond
- Listening to podcasts or reading other online sources about the experiences of academics who have left for positions beyond academia.

Suggested Discussion Topics

Week	Title	Discussion Topics/Readings/Activities/Note

I	Mindset, Success, and The Culture of Professional Philosophy	Potential Readings:
		• Dweck, *Mindset*, Chs. 1-3, 8; "Dweck Responds"
		• Barnett, *The Strategic Career,* Ch. 1, 2
		• Bauer-Wolf, "Feeling like Imposters," IHE.
		• Optional: Frodeman and Briggle, *Socrates Tenured*, intro and Ch. 1
		
		Discussion topics:
		• The professional culture of academic philosophy—good and bad
		• Imposter Syndrome
		  o Almost everybody gets it to some extent
		  o It affects people differently
		  o What to do about it
		• Fixed mindset vs Growth mindset
		• Defining "Success" and Setting Goals
		• Academic and Non-Academic Careers can both be Successful
		
		Suggested Activities:
		• Take skill, interest, and values assessments at imaginephd.com or Stanford's TREE tool
		• Identify personal strategy to reinforce growth mindset

| II | Career Strategy | Potential Readings:
• Barnett, *The Strategic Career,* Chs. 6, 7
• Tetlock and Gardner, *Superforecasting,* Chs. 1, 4, Appendix
• (optional) Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy,* Ch. 1

Discussion topics:
• Finding a Job, Career, Calling
• General professional skills vs technical or industry-specific skills
• Creating a strategic career plan
    o Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) goals
    o Inventorying resources
    o Prioritizing High-Value Activities
    o Identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)
• Foxes vs. Hedgehogs: The best strategy is a *flexible* strategy that remains focused

Suggested Activities:
• Create goals and individual development plan in ImaginePhD website.
• Identify Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats to personal and professional goals |
| III | Effective Time Management | Potential Readings:
• Steel, *Procrastination Equation,* Chs. 1, 2, 4, 5

Topics for Discussion:
• Why do we procrastinate?
• How procrastination harms
• The Evils of Multitasking
• Scheduling and prioritizing work
• Focusing on priorities and saying 'no'

Suggested Activities:
• Identifying distractions
• Brainstorm strategies for overcoming procrastination
• Try the 'Pomodoro technique' for time management for a week |

IV	Basic Project Management I. Initiating and Planning and Project	Potential Readings: • Cook, *Just Enough Project Management,* Chs. 1-3 Topics for Discussion: • What is a Project? Why do Projects Need Management? • Dissertation and Job Search: Two Big Projects • Papers, Conferences, other small projects • Initiating and Planning a Project Suggested Activities: • Work through a sample Project Plan for writing a journal article or a dissertation
V	Basic Project Management II. Managing Change, Communicating with Stakeholders, and Tracking Progress	Potential Readings: • Cook, *Just Enough Project Management,* Chs. 4-5 Topics for Discussion: • Managing changes to the project • Creating a budget, executing it • Identifying risks and managing them Suggested Activities: • Create a budget and project plan for an academic conference • Look at examples of project plans from successful large grants
VI*	Basic Project Management III. Closing a Project, Dealing with Multiple Projects	Potential Readings: • Cook, *Just Enough Project Management,* Chs. 6-7 Topics for Discussion: • Celebrating Successes • Identifying Lessons Learned • Dealing with Overload Suggested Activities: • Group discussion on keeping focused, celebrating successes

| VII | Teamwork I. Relationships, Influence, and Resolving Conflict | **Potential Readings:**
 • Whetten and Cameron, *Developing Management Skills,* Chs. 4, 5, 7

 Topics for Discussion:
 • Building Meaningful Professional Relationships
 • Active vs. Passive Listening
 • Conflict isn't always bad
 • Different personalities in conflict
 • Different styles of negotiation

 Suggested Activities:
 • Active listening exercise
 • Practice defusing a conflict with another student who is evincing different modes of conflict resolution
 • Optional: Use the Thomas Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument to identify your own conflict resolution style |
| VIII* | Teamwork II. Leadership | **Potential Readings:**
 • Whetten and Cameron, *Developing Management Skills,* Chs. 8-10

 Topics for Discussion:
 • Stages of Team Development
 • Empowering Team Members and the Role of the Leader
 • Cultivating decisiveness and taking charge, when appropriate

 Suggested Activities:
 • Bain & Company's RAPID tool |

| IX* | Teamwork III. How to Run Effective Meetings | Potential Readings:
• Smutney, "Cultural Mindfulness and Radical Inclusion," "Facilitating Culturally Diverse Meetings," "Including Persons with Disabilities"

Topics for Discussion:
• Creating an agenda
• Setting ground rules for meetings
• Basic awareness of parliamentary procedure
• Taking meeting notes
• Recording decisions and action items from a meeting
• Ensuring meetings are inclusive

Suggested Activities:
• Practice taking minutes at a meeting, reviewing action items |
| X* | Communication Skills I. Written Communication | Potential Readings:
• Roman and Raphaelson, *Writing that Works,* Chs. 1, 4, 5 or suitable selections from Garner

Topics for Discussion:
• Principles of Effective Communication
• Action-oriented communication
• Similarities and Differences between Business Writing and Academic Writing

Suggested Activities:
• Write a cover letter for a job application
• Write a response letter for a journal resubmission
• Write an email to a senior colleague in your field
• Write an op/ed for a local newspaper on an issue of public interest |

XI*	Communication Skills II. Presentation Skills	Potential Readings: • McKinsey, *Strategic Storytelling,* Chs. 2, 6, 10 • Roman and Raphaelson, *Writing that Works,* Chs. 6-8 or suitable selections from Duarte, *HBR Guide to Persuasive Presentations* Topics for Discussion: • Three Frameworks for Presentations • Body language • Effective use of Charts and Graphs • The 7x7 rule for PowerPoints Suggested Activities: • Record student presentations, and then review and critique as group for feedback
XII	Networking	Potential Readings: • Wickre, *Taking the Work out of Networking,* Chs. 1-4 Topics for Discussion: • Informational Interviews • Identifying potential network contacts • Identifying Appropriate Roles in Interesting Industries • Identifying the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities for success • Building a professional network Suggested Activities: • Identify three potential networking contacts, send them emails • Practice a mock informational interview with faculty • Panel discussion with alumni

XIII	Building Your Brand	Potential Readings: • Wickre, *Taking the Work out of Networking*, Chs. *5-8* Topics for Discussion: • Highlighting strengths in a versatile way • Cultivating a professional online presence • Creating an authentic professional narrative (in multiple versions) Suggested Activities: • Start a blog, or, alternatively, delete your blog • Create two versions of a resume, for different industries • Research resumes of recently-hired people who work in roles that interest you in an industry of interest
XIV	Resilience I. Managing Stress	Potential Readings: • Whetten and Cameron, *Developing Management Skills,* Chs. 1-2 Topics for Discussion: • Healthy Diet and Exercise • Adequate Sleep • Mindfulness & Meditation • Community engagement and Work/Life Balance Suggested Activities: • [Dartmouth Student Wellness Center Mindfulness Resources](#)
XV	Resilience II. Dealing with Disappointment	Potential Readings: • Seligman, "Building Resilience" • Reivich and Shatte, *The Resilience Factor,* Chs. 1, 3, 4, 12 Topics for Discussion: • When to Push Through Adversity • When to Go a Different Direction • Foxes and Hedgehogs *redux* Suggested activities: • Keep a journal, noting successes and setbacks each day, acknowledge feelings, and reflect

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Other Useful Resources

- Wendy Belcher, *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks*, 2nd Edition, University of Chicago Press, 2019.
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