

MDP 514: Applied Development Practice / Professional Development

Emory University
Spring 2013, Fridays, 9:00am – 12pm
Classroom: ECIT 215, Woodruff Library

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Description and objectives

This course is designed to help students journey through the exciting – but anxiety ridden – process of starting one’s career as a development practitioner. It is designed to help students to shift to a proactive, engaged professional stance from “What can I do?” to “Who and where am I at my best?”

We will work on developing skills that are sought and valued professionally, and that you need in order to get your first job after completion of your degree. But we will balance this short-term outlook with a longer-term perspective on the career trajectory that you envision for yourself.

As we move through the course, we will also use this opportunity to critically reflect on what the process of developing a career as an international development professional means in the context of development practice today and how we can ensure that such process integrates the values that bring us here in the first place.

Class structure and “culture”

The class is structured as a dynamic mix of presentations, discussion, and activity-based interaction. In order to harness the synergy of group work, the potential of experiential learning, and the transformative power of self-enquiry, we encourage you to leave any lingering defensiveness or competitiveness out of the class setting.

Encounters with experienced development practitioners and staffing professionals will help students develop an understanding of the current job market and strategies for self-marketing and securing meaningful and rewarding employment. We will explore how they got to do what they do, what kinds of preparation they had/wished they had, what challenges and opportunities they encountered in their careers, and what advice they have for young professionals as they begin their practice. In most cases, these encounters will be based on Q&A rather than formal lectures.

Students select an area of professional interest on which to focus for the duration of the class and develop targeted portfolio materials (resume, cover letter, elevator pitch, online portfolio, sample writing, etc.). Students will also have opportunities to network at professional events, attend recruitment events, and apply for real-life jobs and fellowships.

Requirements and evaluation

The main requirement for this course is your full and purposeful engagement in the exercises, teamwork, and discussions, as you build your career portfolio. You will receive regular feedback on all assignments, but the point is “planning” and “practicing” rather than “performing”.

This course will not guarantee students a job at the end of the semester (and you will not fail the course if you do not get a job ... ☺). However, we will all have failed – us as instructors and you as students – if this course does not teach you something new about yourself and about the unique skills and assets you can offer future employers.

Course materials

Course materials are available electronically through Blackboard, under “Course Documents” in the Toolbar. Additional readings and resources guidelines for assignments and will be provided during the course.

Required Text:

Carland, M.P. and C. Faber. 2008. *Careers in International Affairs*. Edition 8. Georgetown University Press.

Recommended Resources:

Enelow, W.S. and R.L. Krannich. 2002. *Best Resumes and CVs for International Jobs: Your Passport to the Job Market*. Impact Publications, VA.

Norton, E.H. and L.M. Whiteman. 2012. *How to Land a Top-Paying Federal Job: Your Complete Guide to Opportunities, Internships, Resumes, and Cover Letters, Networking, Interviews, Salaries, Promotionis, and More!*. Edition 2. AMACOM.

Waldman, J. 2011. *Job Searching with Social Media for Dummies*. Edition 1. Wiley & Sons.

Wendleton, K. 2006. *Mastering the Job Interview and Winning the Money Game*. The Five O’Clock Club. Delmar.

Wendleton, K. 2006. *Shortcut your Job Search: The Best Ways to Get Meetings*. The Five O’Clock Club. Delmar.

DevEx Career Fair (Washington DC, March 22nd)

The purpose of this event is double fold: a) to give MDP students an opportunity to network face-to-face with DevEx member organizations (all of which are leading development and humanitarian agencies); and b) to provide materials for critical reflection and experiential learning in the weeks prior and after the event. *More details to follow.*

EMORY business cards

We encourage every student to order a set of business cards, at your own expense. The MDP Team can facilitate professional business card orders that will include the official Emory logo, font, and color. For details on order processing, contact Rebeca.Quintana@emory.edu.

CLASS SCHEDULE

The course schedule may be adjusted to accommodate changes in Guest Speakers' schedules, new resource materials that may become available and other learning opportunities that might arise during the course of the semester. We will try to give you as much forewarning about changes as possible.

Flexibility and ability to cope with change are essential professional skills in development practice.

Week 1 **GETTING STARTED**

January 18

What are the objectives of this course? What is expected of me? What am I going to get out of it?

In this first session we will start a process of self-inquiry, whereby you will seek to clarify your goals and interests, take inventory of your skills, and develop an effective professional "image" and "voice". This process will continue during the entire duration of the course and culminate in a final self-assessment whereby we will review changes and growth over the semester.

Bring a hard copy of your current resume to class.

Assignments:

- a) Initiate your DevEx profile (log-in required)
- b) Reflect and write a few paragraphs on a past – successful or unsuccessful - experience of applying for a job. What was good about it, what did you do well, what was bad about it, what could you have done better, what did you learn in the process, how different were you then from how you are now)?

Week 2 **STARTING YOUR JOB SEARCH**

January 25

What kinds of jobs are out there and what kinds of things they are looking for? How do I find them? We will seek to understand the range and diversity of organizational contexts for development work. We will explore connections between the the range opportunities they present and your skills, strengths, interests, and career goals. We will also learn how to look for jobs that are appropriate for your level of experience and education and to your life stage and choices (relationships, children, health, beliefs, etc.).

Guest Speaker: Liz McBride, Subject Librarian for International Development

Readings: Carland and Faber: Chs. 1, 12, 13

Assignments:

- a) Identify at least two job posts on DevEx.org (or another database) that interest you as viable opportunities given your current level of experience; for each of them write a brief paragraph explaining why you think your profile is a good fit for those opportunities
- b) Identify at least two “future” upper-level opportunities that represent your desired career trajectory. Focus on areas of your profile that need strengthening, devise a strategy to build skills and experience so that you will be eligible for those opportunities in the future.
- c) Continue to work on your DevEx profile

Special Event: Attendance Recommended

Lunch and Learn at Rollins: Job Search Overview

The workshop will provide guidelines on how to market yourself. Speaker: Roger Presswood.
Wednesday, January 30, 2013, 12 – 1pm. Claudia Nance Rollins 2001

Week 3**BUILDING A PROFESSIONAL PROFILE**

February 1

What do recruiters look for when examining resumes? We will explore how to develop multiple versions of a resume and how to target a resume for the specific job description. We will devise ways of representing your strengths and packaging your experiences into a coherent, compelling profile. We will learn how to reframe what may seem like “disadvantages” or “detours” in ways that fit - as *assets* - into this profile. We will also assess the opportunities and dangers offered by internet communication, and how to harness the potential of these new media.

Guest Speaker: Sam Jones, the Carter Center

Readings: *Be Sharp: 'Tell me about yourself' in great introductions and professional bios* by Asinoff and Brown: Part 2, pp. 37-60; Part 4, pp.107-114.

Assignments:

- a) Watch DevEx webinar: <https://www.devex.com/en/news/webinar-recording-development-cvs-that-make-a/77089>
- b) Produce 2 different resumes to fit the description of jobs posts identified in week 2.
- c) Develop at least one other kind (e.g. skill-based) of resume, besides your master resume.

Week 4**DEVELOPING SOCIAL NETWORKS**

February 8

Even though job databases, outstanding resumes, compelling cover letters, and impressive interviews are essential professional skills, some of the most rewarding opportunities come from personal connections. Developing and cultivating a network of professional contacts is extremely important, not only to secure job but also to do it better once you have gotten it. Such networks

will constitute invaluable resources for advice, information, and access to other professionals that will help you be more effective in your job.

Guest Speaker: ECIT Staff

Guest Speaker: Don Cornwell, Associate Director of the Emory Career Center

Readings: Carland and Faber: Chs. 3.

Also on DevEx, in preparation for the Public Health Career Fair (see below):

<https://www.devex.com/en/news/how-to-ace-an-international-development-career/65025>

<https://www.devex.com/en/news/blogs/how-to-prepare-for-a-chat-with-an-aid-recruiter>

Assignments:

- a) Develop a map of your professional and social networks and a system or strategy for capitalizing on them for purposes of career development

Special Event: Attendance Required

(we will use as a trial run for the DevEx Career Fair)

2013 Spring Public Health Career Fair

The Career Fair is an excellent opportunity to meet, network, and gather information on prospective employment and employers. Students register on-site.

Contact: roger.presswood@emory.edu. Friday, February 8, 2013, 10am – 2pm a

Emory Conference Center Hotel, 1615 Clifton Road NE Atlanta, GA 30322

Professional attire required.

Week 5

HARD-HITTING COVER LETTERS

February 15

We will learn how to customize cover letters based on actual job and fellowship descriptions in ways that immediately capture the attention of recruiters and employers. This will be an opportunity to practice writing skills, learning how to write in a concise and compelling ways for different audiences. We will identify the weak spots in your professional writing and self presentation style and begin strengthening them.

Guest Speaker: Susan Somach, Consultant for CARE and CBOs

Reading: “Cover letter guide” (On blackboard). “Perfect phrases for cover letters” by M. Betrus

Assignments:

- a) Craft two letters to support your application for the two job posts identified in week 2.
- b) Perform background research on the organizations of interest as part of your cover letter development and interview preparation. Some questions your research should aim to address:

- What does this organization do?
- How is this organization structured?
- How successful is this organization; what does it regard as its major achievements and strengths?
- What recent press coverage has this organization received (including scandals!)?
- What sort of work culture might exist within this organization?
- What sort of person fits in well into this organization?
- What knowledge, skills or experience I have that are particularly relevant to this organization?

Week 6 LEARNING HOW TO INTERVIEW (1)

February 22

We will explore various interview approaches and settings that you may experience, including telephone-based interviews, informational and networking interviews, panel interviews, case interviews, and interviews for career changers. We will learn about the nuts and bolts of successful interviewing (yes, we will talk about wardrobe...!). We will learn how to develop an impressive self-presentation while remaining true to ourselves and to our values.

MDP alumni will discuss their experience applying for and winning competitive fellowships and their experience transitioning from the MDP to their first job.

Guest Speakers: Betsy Root, Miranda Bodfish, Stephanie Stawicki, Gray Clevenger, MDP inaugural class alumni now working with UNICEF, CDC, IDN, and the Carter Center

Readings: “Interview Preparation Guide”; “Informational Interviewing: Get the inside scoop”; “The Art of Phone Interviewing”; “Case Interview Guide” (on Blackboard).

Also on DevEx:

<https://www.devex.com/en/news/development-aid-job-interview-basics-how-to-answer/73675>

https://www.devex.com/en/news/job-interview-secrets-how-to-win-over-a/73225?source=ArticleHomepage_MostPopularNews_3

<https://www.devex.com/en/news/9-secrets-to-a-successful-phone-interview-for/72933>

Assignments:

- Prepare at least 4 written questions for the MDP Alumni panel (each question will be written on a separate card, which you will bring to class)
- Finalize your DevEx profile

Special Event: Attendance Recommended

International Career Networking Night

University-wide annual event on February 27th at 6:30 p.m. at Alumni House.
Professionals working overseas or with international populations will share their experiences.

RSVP from 2/1 to 2/20. Contact: claire.wu@emory.edu.

Professional attire required.

Week 7 **LEARNING HOW TO INTERVIEW (2)**

March 1

We will continue to practice interview techniques under the direction of an experienced professional. This is an excellent way to experience a realistic interview situation – and learn how to manage the inevitable anxiety - without the pressure and stress that often accompanies the real thing. You will be interviewed for one of the job posts that you identified in week 2.

Guest Speaker: Paul Fowler, Director of Emory Career Center

Readings: Carland and Faber: Ch. 2.

Also on DevEx:

<https://www.devex.com/en/news/it-s-your-turn-20-questions-aid-workers-may-ask-in/73552>

<https://www.devex.com/en/news/how-to-dress-for-an-international-development-job/73226>

Assignments:

- a) Prepare written answers for at least 15 out of the 27 questions on the “Interview Questions” handout, relating them to the job posts identified in week 2

Week 8 **PREPARING FOR THE CAREER FAIR**

March 8

Are you ready to put your best foot forward at the DevEx Career Fair? We will develop and practice *elevator pitch* whereby you can quickly convey your strengths and interests to a hurried and mixed audience of potential employers. We will also devise ways of effectively explaining MDP to others in hard-hitting ways that highlight the difference from other MA programs on international development and the comparative advantage it gives you over other job candidates.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Daniel Gross, Consultant to the World Bank

Readings: Career Fair Guide

Assignments:

- a) Prepare an 2 minutes “elevator pitch” on who you are, and what you want to do
- b) Prepare and practice a brief description of the MDP to use during interviews
- c) Begin to identify and apply for suitable job opportunities

Week 9 *******SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS*******

March 15

During break watch these webinars:

USAID: <https://www.devex.com/en/news/ask-the-recruiter-jobs-with-usaid/74190> and

World Bank: <https://www.devex.com/en/news/ask-the-recruiter-jobs-with-the-world-bank/75308>

UNICEF: <https://www.devex.com/en/news/ask-the-recruiter-jobs-with-unicef/74722>

Week 10 **FIELD TRIP TO WASHINGTON DC**
March 22 **DEVEX CAREER FAIR**

Week 12 **FOLLOWING UP ON NEW CONTACTS**
March 29

We will share and reflect upon our experiences at the DevEx Career fair. We will develop strategies to identify and pursue opportunities that you encountered and turn them into tangible options. We will explore how to follow up on contact and expand your nextorks, while also assessing what is appropriate in relation to authority and personal boundaries. Finally we will discuss the role of a professional mentor and how to foster such relationship in your life.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Amy Patterson, Malaria Progra, The Carter Center

Readings: Carland and Faber: Ch 4

Assignments:

- a) Prepare a written analysis of your experience at the DevEx Career fair.
- b) Organize information on contacts and develop a strategy to follow up on them
- c) Continue to identify and apply for suitable job opportunities

Week 11 **WORKING WITHIN DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS**
April 5

We will explore differences with applying to and working within different types of organization, such as bilateral (e.g. USAID) and multilateral (UN and World Bank) organizations. What are the incentives and challenges associated with different institutional contexts? What kinds of positions would be available to MDP students and how to get them? How do I decide what is the optimal organizational setting I would excel and flourish in?

Guest Speaker: Katie King, Senior Recruiter, CARE USA

Readings: Carland and Faber: Ch. 6 and 7.

Also on PCDN:

<http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/profiles/blogs/un-job-list-intro-part1-how-to-go-about-hunting-a-job-in-the-un#.UPtL06C2ljc>

<http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/profiles/blogs/un-job-list-intro-part2-un-system-job-hunting-contract-types#.UPtJcaC2ljc>

<http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/profiles/blogs/un-job-list-intro-part3-finding-that-job-you-need-to-apply-for#.UPtLQ6C2ljc>

http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/profiles/blogs/un-job-list-intro-part4-faq-on-job-hunting-strategies?xg_source=activity#.UPtLeKC2ljc

Assignments:

- a) Drawing upon your summer field practicum experience, write a 1-2 page critical reflection memo (may be narrative, bulleted, etc.) that highlights the key lessons you have learned in terms of career pursuits.
- b) Explore: <http://unjoblist.org/analytics/>
- c) Continue to identify and apply for suitable job opportunities

Week 13 **BECOMING A CONSULTANT**
April 12

Do you want to work on your own? Is consulting a good route for you? We will explore what is it like to make a living and develop a career as an independent consultant. We will discuss how different organizations use consultants and how this may suit different kinds of personalities and lifestyles. We will learn how to develop strategies to build a successful freelancing practice. We will also explore how to make good use of 'gap'/down time when in-between jobs.

Guest Speaker: Claudia Chang, U.N. Consultant

Readings: Carland and Faber: Chs. 11 (skim Chs 9-10).

Also on DevEx:

- <https://www.devex.com/en/news/how-to-succeed-as-an-international-development/76538>
- <https://www.devex.com/en/news/global-development-consulting-how-to-gain-the/77172>
- <https://www.devex.com/en/news/contract-negotiation-faqs-for-development/77113>
- <https://www.devex.com/en/news/cv-writing-for-foreign-aid-consultants-your-faqs/77306>

Assignments:

- a) Develop Terms of Reference or Scope for a consulting job
- b) Continue to identify and apply for suitable job opportunities

(Required) Workshop: Managing Development with Claudia Chang
Friday April 12 (afternoon) – Saturday April 13 (morning)

The “Managing Development” workshop is based on a 40 hour program designed for a UN client to build the intercultural management and leadership skills of a cross divisional group of practitioners from the field and headquarters. We will focus on the “practitioner as manager”, and develop the necessary insights, actions and abilities to provide leadership in development contexts, mainly as managers and leaders. This module examines competencies considered core technical aspects of managers and centers on intercultural team dynamics, leadership and contexts. It addresses how to endender the shift from getting done rather than “doing it” directly.

Week 14
April 19

NEGOTIATING AND MAKING DECISIONS

We will learn to identify our goals and needs in relations to our professional position and employment conditions, in ways that fit our priorities and stage in life. We will also effective strategies to handle salary negotiations with professionalism and confidence. We will consider diversity (race, gender) considerations as well as sexual harassment issues. Finally, we will engage the core challenge of how to exercise critical thinking and theoretical reflection on development practice while also finding and keeping a job.

Guest Speaker: Victor Robinson, international consultant (to be confirmed)

Readings: On DevEx: https://www.devex.com/en/news/foreign-aid-salary-spotlights-the-complete-devex/78857?source=MostPopularNews_1

On PCDN: <http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/profiles/blogs/un-job-list-intro-part2-un-system-job-hunting-contract-types#.UPtJcaC2ljc>

Assignments:

- a) Develop a map or chart of your priorities and criteria for career decision-making (be honest and creative!)
- b) Continue to identify and apply for suitable job opportunities

Week 15
April 26

HOLDING ONTO OUR SANITY: GOING FORWARD

Searching for your first job can be nerve-wrecking. But it can also be a time of personal and professional growth, during which you learn new things, meet new people, discover new opportunities, and explore new frontiers. It is indeed a valuable time for identifying your priorities, taking stock of your experiences, celebrate your strengths, and planning for the future. We will discuss need and strategies for emotional centeredness, stress management, staying motivated, and how to deal with inevitable disappointments.

Readings: On PCDN: <http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/profiles/blogs/working-and-living-abroad-staying-sane-and-odd-things-to-pack#.UPtKP6C2ljc>

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Selected Resources

2011 Directory of Development Organizations: <http://www.devdir.org/index.html>

Peace & Collaborative Development Network:

<http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/profiles/blogs/guide-to-careers-in#.ULkpg0IyFUN>

Contract Types and Job Grades in the U.N. System: <http://www.rottmair.de/2011/01/04/contract-types-and-job-grades-in-the-un-system/>

Jobs at CARE: <https://tbe.taleo.net/NA5/ats/careers/jobSearch.jsp?org=CAREUSA&cws=1>

U.N. Job List: <http://unjoblist.org>

Duke Career Services:

http://issuu.com/dukecareers/docs/2012_career_guide_final?mode=window&pageNumber=1

Columbia SIPA Career Services Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/SIPACareerServices>