

MB 813: Career Management and Work-Life Integration
Summer, 2014

Instructor: Prof. Brad Harrington, Executive Director
Boston College Center for Work & Family
22 Stone Avenue, Chestnut Hill, MA

Work phone: 617-552-4544
Work e-mail: harrinb@bc.edu

Office hours: By appointment, please call (617-552-4544) or e-mail me at anytime to set up a time to meet including after the completion of the course.

Text / Materials: **Harrington, Brad and Hall, Douglas T. *Career Management and Work-Life Integration: Using Self-Assessment to Navigate Contemporary Careers*** (Sage, 2007). Available from BC Bookstore

Career Values Card Sort – Available at the BC Bookstore

Strong Interest Inventory – Available from Center Website (\$25 charge)

1. Course Overview

In recent years, much has been written about the profound changes in both the workplace and the composition and needs of the workforce. The employer-employee contract has been dramatically altered as organizations have moved from practices of lifelong (or long-term) employment to a “free-agent” approach to managing their workforce. The extent to which this is the case was particularly apparent in the latest where US employers shed more than 8 million jobs during its peak two-year period (2007-2009). This change in the psychological contract has led to the establishment of a new career model which is increasingly organization-independent. As individuals depend less on their employers to provide stable jobs and career paths and as changes in the labor market call for more frequent job and even career changes, working people have come to realize that “we are all self employed.”

These changes have occurred at the same time as the nature of families and their relationship to work have also changed. Today, $\frac{3}{4}$ of two-parent families with children under age 15 are dual-career couples. In addition, a significant minority, nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ of families, is led by a single parent. These factors, along with the rising demands for elder care (which will be more acutely felt as a large percentage of our population, the baby boomers, reach retirement age) have put work-life integration at the top of the list of issues that people consider when selecting a potential employer.

Navigating careers and maintaining work-life balance are now necessary skills for all individuals, regardless of the sector in which they are employed. This course will look at these

issues and will help students develop the awareness, understanding, and critical competencies needed to successfully manage their career development while maintaining work-life integration.

The course will be highly experiential and will include the following components:

1. You will complete a very rigorous self-assessment process that will help you clarify your identity by analyzing life experiences, interests, values, skills, goals, and aspirations. Students will use this information to formulate career-life themes that will inform and give shape to your personal and professional objectives.
2. You will utilize your self-assessment, along with an understanding of the labor market, jobs and potential employers to successfully define and attain your desired career outcomes.
3. You will examine how your career goals and improved career competencies can be used to manage/maintain a successful career *and* work-life integration over your lifespan in light of the many changing professional and personal circumstances that will arise.

The course will include readings that will raise student awareness of career and work-life issues in contemporary organizations. We will make extensive use of exercises and instruments to help you achieve a high degree of self-awareness and understanding, both of yourself and the world of work. Classes will rely heavily on dialogue and discussion rather than lectures.

2. Major assignments:

Our primary course objective is to master course concepts so that you are able to effectively manage a successful career and attain work-life balance over your lifetime. Since creating a fulfilling life is a lofty goal and difficult to measure, the surrogate will be to write three high-caliber papers: *The Career Autobiography*, *The Self-Assessment Paper* and *The Career Plan*.

The required assignments for the class are:

1. ***Readings and participation:*** There will be assigned readings that should be completed thoroughly. You should understand the content such that you are able to intelligently participate in class discussions. I will not assign a large volume of reading, due to the compressed nature of the course, but I expect that assigned readings will be completed. **Class participation is a major course expectation.**
2. ***Exercises and Activities:*** Throughout the course, you will complete many exercises and self-Assessment activities. While these are not graded separately, it is critical that you do a thorough job on them. The grading for these will be reflected in your grades for the papers they are part of (e.g. the Self-Assessment Paper).
3. ***The Career Autobiography.*** The purpose of this activity is to do a very thorough job of recounting and reflecting on the major experiences and people that have influenced your thinking, your work, and your life. The Autobiography is due on May 24th and

should be 20 pages typed, double-spaced (minimum, although I am not looking for much more than this).

4. **Peer Coaching.** In the first class, you will choose or be assigned to work as a peer coach with one of your fellow students. The expectations are that you will review your partner's data very thoroughly, provide your peer coach with a 3-4 page summary of the tentative themes you have identified, schedule and conduct a 1-2 hour session to review your partner's results with him/her.
5. **Self-Assessment Paper.** The Self-Assessment paper is the most important deliverable of the semester. The goal of the paper is to demonstrate your ability to use an inductive, qualitative research approach to identify key themes about yourself that:
 - a) have a strong bearing on your career options, choices, and aspirations
 - b) are grounded thoroughly in the self-assessment data that you have generated throughout the first half of the semester
 - c) will become the basis of your career plan
6. **Career Plan.** This assignment will illustrate how you have used the self-assessment process and your readings and research to create a realistic, practical career plan.

3. Grading:

Class participation	10%	
Autobiography	15%	
Peer Coaching		15%
Self-Assessment paper	40%	
Career Plan paper	20%	

4. Detailed class outline and weekly assignments

Class number, Date, topic(s)	Class agenda	Assignments due
Module 1: May 9 (2:00 to 6:00 PM): Introduction and Class Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Well Planned Life</i> and <i>The Summoned Life</i> • Video: <i>The Man in the Red Bandana</i> • Introductions, forming groups • Three Career Cases, The Changing Career Landscape • Review of syllabus • The Peak Experience exercise • The self-assessment process • Selecting a peer coach • Directions for the Interest Inventory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading due before Class 1: Harrington and Hall, Chapter 1, “Understanding the New Career” • Reading due before Class 1: Harrington, <i>Live YOUR Life</i> • Read (in class): David Brooks, <i>The Summoned Life</i>
<i>Self-Assessment</i>		
Module 2: May 23rd morning: Careers and Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of sample Career Autobiography • Discussion of students’ career autobiographies • Understanding the identity meta-competency • <i>The Identities Exercise</i> • Introduction to thematic analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Harrington & Hall: Chapter 2, sections on “The Self-Assessment Process” • Read: Harrington: <i>Let Your Life Speak</i> • Read: Brooks, <i>Life Reports</i> • Read: Harrington, Sample Autobiography • Read: Directions for Career Autobiography (syllabus) • Due: 1-page list of observations from sample Autobiography • Complete: Strong Interest Inventory (by May 16th) • Due: <u>Career Autobiography</u> • Complete in class: Identities Exercise
Module 3: May 23rd afternoon: Career Values; Interests and Passions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing Career Values and the Career Values Card Sort • Review: The Strong Interest Inventory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Harrington & Hall, Chapter 2, sections on “Clarifying Your Values” • Read: Harrington & Hall, Chapter 2, section on “Understanding Your Interests and Passions” • Complete in class: Career Card Sort

Module 4: May 24th morning: Interests, and Lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lifestyle Representation</i> small group discussion and class presentations • Review: Developing Life Themes and instructions for self-assessment paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Harrington & Hall: Chapter 2, sections on “Lifestyle” and “Understanding Your Life Goals and Personal Vision” • Due: Lifestyle Representation • Complete in class: 10-Years-Out Exercise
Module 5: May 24th afternoon: Skills Assessment, Personal Vision, Peer Coaching, and Life Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review skills analysis • Discuss <i>Interview with Significant Others</i> • Review performance evaluation analysis • <i>10-Years-Out</i> small group discussion and class presentations • Directions for Peer Coaching • Final questions on Self-Assessment Paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Harrington & Hall: Chapter 2, section on “Skills Assessment”; Chapter 3, sections on “Integrating Your Self-Assessment” and “Developing Themes from Your Data” • Read: Tierney, <i>Why You Won’t Be the Person You Expect To Be</i> • Complete In Class: <i>The 10-Years- Out Exercise</i> • Complete: Analysis of Performance Evaluations • Complete: Interview with Significant Others • Exchange: Self-assessment data with Peer Coach
<i>Managing Your Career</i>		
Module 6: June 13th morning: From Self-Assessment to Career Development Finding Ideal Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Self-Assessment papers • Developing implications • The Career Orientation Index: Adaptability and the protean career 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Harrington & Hall, Chapter 3, section on “Developing Career and Work-Life Implications”; • Complete In Class: Complete Career and Life Orientation Index • Due: Self-Assessment Paper • Due: Peer Coaching Feedback (imbedded in peer coach’s paper with you name at the top) • Due: One-page list of themes
Module 7: June 13th afternoon: Developing a Personal Marketing Campaign Career Portfolios; Job Search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering information on the labor market; on organizations and jobs • Identifying the right job and the right organization • Informational interviewing • Building Career Portfolios • Job search essentials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Harrington & Hall, Chapter 4, Finding Ideal Work and The Job Search pp. 61-95

Module 8: June 14th morning: Career Decision Making and Managing Your Career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career decision process and The Career Decision Matrix • Organizational careers and upward mobility • The Global Leaders Study • Alternative career paths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete: My Ideal Organization Exercise • Read: Harrington & Hall: Chapter 5, “Career Development Strategies”
Module 9: June 14th late morning – early afternoon: Work-Family and Workplace Flexibility; Class Celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and roles • Dual-career couples • Corporate work-life programs • The case for flexible work arrangements • Guest: Dr. Annie Soisson, Tufts University • Class wrap-up • Celebration! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Harrington & Hall, Chapter 6, “Work and Family” • Read: Hewlett, <i>Executive Women and the Myth of Having It All Or ...</i> • Read: Harrington, Van Deusen, and Humberd, <i>The New Dad: Caring Committed and Conflicted</i> • Read: Harrington & Hall, Chapter 7, “Workplace Flexibility”
Hand or Send in Career Plan (if e-mailed, must be submitted as one document, not attachments)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Due: Career Plan Paper, no later than June 21th at my office or by e-mail.</u>

5. Detailed information on written assignments

The Career Autobiography (15% of grade)

This assignment does not draw from theories learned in this course or any other. You are simply expected to construct the story of your life – a small task (ha-ha.) The purpose of this assignment is to do a very thorough job of recounting and reflecting on the major experiences and people that have influenced your thinking, your work, and your life.

While we cannot attach a grade to your life, we can grade the quality and rigor of your effort to describe it. Like other papers in the course, the key will be to explore ideas and experiences with a high degree of depth. Don't just say, for example, "My father was a stay-at-home dad, which was interesting." Describe what it was like, how your father was in this role, how that influenced your concept of parenting or careers, how that challenged stereotypes, etc.

Unlike other assignments, we will not be "picky" about the quality of the writing (i.e., use spell check and correct grammar but don't worry if it doesn't read like *Great Expectations*.) This assignment is not a polished work, but a serious draft, a work in progress. It is the cornerstone of your self-assessment process so do not do a "once over lightly." Questions are provided to give you a focus. **Due date is May 24th.**

Peer Coaching Activity (15% of grade)

You will act as a peer coach for another class member during the semester. In this role, you will be doing two things:

1. Practicing and improving your skills at doing qualitative analysis. This is an excellent opportunity for you to develop and refine these skills before doing your own paper.
2. Providing some highly useful assistance to a colleague that will give them objective feedback on their self-assessment process.

The expectations are that you will:

- Review your partner's data very thoroughly
- Schedule and conduct a 1 – 2 hour session to review each partner's results
- Provide your peer coach with a 3-4 page summary of the tentative themes you have identified for him/her, with some basic supporting data for each theme. Please put the name of the person you are coaching and your name at the top of the feedback paper.

Important: Feedback from your peer coach then becomes another data source that should be used in developing and supporting the themes that are the basis of the Self-Assessment Paper.

The Self-Assessment Paper (40% of grade)

The Self-Assessment Paper is the most important deliverable of the semester. The goal of the paper is to demonstrate your ability to use a qualitative research approach, based on inductive reasoning, to create a well-developed and well-supported self-assessment paper. The quality of the paper will be based on how effectively you have done the exercises, developed themes that are well grounded in data, and the clarity of your narrative. We are not grading your life or your values, just the rigor of your work and the clarity in which it is presented.

The Self-Assessment Paper will use the following data sources that have developed during the first six weeks of the class:

1. The Career Autobiography (life history / experience)
2. The Peak Experience Exercise (highlights)
3. The Identity Exercise (life roles / sub-identities)
4. The Career Values Card-Sort (values)
5. The Strong Interest Inventory (interests / skills)
6. The Lifestyle Representation (lifestyle)
7. The Ten Years Out Exercise (vision / aspirations)
8. The Interviews with Significant Others (feedback / skills) – 2 interviews are required, one from a work colleague and one from someone who knows you well personally
9. The Skills Analysis from Performance Evaluations (skills - optional)
10. The Peer Coaching Exercise (feedback)

This paper will be framed around a set of “life themes” that you will develop. You will be expected to develop a minimum of 15 themes that are clearly derived from an objective review of all available data sources. Each page will have a theme label at the top of the page. Below you will list all supporting data and data sources as well as any contradictory data that you have identified (example in text.) You will then accompany your 15 pages of themes with a written paper, 5-6 pages in length that introduces your themes and discusses the ways in which your themes influence and guide your career thinking. **Due on June 14th – hard copy in class. Do not e-mail it to me.**

The Career Plan (20% of grade)

The final paper is an action plan for your career in the future. It is less structured than the self-assessment paper, in part because you may be at different places in your career and your action plans may reflect profoundly different strategies. The career plan is not just for people looking to make a job / career change. It is a description/plan of what steps you will be taking in your career over the short and longer term to achieve your goal of a meaningful work life.

The components of the paper include the following:

1. Part One: A narrative that describes your implications and how those influence your next steps in your career/life plan. You should also review and discuss your career decision matrix. Comment on how you developed and evaluated the options under consideration.
2. Part Two: What is your long term plan? Do you think you will have an organizational or a protean career? Will you have a career that moves you up the organization, alternative career paths, or perhaps an entrepreneurial career? How will you balance work with you other life priorities (personal pursuits, family, community, etc.?) Do you see yourself working alternative or flexible work options? If so, which ones and why?
3. Part Three: A strategy for moving toward your ideal future work-life situation. If your Ten Years Out Exercise describes your long-term aspirations, what are the interim steps or milestones you have laid out for yourself that you will move you in this direction? These should be articulated in time frames (of perhaps 2-4 years each.) Should include an emphasis on your one-year plan. What specifically will you do in the next year to achieve your short-term goals?
4. Part Four: Summary. How has going through this exercise clarified, confused, or changed your concept of a career and what kind of career will best work for you?

The paper should be broken up into the 4 distinct segments mentioned above! The text of this paper should be 5-6 pages double-spaced and should follow the sections outlined above. Also, include the following appendices:

- a) Your self-assessment themes (one page summary)
- b) Your career implications that were developed from your themes. Implications should cite the themes you used to develop the implication.
- c) Your Career Decision Matrix. This matrix should show how your life themes compare to job possibilities that you are considering.
- d) Your revised (if needed) 5/10 Years-Out Exercise
- e) Your resume
- f) A completed Ideal Organization exercise

Due on or before June 21th at my office. Can be sent by e-mail but must be in one document (not separate attachments).