

Exploring Faculty Careers in Higher Education

GRDSCH 630 - Spring 2008

<http://depts.washington.edu/g630/Spring/>

This course is for graduate students in any discipline who are considering careers as faculty members. Through a series of speakers, readings, and other activities, students will develop an understanding of some of the basic attributes, values, and traditions of American higher education and the ways in which they take shape at different kinds of educational institutions.

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Textbook Hostetler, K., McLaran Sawyer, R., & Pritchard, K. (2001). *The Art and Politics of College Teaching: A Practical Guide for the Beginning Professor*, 2nd edition. New York: Peter Lang.

Other readings and reference materials are accessible through links from the course web site. A reference list is attached at the end of the syllabus.

Goals As a result of taking this course, graduate students will be able to identify the following factors which will help them to make informed decisions about their future careers:

- The characteristics of higher educational institutions in the U.S., and ways in which these characteristics shape the culture of various kinds of institutions
- Ways in which teaching, research, and service are carried out at various kinds of educational institutions
- The rationale for and implications of widely held values of the academy: tenure, diversity, collegiality, and academic freedom
- Some of the choices the academic job market has to offer
- Students' own interests concerning an academic career

Grades This course is 2 credits, graded on a Credit / No Credit basis. To receive Credit, students will be expected to prepare for and participate in class sessions and to develop a draft philosophy statement (teaching, diversity, or community college) to help them be prepared for a faculty job search.

Schedule Class meets weekly on Wednesdays, 2:30-4:20 p.m., in Loew 101. Readings and reference materials for each week are identified on the course web site: <http://depts.washington.edu/g630/Spring/>. Reminders about upcoming speakers, topics, and assignments will be distributed at class meetings.

Please complete the reading(s) and/or assignments before the date of the class session.

Schedule of Class Meetings and Assignments

Readings that are not in the textbook and additional resources for each week are accessible online at <http://depts.washington.edu/gs630/Spring/syllabus.html>

<i>Date and Topic:</i>	<i>Readings and Assignments:</i>
4/2: Introduction and Overview: What do faculty do?	
4/9: Scholarship Reconsidered - Higher Education in the U.S. - Representing Yourself as a Scholar	- Boyer, "Enlarging the Perspective" - <i>Art & Politics</i> , Introduction (pp. 5-14), plus one chapter from Section I (pp. 17-83) - Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education
4/16: Faculty Panel – Teaching at Other Types of Institutions	- Review relevant chapters from <i>Art and Politics</i> Part 1 (pp. 17-83), and web sites from the institutions represented by this week's panelists.
4/23: Tenure and Promotion	- <i>Art & Politics</i> , "Promotion and Tenure: Keys to the Kingdom" (pp. 227-233) - <i>Art & Politics</i> , "Academic Freedom and College Teaching" (pp. 289-299) - University statements on Tenure and Promotion
4/30: Diversity Among Students and Faculty	<i>One or more of the following:</i> - Chesler, "Perceptions of Faculty by Students of Color" - Nelson, "Student Diversity Requires Different Approaches to College Teaching, Even in Math and Science" - Saunders & Kardia, "Creating Inclusive College Classrooms"
5/7: Institutional Mission & Faculty Roles	- See the course web site for links to the institution represented by guest speakers.
5/14: Making Your Statement Successful Academic Job Searches	- Assignment Due: First draft of a Philosophy Statement, ready for peer review.
5/21: Collegiality, Ethics, and Community	- <i>Art and Politics</i> , "Ethics of the Profession" (pp. 323-340) - Murray, et al. "Ethical Principles in University Teaching"
5/28: Faculty Panel – The First Years: Advice for and from New Faculty	- See the course web site for links to institutions represented by guest speakers. - <i>Art and Politics</i> , "Making the Transition" (pp. 141-162) - <i>Art and Politics</i> , "On Becoming a Professor" (pp. 163-169)
6/4: Looking to the Future	- <i>Art and Politics</i> , "Getting the Job: Anxiety and Aspirin" (pp. 87-92) - <i>Art and Politics</i> , "Getting the Job: With a Little Bit of Luck ... and a Whole Lot of Forethought" (pp. 93-105) - Assignment Due: Philosophy Statement Second Draft

Reading List

Most readings are taken from the textbook (Hostetler, et al., *Art and Politics of College Teaching*), and additional readings are accessible through the online syllabus at <http://depts.washington.edu/g630/Spring/syllabus.html>

Boyer, E. (1990). Enlarging the perspective. *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, pp. 15-25. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. (2005). <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications/>

Chesler, M. (1997). Perceptions of faculty by students of color. *CRLT Occasional Papers*, No. 7.

Murray, H., Gillese, E., Lennon, M., Mercer, P., & Robinson, M. (1996). Ethical principles in university teaching. *Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*.

Nelson, C. (1996, Nov-Dec). Student diversity requires different approaches to college teaching, even in math and science. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 40(2).

Saunders, S., & Kardia, D. (no date). Creating inclusive college classrooms. *CRLT Occasional Papers*.

The online syllabus also provides links to a collection of supplemental readings, additional resources, and web sites for the institutions represented by guest speakers and panelists.

Expectations for Class

On most days class will consist of 3 parts:

1. *Opening*: Part One of the class will include a brief discussion of readings or web materials for that week, and also time to follow up on questions remaining from the previous week.
2. *Presentation or Panel Discussion*: Most weeks, Part Two will feature a guest speaker or panel presentation addressing the topic for the week. Some guest speakers will give a presentation followed by a question-and-answer session; others will lead their entire session as a discussion. Presenters on panels are prepared to each speak for 5 minutes, followed by discussion with the class as a whole.

Participation from all students is welcome and encouraged during these sessions with guest speakers and panelists. Guests have important things to say, but all agree that they can make their sessions most effective when they are able to focus the sessions on issues and questions raised by students in the class.

You may feel relatively uninformed about topics that come up in this class, and as a result you may feel somewhat hesitant to raise questions that you suspect everyone else already knows the answer to. The fact is, however, that the topics raised in this class are rarely addressed in most students' graduate school experience. Just by reviewing the suggested readings each week, you will already be better informed on these topics than most other graduate students, and most people in this class are probably in situations very similar to yours. At least, that's what the research suggests:

"I don't have any idea. At this point, I don't know. I have no idea. Beats me. I have no idea what it's like to be a faculty member. And I thought being a grad student might give me some idea, and it doesn't. I don't have any real power, and I don't have any real understanding of anything that goes on. I guess it's about playing the game and making sure everyone likes you until you get tenure; then you can alienate everybody. I don't even know how that works, I mean, what it's really like. I don't know anything. I feel like I should, but I don't."

– Graduate student quoted in “On the road to becoming a professor: The graduate student experience.” (Nyquist, Manning, Wulff, Austin, et al., 1999). *Change* 31(3), p. 18.

3. *Reflection / Follow-up Questions:* Part Three will come at the close of each session, or will take place by email after class. At that time, I'll ask for a 2-3 minute written comment or response from each person in the class. These responses may raise questions for further discussion during the following week's Opening, or simply provide feedback on the overall usefulness of the session.

Because this class relies heavily on guest speakers and panel presentations, and very few assignments are turned in, these brief written responses will be an important source of information for me as I work to keep class sessions on track and make sure that we are adequately addressing the questions you have about faculty careers.

Philosophy Statement

Your only assignment to hand in for this course is a written philosophy statement. The goals of this assignment are to 1) encourage you to think about the kind of faculty position that would be best for you, and 2) produce a draft of an item that could be included in your application for a faculty position. You will have two opportunities to get peer feedback on your philosophy statement. Please bring a first draft to class on **May 14**. Please bring your second draft to the last day of class on **June 4**.

Format

Your statement should be 1-2 pages in length, organized in a way that works best for the information that you want to present. For example, some use a primarily narrative approach, while others prefer to write distinct sections with headings and sub-headings to introduce different topics. Single-spacing is appropriate, but do not use an unusually small font or narrow margins that might make it more difficult to read or give an unprofessional visual impression.

Grading

You will not be graded on the content of your philosophy statement. This is a credit/no credit assignment. To receive credit, please bring a copy to turn in on May 14 and June 4 and these copies will document that you have completed the assignment.

Peer Review

Rather than receiving a grade, you will receive feedback on your statement from peers in class. The goal of the peer review is to receive feedback from people with potentially different perspectives. Thus, each person should review at least two other teaching philosophy statements. On peer review days (May 14 and June 4), please come to class with 4 copies of your statement: 1 for yourself to annotate during peer review, 2 to share with your peers, and 1 to turn in. I will also review drafts upon request for those who would like to receive additional feedback.

Within your peer review group, you will be asked to create a list of the kinds of feedback that would be most useful for improving your teaching philosophy statement. Think about how to structure the peer review so that everyone gets the most constructive feedback.

Why Write a Philosophy Statement?

Colleges and universities are increasingly requesting philosophy statements from faculty candidates. As you know, different institutions are looking for different kinds of faculty. Philosophy statements are one way to help search committees assess the qualifications of applicants and ensure a "good fit" between candidate and institution. There may be no other place in your written job materials for your own voice to be as clearly expressed as it can be in a philosophy statement.

Even if a job posting does not explicitly request a copy of your philosophy, what you produce may help you to prepare for a faculty job search. Most people find it difficult to write a philosophy statement in a single attempt, so if you postpone writing one until you are formally on the job market, you may find that you lack the time to write something that represents you well. Even when a philosophy statement is not requested, the act of having written your statement in advance will help you be much more articulate in response to questions that come up as you interact with potential employers, and will also help you think through what you are looking for in *them*.

What is a Philosophy Statement?

For some people, the word ‘philosophy’ brings to mind visions of abstract theoretical perspectives or beliefs about the importance of an educated public. Alternatively, you might be concerned that you do not have a philosophy. You do – even if you have never had the opportunity or reason to articulate it.

In some ways, your philosophy statement is analogous to a theoretical statement in a research proposal because it documents the conceptual basis that guides your actions and provides a framework into which everything else fits. Your philosophy statement will demonstrate that you have given serious thought to your chosen career. Typically, a philosophy statement describes the rationale behind your actions in instructional and other academic settings.

What Kind of Philosophy Statement?

Institutions hiring new faculty have been known to request statements that reflect your *teaching philosophy*, *commitment to diversity*, and *understanding of the community college system*. Your statement for this course should focus on one of these topics.

If you are not yet sure about your future career plans, you will still need to write a statement, but you may adapt the assignment to suit your circumstances. For example, you may opt to write a statement about how your graduate career has prepared you to work on a team and communicate with colleagues from different fields – two skills that are crucial to working in private and government sectors (hint: any TA experience that you have might also be helpful in showing your preparation for these types of non-academic positions).

Teaching Philosophy

The teaching philosophy statement provides readers with your perspective on learning and teaching. You *do* have ideas about how students learn and why you teach the way you do (or would like to). However, for most instructors these ideas remain implicit. This is an opportunity to unearth the assumptions that guide your teaching decisions and to share them with others. If you develop a full teaching portfolio in the future, the philosophy statement is the focal point, articulating the underlying principles that are demonstrated throughout the rest of the portfolio.

At a minimum, your teaching philosophy articulates your intellectual expectations for students and how you help them achieve your learning goals. Your statement should include: (1) what you expect your students to accomplish intellectually, (2) ways that you help students to achieve the objectives you have identified, and (3) reference to specific examples of teaching and learning activities.

Individual Diversity Philosophy

As written documents, Diversity Statements are relatively rare in the academy. There is no widely accepted definition or description of a diversity statement or its content. At the very least, a diversity statement demonstrates that you have given serious thought to the issue. You might choose to include your diversity statement in a job application, or you may never show it to anyone. The primary purpose of writing such a statement is to take the opportunity to think about diversity and articulate your thoughts *before* you are required to do so in a faculty interview or grant proposal.

It would not be possible to take a prescriptive approach to diversity statements by providing suggestions about what you should include as content. A Diversity Statement might describe the importance of a diverse scholarly community or its significance to your discipline. You might explain why you use particular teaching methods and their impact on a diverse student population. You might provide examples of your participation in campus diversity programs or how you have contributed to recruitment and retention efforts in your field. A Diversity Statement might also describe how you interact with students and colleagues who have different backgrounds and experiences.

Community College Statement

Community colleges are particularly interested in hiring candidates who are clear about the mission and philosophy of the CC system. These institutions need to be able to identify candidates that are deliberately choosing to join their academic community, rather than seeking a position at a two-year college as a second- or third-choice. Asking faculty candidates to provide a statement of their understanding of and commitment to the goals of this kind of institution can serve a filtering function for search committees.

Your statement should reflect that you know what it takes to teach at a two-year college. It would be worthwhile for you to review the institutional mission and diversity statements of a number of community colleges as preparation for writing this kind of statement.

Consider the Audience

Common questions about philosophy statements include:

- “Who will be reading this?”
- “What are they expecting to see?”

One way to view your philosophy statement is as an opportunity to let others see how you think. It is an opportunity to describe not just what you do, but why – what you value, how you make decisions, and what you're satisfied with. Similarly, most materials you provide for the job search show what you think as a potential member of a scholarly community, but they don't necessarily show how you think in relation to people who are not yet part of that community (i.e., your students).

Another way to think about this is to consider the composition of a faculty search committee. Search committees can be composed of a variety of different kinds of faculty, depending on the kind of institution and its organizational structure. Other people may also be involved in a faculty search, such as deans, department chairs, program directors, faculty from other departments, academic staff, and students. The audience for your philosophy statement might vary along the following dimensions:

- Interest in Teaching – positive, neutral, or negative
- Experience – from senior faculty to new faculty, and also non-faculty
- Field – from inside the department, outside the department, academic administration
- Discipline – representing specializations relatively close to your area, or relatively unrelated

Imagine people with a variety of these characteristics and think about how they might react to the wording, examples, and teaching methods mentioned in your philosophy statements. What kinds of supporting evidence might these different kinds of people expect to see in your portfolio? Will you be able to create/provide artifacts that meet these expectations?

“The F-word we hear is ‘failure’ – a nasty, horrible utterance applied to many an overachieving Ph.D. who falls short of finding a tenure-track job. Fear of that word – for the summa cum laude, the Phi Beta Kappa, or the NSF grant recipient – can become debilitating and demoralizing, turning a once confident and optimistic young adult into a depressed, panic-ridden, and paralyzed recluse. Unfortunately, we are not exaggerating.

“The real problem here is the painfully constrictive definitions of failure and success within academe. Failure, says academic culture, is anything other than achieving the ultimate goal of a tenure-track professorship. More specifically, the epitome of success is a tenure-track job at a major research university ...

“Unfortunately, the hard facts show again and again that only a small percentage of doctoral students can achieve the success of becoming a tenure-track professor at a research institution.”

– “A Ph.D. and a Failure” by Megan Pincus Kajitani & Rebecca Bryant, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 24, 2005)

Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodation should notify the instructor as soon as possible.

If you have any concerns about the course or the instructor, please see the instructor about these concerns as soon as possible. If you are not comfortable talking with the instructor or not satisfied with the response that you receive, you may contact Elizabeth Feetham, Associate Dean of the Graduate School, at G-1 Communications Building, 543-5900, or by e-mail: efeetham@grad.washington.edu.