

Finding and Following Your Calling **Capstone Program**

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- Office hours:** Mondays 1-3 or by appointment. Please call or e-mail me at any time to set up a meeting.
- Text / Materials:** **Brad Harrington and Douglas T. Hall: Career Management and Work-Life Integration: Using Self-Assessment to Navigate Contemporary Careers** (Sage, 2007)
- Gregg Levoy: Callings: Finding and Following an Authentic Life** (Random House, 1997)
- Parker Palmer: Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation** (Jossey-Bass, 2000)
- Course Readings:** On Course Website, see Canvas Learning System
- Strong Interest Inventory*** – Available on BC Career Center Website

Course Overview

We are living in a time of profound change. It seems that nearly every major sphere of our world and our lives is undergoing significant transformation – politics, the economy, religious institutions, education, work, families, and communities. There are macro-trends that are driving these changes: new technologies, globalization, the environment, and the dramatic shifts in the corporate, political and economic landscape. But these changes are not simply altering the world around us, but our lives as well.

These trends have created a greater need for us to consciously develop and continually revise our own life plans as we are increasingly operating in uncharted waters. In order to play this more proactive role requires all of us to possess a very high level of self-awareness - also known as a clear sense of identity. We need to know ourselves well in order to have a firm grasp on our chosen direction but at the same time also show a profound willingness to listen to the seemingly random but important messages and signals we receive from the world around us.

Finding and Following Your Calling is a **Capstone** course that aims to help you come to grips with the external forces that are changing your life, but far more importantly, the internal forces that will help you navigate these changes. Building greater self-awareness and more in-depth self-knowledge is the foundation for the course. In turn, this knowledge should be the foundation for your plans for your life moving forward. Throughout the semester, we will rigorously pursue an answer to the question, “How can I best know myself and the unique gifts that I can bring to the world?” We will use this heightened level of self-awareness to focus on three primary dimensions of your life:

- **Careers:** In recent years, much has been written about the profound changes in that have occurred 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 (long-term) employment to more of a “free-agent” approach to managing their workforce. This change in the psychological contract has led to the establishment of a new career model that 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 may call for more frequent job and even career changes, working people have come to realize that ultimately “we are all self employed.” The challenge is how can we best deal with the implications of these changes and see them not as a barrier, but rather as an opportunity to forge our own unique “path with a heart.”
- **Relationships, Marriage and Family:** The most important determinant of your happiness in life will almost certainly be based on the success you have in maintaining long-term, meaningful relationships. While many young people are delaying commitment to marriage and family, it is critical to think about these critical relationships and how the institution of marriage, gender roles, and family structures are changing. Today, the traditional family (i.e. a two-parent household where one parent is in paid employment while the other is at home) is becoming a thing of the past. Where 30 years ago, this family configuration represented nearly 50% of American families, today it accounts for just 20%. The majority of families today are led by dual-career couples that need to find ways to successfully integrate their work and family responsibilities. At the same time, women’s superior accomplishments in higher education and their desire for greater equality in the workplace have led to a slow but certain shift in traditional gender roles. How do we think about relationships, families, and the roles we will play in those in light of the significant changes we have seen over the last generation?
- **Community:** We live in a mobile, technology-enabled society. While greater mobility and technological advances may, on the positive side, make us “citizens of the world”, it also raises many questions: As the world we operate in has become more global, what have we given up in the process? Where do I belong? In which communities do I seek to be a member? How am I contributing to the betterment of my community (whether it is physical or virtual)? In this course, we

will try to answer the question, “How do we avoid becoming individuals who are citizens of the world, but have no place called home?”

We are living in a time when well-worn paths may be less relevant, yet values and attributes are enduring. A time, perhaps more than any other, where individuals need to think for themselves, decide for themselves, navigate for themselves, and care for themselves, not in a selfish way, but in a self-directed way. By effectively doing so, they are best able to fulfill their calling and give back to others (i.e. friends, families, and society) in a meaningful manner.

The goal of this course is to help students explore in-depth what it means to have a clear sense of identity and, in turn, to see how this heightened level of self-understanding will have profound implications in terms of how we live, the work we do, the relationships we engage in, and the sense of community that we experience.

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

1. You will ***complete a highly rigorous self-assessment process*** that will help you clarify the meaning to be found in your life experiences, interests, values, skills, goals, and aspirations.
2. You will ***utilize the extensive self-assessment information that we generate in the course to develop life themes***. These themes will be a series of statements about yourself that you believe to be true based on the in-depth work you have done to develop them.
3. You will ***utilize your life themes*** to look at the most important dimensions of your life – your career, your relationships, your family, your community – and ask, “***What are implications of my life themes to my hopes and dreams for how I hope to live my life?***”

The course will include readings that will raise your awareness to the important changes that are occurring in our world. More importantly, we will make extensive use of exercises and instruments to help you achieve a high degree of self-awareness and understanding. Classes will rely heavily on a dialogue and discussions that will be stimulated by the readings and the assessment instruments that we utilize throughout the semester.

Major assignments

Our primary course objective is to master course concepts so you are more likely able to find and fulfill your life’s callings. Since creating a fulfilling life is a lofty goal and difficult to measure, the primary surrogate will be my evaluation of the three high-caliber papers you will write for the course: *The Autobiography*, *The Self-Assessment Paper* and *The Implications Paper* and your work as a peer coach to one of your classmates.

The required assignments for the class are:

1. ***Readings and participation:*** There will be assigned readings that should be completed thoroughly. Due to the large number of exercises and amount of writing required by the course, I do not assign a large volume of reading. But, you should do the readings thoroughly and understand the content such that you are able to intelligently and actively participate in class discussions - a major class expectation. A part of your class participation grade will be the result of your attendance (which is required). You will be expected to e-mail me in advance if you need to miss a class. I will be using the discussion feature on Canvas and will ask you to post at least one comment a week based on the readings. Further details on how this will work will be forthcoming. I may also administer a small number of “pop-quizzes” on the readings over the course of the semester.
2. ***The 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 should be 20 pages typed, double-spaced. It is due at the beginning of class 4.
3. ***Other Self-Assessment Exercises:*** In addition to the Autobiography, you will be completing a number of other self-assessment exercises – e.g. Peak Experiences, 10 Years Out, etc. While I will not collect these each week, they will all be handed in (as inputs/attachments to your Self-Assessment Paper). All of these should be completed thoroughly and typed. We may begin some of these during class time, but there will not be time to complete these in class. I expect you to do a very thorough job on these and they will be graded as part of your SAP.
4. ***Peer Coaching.*** Early in the semester, you will choose or be assigned to work as a peer coach to one of your fellow students. The expectation is that you will review your partner’s self-assessment data thoroughly and provide him or her with a 3-4-page summary of your observations and the tentative themes you have identified from reviewing their self-assessment data. You will schedule and conduct a 1-2 hour session to review your partner’s results with him/her. Note: Confidentiality of all information is strictly maintained in this class.
5. ***Self-Assessment Paper.*** The Self-Assessment paper is the most important deliverable of the semester. The goal of this 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-life 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-life plan (your implications paper)
6. **Implications Paper:** This assignment will illustrate how you have used the self-assessment process and your readings and research to create a realistic, practical plan for the future. The implications should be concerned with many facets of your life including your career, your relationships and family, your personal pursuits, and your commitment to community.

Grading

Class participation (including attendance, leading and participating in class discussion)	20%
Peer Coaching	10%
Autobiography	15%
Self-Assessment (Including Exercises and Paper)	40%
Implications paper	15%

Detailed class outline and weekly assignments

Week 1: Course Introduction (8/29/16)

- Introductions
- Course overview, group process, and syllabus review
- The Well Planned Life vs. The Summoned Life
- Video: Welles Crowther (BC '99): *The Man in the Red Bandana* or ...
- Video: *Dr. George Lombardi, Mission to India*
- Reading (in class):
 - **For opening dialogue:** Safi, *The Disease of Being Busy*
 - Harrington: *Live YOUR Life, Huffington Post*
 - Brooks: *The Summoned Self, New York Times (to be read in class)*
- Assignment Directions for *The Strong Interest Inventory*

Week 2: Finding Clarity; Self-Assessment, Identity and the Protean Career (9/12/16)

- The Protean Career and the Identity Meta-Competency
- Video: Fr. Michael Himes, *The Three Questions* (Part 1: What gives you joy?)
- Video: Matteson Perry, *The Running of the Bulls* (from Moth Radio)
- Activity: *Peak Experiences Exercise (in class)*
- Readings due:
 - **For opening dialogue:** *Smith and Aaker: Millennial Searchers*
 - NPR: *Poll: Prestigious Colleges Won't Make You Happier In Life or Work*
 - Levoy: *Introduction; Chapter 1, The Ear of the Animal,*
 - *Levoy: Chapter 2, Finding Clarity*

- Palmer: Chapter 2, *Now I Become Myself*
- Harrington and Hall: *Understanding the New Career*
- Assignment Directions for *The Autobiography* and completing your *Peak Experiences*

Week 3: Reflecting on Your Past; Personal Histories (9/19/16)

- Reflections on your *Peak Experiences*
- Discussion on assigned readings
- Reviewing the *Sample Autobiography*
- Introduction to Thematic Analysis
- Video: *Life Instagrammed: The life and death of Madison Holleran*
- **Assignment due: One page list of observations from the *Sample Autobiography***

Complete your Peak Experience Exercise

- Readings due:
 - **For opening dialogue:** Harrington: *Let Your Life Speak*, *Huffington Post*
 - Levoy: *Chapter 10, Memory's Vital Secret (#1)*
 - Palmer: Chapter 1, *Listening to Life*
 - Harrington and Hall: *The Autobiography*
 - Harrington: *Sample Autobiography*
- *Assignment Directions*: Final review / questions on *Autobiography*

Week 4: Living Your Values (9/26/16)

- Discussion on values and their role in work and life
- Career Values Exercise
- Video excerpt: *The Zero Impact Man*
- **Assignment Due: Your Autobiography**
- Readings due:
 - **For opening dialogue:** Bill Stuntz: *taught Christian legal theory at Harvard*
 - Hull and Holder: *Do Your Commitments Match Your Convictions? (#2)*
 - Harrington and Hall: *Clarifying Your Values*

Week 5: Your Interests and Passions (10/3/16)

- What really interests me? How do my interests translate to careers?
- The Strong Interest Inventory
- Is it possible to pursue your passions in life?
- Video: *One Child at a Time* (from 60 minutes)
- Readings due:
 - **For opening dialogue:** Robert Markowitz: *Abandoning the Work I Hated*
 - Harrington and Hall: *Your Interests and Your Passions*
 - Trunk: *Want a life? Plan a career that leaves room to pursue personal passions*
 - Boyatzis, McKee, and Goleman: *Reawakening Your Passion for Work*
 - Gregoire: *Why 'Follow Your Passion' Is Bad Career Advice*, Huffington Post

Week 6: Seeking Help from Others; Identifying Your Skills and Unique Gifts (10/17/16)

- What are you good at? What are the unique gifts you can offer?
- Video: Fr. Michael Himes, *The Three Questions (part 2)*
- **Complete:** The Interview with Significant Others
- Readings due:
 - Levoy: *Chapter 15: Ariadne's Thread*
 - Harrington & Hall: *Skills Assessment*
 - Kruger and Dunning: *Unskilled and Unaware*

Week 7: Your Dreams and Aspirations (10/24/16)

- What is your personal vision? What, for you, constitutes the ideal life?
- The Ten Years Out Exercise
- Review directions for the Self-Assessment Paper
- Video: Ric Alias (BC '89), *Three things I learned while my plane crashed*, TEDTalk

- Readings due:
 - **For opening dialogue** Tierney: *Why You Won't Be the Person You Expect to Be*
 - Harrington & Hall: *Understanding Life Goals and Personal Vision*
 - Harrington & Hall: Chapter 3, *Integrating Your Self-Assessment* (pages 47-57)
 - Christensen: *How Will You Measure Your Life?*

Week 8: When Things Derail; Responding to Adversity (10/31/16)

- What do we do when things don't go according to plan?
- How do we re-group?
- How do we listen for callings that may beckon you in new directions?
- **Video:** *Ed Gavagan: Drowning on Sullivan Street (or What Doesn't Kill You)*
- Reading:
 - **For opening dialogue:** Cullen, *A spirit as deep as the sea*
 - Smith: *The Virtue of Hard Things*
 - Harrington & Hall: *Job Loss* (pages 61-65)
 - Levoy: *Chapter 13: The Dignity of Daring (#5)*
 - Levoy: *Chapter 14: The Shadow in the Calling (#6)*
 - Palmer: Chapter 3, *When Way Closes*; Chapter 4, *All the Way Down*

Week 9: Serendipity, Synchronicity and the Meaning of Success (11/7/16)

- How do we attend to callings that are not part of the plan?
- What role does serendipity and synchronicity play in our lives?
- How do we decide to stay the course vs. following a calling
- Readings due:
 - **For opening dialogue:** Tugend, *Redefining Success and Celebrating the Ordinary*, *New York Times*
 - Levoy, Chapter 7, *The Turn of Events*
 - Levoy; Chapter 11: *Flight to Tarshish*

Week 10 (11/14/16): Developing Implications; What does the World Need Me To Do?

- Video: Fr. Michael Himes, *The Three Questions (part 3)*
- Discussing the implications of your Life Themes for your career and life outside of work
- **Assignment due: Your Self-Assessment Paper**
- **Assignment due: Your one-page list of themes – handout for class**
- Readings due:
 - **For opening dialogue:** Lockhart: *How to be a Writer*
 - Harrington & Hall: *Developing Career and Work-Life Implications* (pages 57-60)

Week 11 (11/21/16): Implications for Careers

- Exploring career options
- Discussing the implications of your Life Themes for your career
- Readings due:
 - **For opening dialogue:** Brooks: *The Sandra Bullock Trade*, *New York Times*

- Harrington: *It's Time to Retire Millennials*, *The Huffington Post*
- Harrington & Hall: Chapter 4, *Finding Ideal Work*; Chapter 5, *Career Development Strategies*
- Harrington, Van Deusen, Fraone, & Morelock: *How Millennials Navigate Their Careers: Young Adults Views on Work, Life, and Success*

Week 12 (11/28/15): Implications for Community

- What does it mean to live in community?
- Does the idea of community still resonate in our modern society?
- Video: Devastation and Determination in Belle Harbor
- Readings:
 - **For opening dialogue:** Harrington, *Clinging to a Lifelong Love*, Huffington Post
 - Palmer: Chapter 5, *Leading From Within*
 - Putnam: *The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Bowling Alone
 - Gaston: *Has Obama Convinced Americans about the Importance of Community?*
 - Brooks: *Party of Strivers*, *New York Times*
 - Korelitz: *Our Town, Real Simple*

Week 13 (12/5/15): Implications for Couples, Marriage, and Family

- What are keys to successful relationships
- How do we maintain our focus on family?
- How do we balance the needs of our family with other demands in our life?
- **Guest: Dr. Annie Soisson, Tufts University**
- Readings:
 - **For opening dialogue:** Harrington, *An Anniversary: 25 and Counting*, *The Huffington Post*
 - Harrington, *Large Policies, Small Moments*, *The Huffington Post*
 - Harrington & Hall, Chapter 6, *Work and Family*
 - Quindlen: *The Good Enough Mother*
 - Scharf: *Fatherhood as Vocation*
 - Harrington, Van Deusen & Humberd: *The New Dad: Caring Committed and Conflicted*

Week 14 (12/12/15): Living an Integrated Life, Course Reflections, and Class Celebration

- How do we live our lives with integrity?
- Seeing the whole: Self, Work, Home, and Community
- Personal Reflections and Key Learnings
- Readings Due:
 - Levoy: Chapter 9, *Making Pilgrimage*
 - Levoy: *Chapter 16, Heartbreakthrough: The Consequences of Saying Yes*
 - **Final Paper Due!!!**

Detailed major assignments

The Autobiography (15% of grade), Due September 26

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 choices, and your life up to this point.

While I cannot attach a grade to your life, I 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 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 it influenced your concept of parenting or careers, how it challenged stereotypes, etc.

It is very important for this assignment to not present a "Facebook image" of your life – one that only shows the positives and the successes. As columnist David Brooks says, "Most people shoot for happiness but feel formed through suffering." While I don't mean to suggest that your life was filled with suffering and challenges (and certainly hope this is not the case), we can't shy away from these parts of our lives. Indeed, they may be our most formative and meaningful experiences.

Unlike other assignments, I am less concerned about the quality of the writing. You should not have any typos and spelling and grammar should be correct, 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 September 19 so start writing soon!**

Peer Coaching Activity (10% 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, objective feedback and assistance to a colleague on their self-assessment process.

The expectations are that you will:

- You will share you the information you developed from the self-assessment activities with your peer coach. You may decide to withhold some information

- from your peer coach if you do not feel comfortable sharing it. But for the most part, I would expect that this would only be by exception.
- Review your partner's data very thoroughly. Begin to formulate some observations and tentative themes for your partner based on the data you have reviewed.
 - **Treat all information with the strictest confidentiality** – as you would expect your data to be treated by your coach. Nothing that you learn from this process should be shared with anyone other than the person you are acting as a peer coach for.
 - 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.
 - Schedule and conduct a 1 – 2 hour session to review each partner's results. It is a requirement to do this meeting face to face. Sending an email with your feedback doesn't show the right level of "personal touch" needed for this assignment. As the information you are working with is of a highly personal nature, feedback given only in writing is open to misinterpretation.

***** Important: Feedback from your peer coach then is another data source that should be used in developing and supporting the themes that are the basis of the Self-Assessment Paper. Just as you will use data points from the self-assessment exercises to support your themes, so too you will use feedback from your coach as supporting or contradictory evidence.***

The Self-Assessment Paper (40% of grade), Due November 14

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 Autobiography (life history / experience)
2. The Peak Experience Exercise (highlights)
3. The Career Values Card-Sort (values)
4. The Strong Interest Inventory (interests / skills)
5. The Ten Years Out Exercise (vision / aspirations)

6. The Interviews with Significant Others (feedback / skills) – 2 interviews are required. One should be from a co-worker at a job or a fellow student who has worked with you on a team or a project. The other should be from someone who knows you well personally (a friend, parent, etc.)
7. The Peer Coaching Exercise (feedback)

This paper will be framed around a set of “life themes” that you will develop. You will develop a *minimum of 12 themes that are clearly derived from an objective review of your 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.) *A solid theme must have a minimum of 8-10 pieces of supporting data as well as any contradictory evidence that might exist.* You will then accompany your 12 pages of themes with a written paper, 5-6 pages in length that introduces (does not simply regurgitate) your themes and discusses the ways in which your themes influence and guide your thinking about the future. This assignment is extremely rigorous and takes significant time to complete. **Due in class on November 3.** **The structure of the paper is (please follow below outline exactly):**

1. Part One: A 5-6 page narrative that introduces and reflects on your life themes. Please do not simply regurgitate what they are. Discuss what patterns you see, what reinforces what you felt you already knew, what themes are new or surprising, whether and how the themes connect with one another.
2. Part Two: Your life themes:
 - a. A one page list of all of your 12+ life themes. Each theme should be numbered.
 - b. Each theme should be on a page and below that theme should be a list of all supporting and contradictory data and the source of that data point should be provided in parenthesis using the abbreviations listed below.
 - The Autobiography (A)
 - The Peak Experience Exercise (Peak)
 - The Career Values Card-Sort (CVCS)
 - The Strong Interest Inventory (SII)
 - The Ten Years Out Exercise (10YO)
 - The Interviews with Significant Others (ISO)
 - The Peer Coaching Exercise (PEER)
3. Attached supporting data: All supporting data should be attached to the paper in the exact order listed above.

The materials should all be typed and the entire package should be pulled together using a binder clip (preferably) or elastic band. There is no need to put the materials in a binder (save the plastic) and I will want to pull the paper apart when I do the grading so do not want the materials to be bound in any way.

The Career-Life Implications Paper (15% of grade). Due between December 12-14

The Career–Life Implications Paper is an action plan for your future as well as your reflections on this course. This assignment demonstrates how you will use the self-assessment process and course readings to create a plan for moving forward. The Career-Life Implications Paper should address the many facets of your life including your career, your relationships and family, your personal pursuits, and your commitment to community, following this outline:

1. Part One: Your Career-Life Plan describes your implications in each of four areas:
 - a. Your career: What do you see yourself doing in the future? Do you see yourself in the workplace a year from today? Do you want to pursue graduate school? Would a year of traveling or doing volunteer work be something you might consider?
 - b. Your personal pursuits: What activities, hobbies and other personal pursuits do you see yourself engaging in in the future. What personal interests are integral to your sense of self (e.g. fitness, athletics, the arts, social activism, music, theater, etc.)?
 - c. Your relationships: Do you have a clear sense of what kinds of relationships you hope to see yourself in? Is a serious relationship or possibly even marriage in the your near future? What thoughts do you have about family, even if the thoughts of having a family of your own may seem to be far in the future at this time?
 - d. Your community: How you do define community? Is there a specific place that you would like to be living in the future? In what ways can you enrich your community with the gifts you have to offer?
2. Part Two: Living an Integrated Life: How do you look at the concept of living an integrated life? How will you try to put your values into practice in your career, your relationships, your community, and your life?
3. Part Three: Summary & Reflections. How has going through this exercise clarified, confused, or changed your thoughts on your life going forward. What readings have most influenced your thinking about your future, your goals and values, the meaning of living “the good life.” What reflections do you have after going through this extensive self-assessment process?

The paper should include the following attachments:

- a) Your self-assessment themes (the one page summary)
- b) Your implications developed from your life themes. Each implication should cite the themes you used to develop that implication. It should include implications for your career, family, personal pursuits and community.
- c) Your Career Orientation Index

- d) Your revised 5/10 Years-Out Exercise (if you have revised it, if not, hand in the original)
- e) One page short term bulleted action steps. One page that lists the steps you need to take in the next 6-12 months (and by what date) to put your plan into action.