IDS 4930- Grad School 101

Instructor: Dr. Jacob T. Watson
Email: jacobwatson@ufl.edu
Office Hours: Email Me for Appointment

OVERVIEW

This course is designed for anyone who is thinking about graduate school in the future and would like to enhance their preparation and make a more informed decision. The course provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of graduate programs, plan ahead, and reflect on whether graduate school is the right path for you. Students will learn about the graduate school application process, different types of graduate programs, the day-to-day life of graduate students, and how to effectively prepare for a future in graduate study today.

OBJECTIVES

- construct a graduate school preparation timeline
- create a budget and table of funding/cost-of-living data for graduate programs
- craft and refine application materials for graduate school
- make an informed decision regarding post-graduation education
- understand the path from graduate school to career
ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Grading percentages are as follows:

- Faculty Profiles 5%
- Grad Student Budget 5%
- Funding Table 5%
- Experience Timeline 5%
- CV 10%
- Grad School Interview 20%
- Statement of Purpose 20%
- Final Portfolio 30%

Grading scale:

A=92.5-100; A-=89.5-92.4; B+=86.5-89.4; B=82.5-86.4; B-=79.5-82.4; C+=76.5-79.4; C=72.5-76.4; C- =69.5-72.4; D+=66.5-69.4; D=62.5-66.4; D-=59.5-62.4; E=<59.5

ATTENDANCE

Since this class only meets once per week, it is important to attend every class session. Accumulating more than three unexcused absences may result in automatic failure of the course. Illness, religious observances, athletics travel, and other circumstances which make attending impossible will be excused, so long as documentation is provided.

LATE WORK

Late work will not be accepted except under extenuating circumstances. Students in need of an extension for medical or other reasons should inform the instructor prior to the assignment deadline if possible.

EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at http://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/. To help improve the course and maximize the benefit for students, additional, informal evaluations will be assigned at the beginning and midpoint of the semester.

DISABILITY NOTICE

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.
SCHEDULE

Weeks 1-2 (Jan. 9 & 23): Defining Grad School
   1: First day business; Discuss goals, questions, preconceptions
   Readings: Field Guide to Grad School Ch.1; “A Sketch of Grad School”

[NO CLASS MLK DAY: JANUARY 16]
   2: Grad School Terms and FAQs; Alternatives to traditional graduate programs

Weeks 3-4 (Jan. 30 & Feb. 6): The Choice to Go to Grad School
   3: Values: prioritizing programs based on motivating factors
   Reading: “20 Honest Reasons Not to Attend Grad School”
   4: Myths: what a graduate degree won’t do
   HW: Faculty profiles due next week

Weeks 5-6 (Feb. 13 & 20): Paying for Grad School
   5: Budget: the costs of being a student
   Reading: The Graduate School Funding Handbook Ch. 1 & 2
   6: Funding: stipends, assistantships, and fellowships
   HW: Personal Budget and Cost-of-Living Table due next week

Weeks 7-8 (Feb. 27 & March 6): The Application
   7: Materials: crafting a competitive statement of purpose
   8: Interview: self-presentation and preparation
   HW: CV due next week; scheduling mock interviews

[SPRING BREAK March 13-17]

Weeks 9-10 (March 20 & 27): Preparing for Grad School
   9: Experience Timeline: making a plan of action
   10: Mock Interview Day
   HW: Experience Timeline due next week

Weeks 11-12 (April 3 & 10): The Grad Student Experience
   11: Differences: top 10 ways grad is not like undergrad
   Readings: Field Guide to Grad School Ch. 11 & 12
   12: Guest Panel: talk to UF alumni in Grad School
   HW: Statement of Purpose due next week

Weeks 13-14 (Apr. 17 & 24): Life After School
   13: Job Market: what to expect for the post-grad job search
   14: Leveraging Skills: making the degree count
   *Portfolios due last day of classes (Apr. 26)