

Peru State College
**COLLEGE 201 – PRIOR LEARNING/LIFE EXPERIENCE PORTFOLIO
DEVELOPMENT**
Syllabus – Spring – 2010

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Course Meets: Everything submitted online

Required Textbook: None

Required Software: Need to utilize Microsoft Word 97-2003 in order to submit to Blackboard for reviewing

Course Description & Objectives

This is an online course designed for students interested in having their life experience evaluated for the purpose of determining if credit for prior learning should be granted. This involves a process of self-evaluation, analysis, personal reflection and documentation. It is for individuals with appropriate learning experiences allowing the student to identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities they have acquired or demonstrated in non-collegiate settings. The course will help students to identify transferable learning experiences and to prepare an adequate description and documentation of their prior learning. Students will examine and assess personal, educational, and occupational goals in context of the changing world of work.

Prerequisites: None

Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

1. Conduct an in-depth analysis of personal and occupational skills and qualifications.
2. Complete the components of a professional portfolio documentation of training, skills, and employment to verify prior learning.

Expectations & Instructional Approach

The online class is set up based on modules needed to document the prior learning for each student. Students will submit their work and it will be reviewed by the instructor for content and grammatical errors which can be revised prior to submission of the portfolio at the end of the course.

Assessment and Grading

As noted in the expectations, the course will have module work. At the completion and submission of the portfolio, the student will receive a credit for the course. The respective Dean(s) of each school will review the portfolios to determine the prior learning to be awarded.

College's Incomplete Coursework Policy

To designate a student's work in a course as incomplete at the end of a term, the instructor records the incomplete grade (I). Students may receive this grade only when serious illness, hardship, death in the immediate family, or military service during the semester in which they are registered prevents them from completing course requirements. In addition, to receive an incomplete, a student must have completed substantially all of the course's major requirements.

Unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise, students must initiate requests for an incomplete by filling out an Incomplete Grade Completion Contract, which requires the signature of the student, instructor, and Dean. The Incomplete Grade Completion contract cites the reason(s) for the incomplete and details the specific obligations the student must meet to change the incomplete to a letter grade. The date by which the student agrees to complete required work must appear in the contract. The Dean, the instructor, and the student receive signed copies of the Incomplete Grade Completion Contract.

Even if the student does not attend Peru State College, all incomplete course work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester. Unless the appropriate Dean approves an extension and if the student does not fulfill contract obligations in the allotted time, the incomplete grade automatically becomes an F.

College's Academic Integrity Policy

The College expects all students to conduct themselves in a manner that supports an honest assessment of student learning outcomes and the assignment of grades that appropriately reflect student performance. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to understand and comply with instructions regarding the completion of assignments, exams, and other academic activities. At a minimum, students should assume that at each assessment opportunity they are expected to do their own original academic work and/or clearly acknowledge in an appropriate fashion the intellectual work of others, when such contributions are allowed. Students helping others to circumvent honest assessments of learning outcomes, or who fail to report instances of academic dishonesty, are also subject to the sanctions defined in this policy.

Instances of academic dishonesty may be discovered in a variety of ways.

Faculty members who assign written work ordinarily check citations for accuracy, run data base and online checks, and/or may simply recognize familiar passages that are not cited. They may observe students in the act of cheating or may become aware of instances of cheating from the statements of others. All persons who observe or otherwise know about instances of cheating are expected to report such instances to the proper instructor or Dean.

In order to promote academic integrity, the College subscribes to an electronic service to review papers for the appropriate citations and originality. Key elements of submitted papers are stored electronically in a limited access database and thus become a permanent part of the material to which future submissions are compared. Submission of an application and continued enrollment signifies your permission for this use of your written work.

NSCS Board of Trustees Policy 4220 states that each College “. . . will establish a distance learning assessment policy that will include, at a minimum, a substantial culminating experience that is proctored.” Peru State College’s policy is that each course that is offered entirely online will feature a proctored final exam that substantially measures the extent the course’s stated learning objectives are achieved. Online course syllabi will clearly state that, regardless of grades earned previously, the proctored final exam must be passed in order to receive credit for the course. Courses which feature graded site-based activities (e.g., teaching demonstrations) and/or video-taped presentations that occur near the end of the term, and that are designed to substantially assess the achievement of learning objectives, can be considered in compliance with this policy. Project-based capstone and graduate courses utilizing real-time discussions held by web-cam, phone or in person with the faculty member as part of the assessment process can also be considered in compliance with this policy.

Should an occurrence of academic misconduct occur, the faculty member may assign a failing grade for the assignment or a failing grade for the course. Each incident of academic misconduct should be reported to the Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The VPAA may suspend students for two semesters found to be responsible for multiple instances of academic dishonesty. The reason for the suspension will be noted on the student’s transcript.

A faculty member need present only basic evidence of academic dishonesty. There is no requirement for proof of intent. Students are responsible for understanding these tenets of academic honesty and integrity. Students may appeal penalties for academic dishonesty using the process established for grades appeals.

Title IX Compliance Notice

Peru State College is an equal opportunity institution. PSC does not discriminate against any student, employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or age in employment and education opportunities, including but not limited to admission decisions. The College has designated an individual to coordinate the College's nondiscrimination efforts to comply with regulations implementing Title VI, VII, IX, and Section 504. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies and practices may be directed to Eulanda Cade, Director of Human Resources, Title VI, VII, IX Compliance Coordinator, Peru State College, PO Box 10, Peru, NE 68421-0010, (402) 872-2230.

Students requesting reasonable accommodation and tutoring services should contact the Center for Achievement and Transition Services (CATS).

Tentative Course Schedule

Course Modules for College 201

1. The Professional Career Goal - Due Sunday, January 24

The career goal component is an important element of the portfolio. It encourages the student to reflect on his/her background and experiences, considering where interests and skills were developed, applied, and enhanced.

In addition, the career goal component asks that the student consider his/her current status: What interest, skills, goals are being actively pursued or enhanced/advanced in regard to education, employment and/or life skills?

Finally, the career goal's component should address plans for the future. One might consider additional education or training needed or desired to facilitate, advancement in chosen career, or a career change.

Requirement:

The student will develop a professional career goal paper to be included in the professional portfolio. While the past and present should be included, the emphasis should be placed on the future goal and the steps to attain it. In two or three paragraphs (approximately one page), students will describe their career goal.

Assessment:

The professional career goal paper will be reviewed for proper grammar, language usage, punctuation, etc. In addition the paper will be reviewed for thoroughness of the topics identified.

2. Current Employment Profile – Due Sunday, February 7

In this section, the student will prepare a resume and a reference list. In addition, the student will provide a current, detailed job description and an organizational chart from his/her current employer.

The resume is an outline of personal, educational, military and employment background as well as an individual's accomplishments. It is considered an introduction to the rest of the portfolio. It will serve as a reference when reviewing other sections.

The reference list will include three to five professional and/or personal references who could be contacted for verification of previous work experience and/or accomplishments.

A detailed job description is important for an evaluation committee to understand your position in the world of work as job titles alone often do not adequately reflect expectation, skills and knowledge. A company organization chart, with your position or area identified allows an even clearer picture of your position.

Requirement:

The student will develop and submit a resume, reference list, and a current job description with an organizational chart.

Assessment:

The resume, reference list, and current job description/organizational chart will be reviewed to ensure completeness of the tasks identified.

3. Personal Essay – Due Sunday, February 28

The personal essay section of the professional portfolio is a narrative summary of personal, education, and work background relevant to your professional/career interest and training. The life/work history may begin with your high school interests and how you selected or progressed through your education and employment history.

Requirement:

A three to five page typed narrative will be prepared. The narrative should chronicle a student's job/educational history. For each job held, a brief summary of the company and how the tasks related to or clarified career goals should be provided. The personal essay is an autobiography summarizing an individual's professional and personal evolution to this point in time. A brief perspective of future objectives could be included

as well. The concentration of the narrative should be on what has been learned from the life experiences.

Assessment:

The personal essay will be reviewed for proper grammar, language usage, punctuation, etc. In addition the narrative will be reviewed for thoroughness of the topics identified.

4. Job/Employment Autobiography – Due Sunday, March 21

The job/employment autobiography summarizes the knowledge and skills that were learned and/or performed on the job(s) an individual has held. NOTE: You may wish to utilize the Occupational Outlook Handbook to help summarize your job descriptions. You can simply google it and then search for similar positions. The reason I am suggesting this is that you may have done things that have allowed you to develop certain skills. Some of these types of things are not always described in a job description.

If a student has completed a formal training program, non-credit coursework, training, seminars, workshops, etc., through a college, business and industry or other source, the individual may summarize the knowledge and skills acquired through such.

Requirement:

A chronological summary of employment will be developed identifying the knowledge and skills learned and/or performed on the job.

If other training has been completed, an outline of course descriptions, course objectives, student learning objectives, etc., should be developed. Documentation of hours of training would be helpful to include.

Assessment:

The job/employment autobiography and/or summary of additional training will be reviewed for the thoroughness of the suggested topics.

5. Course Credit or General Request Preparation – Due Sunday, April 18

In this module, students will determine which course(s) they believe they have enough significant evidence to document that the academic learning objectives for that course have been mastered.

Students should view the course descriptions that are available on-line through the College's website at www.peru.edu. You will need to go to each school to view the courses that are offered. In the case of the School of Education and Graduate Studies

and of the School of Professional Studies, there is a separate Course Description link that will take you to the courses.

For each specific course, you will need to review not only the course description, but the academic learning objectives that have been identified. The learning objectives can be found near the beginning of every syllabus that is linked to the course description. If students believe they have significant evidence to document mastery of the objectives, they must provide evidence with a reflection as to how and what they learned in their various positions and experiences. Information should be provided for as many of the learning objectives that were mastered in order to give the respective Dean enough evidence to document that the objectives were significantly learned. Provide as many examples as possible so the Deans are confident you have mastered the objectives.

After students have determined they will request credit for specific courses, they will identify each course on the Evaluation Document which should be the first page of this section of the portfolio.

If you have any questions about the sufficiency of your documentation, please feel free to contact your instructor.

Requirement:

The student will document which courses they believe they should receive credit for by providing significant evidence to substantiate mastery of the objectives.

Assessment:

The information provided will be reviewed to determine if substantive evidence has been provided to warrant credit for the course(s) requested.

6. General Prior Learning/Life Experience Request Preparation

Additional documentation of transferable knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained through work and life experiences is essential. The key to any type of documentation is that it must verify the student's learning and level of proficiency from the experience.

In this module, students will prepare their requests seeking general credit for experiences gained through either certification processes; workshops, seminars, or conferences attended; or through volunteer activities. In addition, the students will provide verification of their previous work experience,

The student will provide a variety of extra documents to ensure the portfolio is thorough, complete, and credible. Examples of documentation may include: third-party documentation letters; certificates of completion; commendations for work, participation, community service, etc.; work samples, awards, honors, and like materials.

If seeking credit for of certifications received, students must provide a copy of the certificate. In addition, the students should provide a detailed outline of what the certification process entailed including the rigor and length of such process. Students should consider searching the Internet to see if their formal training experiences or certificates have already been evaluated for college credit. If students do find such information, they should provide a copy of the information in this section.

If seeking credit for workshops, seminars, and/or conferences, students should provide proof of attendance which could include a certificate. In addition, the students should provide a detailed description of what the conference was about including the length and/or numbers of hours in attendance.

If seeking general credit for work experience(s), students must provide verification of successful employment. Students should request letters from previous employers, preferably on company letterhead, verifying the dates of the employment, the positions held, and a generalized statement of the main responsibilities completed in the position. If the student was self-employed or worked for a relative, they should secure a letter from perhaps a banker or community member that could verify the successful operation of the business. The letter should note the length of time the student was employed in the family business.

If seeking general credit for community service, which could include leadership roles, students must provide verification of successful completion of each role served. Students should secure letters, preferably on letterhead, from community leaders of organizations in which they have successfully served in some capacity. The letters should note the roles the students have had and the length and time of service. Any additional support documentation including commendations should be included in this section.

As part of this module, the students will complete the General PL/LE Credit Requested portion of the Evaluation Form and will place it in the front of this section of the module.

Requirement:

The student will provide a variety of extra documents to ensure the portfolio is thorough, complete, and credible. Examples of documentation may include: third-party documentation letters; certificates of completion; commendations for work, participation, community service, etc.; work samples, awards, honors, and like materials.

Assessment:

The additional professional portfolio documentation will be reviewed for the completeness of the suggested additional documentation.