ABEN/ASM 491
Seminar (Career Planning and Job Search)

1 credit
Tues/Thurs 8:30-9:20 AM in ABEN 201 (8/26-10/16)

Instructor:
Dr. Scott W. Pryor
205 Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering
(701) 231-7274
scott.pryor@ndsu.edu

Office Hours: Monday and Thursday 1 – 2 PM or by appointment. Drop-ins are welcome at other times but availability cannot always be guaranteed. Students may also call or send questions via e-mail.

Text: none

Course Objectives:
To assist students plan careers and become employed before graduation by:
• Creating an awareness of the availability and services of the NDSU Career Center, commercial placement agencies, and internet resources
• Creating an awareness of graduate school opportunities (ABET Educational Objective 2i).
• Demonstrating the need for a thorough self-analysis to develop a personal marketing plan (ABET Educational Objective 2f)
• Assisting in the development of a plan to conduct a job search
• Assisting with the development of a resume, letter of application, and other job search related communications tools (ABET Educational Objective 2g)
• Help develop interview skills (ABET Educational Objective 2g)

Class Participation
You are expected to be an active participant in the class; ask questions, share your ideas about what works and what doesn’t work, etc. If you are sitting on the line between two grades, your level of class participation may be used to determine which grade you receive.

Assessment
Homework:
You will be required to develop and write a resume, cover letter, and other correspondence associated with a complete job search. This work may be iterative - you will have the opportunity to complete assignments 2-4 several times to provide the opportunity for continual improvement. I will grade each homework assignment as if I was an employer who wanted to pick 5 people to interview from a pool of roughly 50 - subjective but I hope you get the point. Grades will be assigned as follows:
   A = Excelled (Polished and professional: I would want to interview you!)
   B = Met expectations (I would consider interviewing you)
   C = Lacking/unimpressive (I probably wouldn't consider an interview)
   D = Poor (I would not consider an interview after seeing this letter/resume)
   F = Unacceptable/failing
What matters:
1. Following all directions exactly
2. Using complete and grammatically correct sentences
3. Using *professional* language (avoid jargon, figurative, and colloquial language)
4. Using *precise* language (say what you mean and mean what you say),

If you are not satisfied with the grade you receive, you can revise your work and resubmit it for grading again. Each assignment (except the first and last) will be graded a maximum of three times. Your grade for each assignment will be weighted as follows: 20% - 1\textsuperscript{st} submission, 30% - 2\textsuperscript{nd} submission, 50% - final submission.

If you meet my expectations the first time you turn in an assignment, your workload (and mine) will go down. If you are satisfied with your grade after the first or second submission, the remainder of the grade will be from the latest submission.

I have two goals:
1. that you have quality products that will serve you well in the job search
2. that you recognize writing quality and are able to produce better professional documents on your own.

Final grades will be an average of all HW grades as described above and any in-class quizzes.

**The Backer Philosophy**

"One of the measures of your success, the department's success, and my success, is your ability to find employment at or before graduation. I want you to be successful. I want your department to be successful. I want to be successful. So we are all successful, I will do my best to help you find the type of employment you want. I cannot get a job for you, but I can help you get a job and start a career. If you let me, I will help!"
Students with Disabilities:
Any students with disabilities or other special needs who need special accommodations in this course are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor as soon as possible.

Students and Military Service:
Veterans and student soldiers with special circumstances or who are activated are encouraged to notify the instructor in advance.

Academic Integrity
All work in this course must be completed in a manner consistent with:
1) NDSU University Senate Policy, Section 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct [link](http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/335.pdf) and
2) the COE Honor System [link](http://www.ndsu.edu/coe/undergraduate_students/honor_code/)

Students are encouraged to work together and assist one another with assignments. All work submitted should be created by an individual. If it is apparent that work has been copied, all involved students will receive 0 points for that assignment with no opportunity for resubmission. Students may be referred to the Honor Commission as outlined in the COE Honor System.

Attendance
According to NDSU Policy 333, attendance in classes is expected. Students are responsible for getting any information or announcements made if class absence is necessary.

ABEN Program Educational Objectives and Student Outcomes for ABET:
Educational Objective 2. Graduates will become engineers who have interpersonal and collaborative skills and the capacity for productive careers. This will be accomplished by ensuring that graduates have:

- **ABET-f** Understanding of professional and ethical responsibility
- **ABET-g** An ability to communicate effectively
- **ABET-i** Recognition of the need for and an ability to engage in lifelong learning
## Potential class schedule
The following is a tentative schedule. It will change as necessary due to: changes in speaker schedules/commitments, the needs of the class, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Conversation Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>Introductions and goal setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>The Job Search</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sept 02</td>
<td>The Job Search/Resumes</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Resume Development</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Resume Critiques</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Career Center presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Letters</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Letters</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Letter critiques</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Agriculture Career Expo – Fargodome</td>
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<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1 pm – 4 pm</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>Engineering Tech Expo – Fargodome</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>10 am – 3 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Oct 02</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>No class (other speaker?)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>Local ABEN/ASM Alumni visits</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Evaluating Job Offers</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
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<td>HW 1 Self-assessment</td>
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<td>HW 2 Resume</td>
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<td>HW 3 Cover Letter</td>
<td>Sept 26</td>
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<td>HW 4 Thank you (e-mail)</td>
<td>Oct 3</td>
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<td>HW 5 Interview questions</td>
<td>Oct 10</td>
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HW 1 (Self-Assessment): Due: Sept 2
I expect you to put a significant amount of time into this assignment; you have much to gain by doing so. The job you do with this will have a direct bearing on your opportunities for employment!

1- Prepare a list of all your skills that may be valuable to an employer. Start each complete sentence in the list with the phrase, “I can...”. This list should be long (perhaps a whole page). Think about it! This can include technical and non-technical skills. This is what you have to sell to a potential employer! (If you can't articulate your strengths or skills, why would anyone want to hire you?)

2- Prepare a list of your good personal characteristics or attributes (strengths). Start each complete sentence in the list with the phrase, "I am...". This list should also be long. Recruiters may ask; therefore you need to know!

3- Prepare a list of your poor personal characteristics or lacking skills (weaknesses). This list should be only about half as long as the one above. We all have weaknesses and recruiters know it. Someone will ask- really! You need to recognize these, understand them, and figure out how to address the issue positively. You may include some here that you wouldn't discuss with a recruiter, but it might be good to identify them anyway.

4- What talents, education, training, experiences, personal characteristics and/or skills do you have that you feel set you apart from others in a job search for similar jobs? These are your greatest strengths. If you can't identify some, why would potential employers who interview you and your classmate select you rather than your classmate or someone else? You are not the only qualified person being considered for any particular job! You have stiff competition. To be better able to land the job you want, you need to demonstrate that you are better than the competition.

HW 2 (Resume): Due: Sept 12
Page 1: Write a short but concise description of a job that you would want. If it is a real job description, include where you found the posting.

Page 2: Make a resume for yourself to apply for the above position.

[Print, complete, and sign the Resume Checksheet]

HW 3 (Cover Letter): Due: Sept 26
Write a cover letter for a job that you would like to apply for. If you don't have a specific job in mind, you will have to be a little more creative in making the letter as realistic as possible.

[Print, complete, and sign the Cover Letter Checksheet]

HW 4 (e-mail thank you): Due: Oct 3
E-mails may be appropriate for business communication in your job search and when you send them they need to be professional. Send me an e-mail (scott.pryor@ ndsu.edu) thanking me for having interviewed you for whatever position it is you would like to interview for. Be creative in addressing specific follow-up points relevant to the fictional interview.

HW 5: Interview questions Due: Oct 10
You will get a list of common interview questions. Pick 5 of those questions and write out a short answer for each. I won't be grading it based on grammar (since this spoken language
has a different standard than written language) but I will be looking for you give me the
details of a relevant story you could tell in about 2-3 minutes. Write each out in
Situation/Task/Action/Result form. I'll give a maximum of 20 points per story- you can't use
the same story for multiple questions unless you clearly put a different spin on it. Your score
will be docked if it isn't clear that you gave it some good thought or if didn't provide enough
detail for it be a useful response.