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

1 credit
Tues/Thurs 8:30-9:20 AM in ABEN 208 (8/23-10/14)

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:
- Demonstrating the need for a thorough self-analysis to develop a personal marketing plan (ABET Educational Objective f)
- 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 g)
- Helping to develop interview skills (ABET Educational Objective g)
- 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 i).

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 some assignments (#2, 3, 4) 2-3 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 - this is 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. If you are satisfied with your initial grade, it will also count for the resubmission. The first and last assignments will be graded one time. Demonstrate your ability to write professionally. Assignments 2 and 3 may be graded at least two times. Fixing the items noted by the instructor in the first draft is likely not sufficient to earn an A, so you will need to do your own critical thinking. By turning in the first and 2nd drafts with a marked up copy from a friend (and a signed checksheet from him or her), you will earn a grading of a third draft. The highest two grades will count.

I have two goals and the assignment guidelines are structured to help us meet them:
1- You should have quality products that will serve you well in the job search.
2- You should recognize writing quality and be able to produce better professional documents on your own.

Course grades will be based on the percentage of total course marks as noted below (400 total).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HW 1 Self-assessment</td>
<td>Sept 1</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW 2 Resume</td>
<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>- Resume rewrite</td>
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<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW 3 Cover Letter</td>
<td>Sept 27</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Cover letter rewrite</td>
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<td>70</td>
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<td>HW 4 Thank you (email)</td>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>- email rewrite</td>
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<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW 5 Interview questions</td>
<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>50</td>
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**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 http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/335.pdf and
2) the COE Honor System 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 23</td>
<td>Introductions and Course Orientation</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>The Job Search</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>The Job Search/Resumes</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sept 01</td>
<td>Resume Development</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>Resume Critiques</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>Letters</td>
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<td>Letters</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Letter Critiques</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Emails/critiques</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Agriculture Career Expo – Fargodome</td>
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<td>1 pm – 4 pm</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Engineering Tech Expo – Fargodome</td>
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<td>10 am – 3 pm</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Oct 04</td>
<td>Local ABEN/ASM Alumni visits</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>Evaluating Job Offers</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Career Center Presentation - Networking (LinkedIn)</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
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HW 1 (Self-Assessment):  
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. Some will be appropriate for a resume, some will not. They will all be valuable in interviewing. This is what you have to sell to a potential employer!  (You must be able to articulate your strengths and skills if you expect anyone 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 someone else? Unfortunately, you are not the only qualified person being considered for any particular job. You have stiff competition. If you want to land the job you want, you need to demonstrate that you are better than the competition.

HW 2 (Resume):  
**Due: Sept 13**

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

Page 2: Make a resume for yourself to apply for the above position. Use the Resume Checksheet and revise, revise, revise. Have someone else check it. Repeat until you would be proud to hand it to the person hiring for your dream job. Hand it in.

Page 3: Print, complete, and sign the Resume Checksheet indicating that you reviewed the resume against all listed criteria.

HW 3 (Cover Letter):  
**Due: Sept 27**

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 4**

E-mails will likely 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. Write the email exactly as if it were being sent to a real interviewer. Be creative in addressing specific
follow-up points relevant to the fictional interview. Start the subject header with the exact phrase [ABEN/ASM491 HW4], including the brackets and spacing, followed by your actual subject header. This will make sure your submission goes in to the right folder of my email.

**HW 5: Interview questions**  
Due: Oct 11

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. Aim for around 150-300 words per question. If it is more than this, make it more concise. If it is shorter than this, add some detail. If it is outside of these bounds, it should be a strong enough story to justify that.

Write each out in Situation/Task/Action/Result form. I'll give a maximum of 10 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.