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

1 credit
Tues/Thurs 8:30-9:20 AM in ABEN 208 (8/22-10/12)

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 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</td>
<td>Aug 31</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-assessment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HW 2</td>
<td>Sept 12</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resume</td>
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<td>- Resume rewrite</td>
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<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW 3</td>
<td>Sept 26</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cover Letter</td>
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<td>- Cover letter rewrite</td>
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<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW 4</td>
<td>Oct 3</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thank you (email)</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</td>
<td>Oct 10</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview questions</td>
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Late HW submissions
Ask the instructor at least 2 days in advance if you think you may need an extension. Otherwise, HW 1 and 5 may be submitted by the beginning of the class following the due date for 1 letter grade deduction. After that, no credit will be given.

If HW 2, 3, or 4 are late without being granted an extension, the student may not rewrite/resubmit the HW and the initial grade will count as the submission and rewrite.

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](http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/335.pdf) and
2) the COE Honor System [http://www.ndsu.edu/coe/undergraduate_students/honor_code/](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
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 22</td>
<td>Introductions and Course Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>The Job Search</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>The Job Search/Resumes</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Resume Development</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Sept 05</td>
<td>Resume Critiques</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>Letters</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Letters</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Letter Critiques</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Emails/critiques</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>Agriculture Career Expo – Fargodome 1 pm – 4 pm</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>Engineering &amp; Tech Expo – Fargodome 10 am – 3 pm</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Open</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Oct 03</td>
<td>Local ABEN/ASM Alumni visits</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>Career Center Presentation - Networking (LinkedIn)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Evaluating Job Offers</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Graduate School (or other)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
HW 1 (Self-Assessment): Due: Aug 31
See HW description on Blackboard.

HW 2 (Resume): Due: Sept 12
Page 1: Find and print out job description that you would be interested in applying for. Highlight the phrases or keywords in the job description that are most important for you to address in your resume. I will review your resume in general for formatting and proofreading, and specifically for how it addresses the job description.

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

Page 3: When you are happy with your resume, evaluate it against the resume rubric. Fill out the evaluation form and sign it at the bottom to indicate you completed it. One full letter grade will be deducted if you fail to complete or attach the rubric.

Pages 4-5 [optional]: If you wish to have your resume critiqued and graded a 3rd time by the instructor, you must have someone else (preferably, but not necessarily, from class) review a first draft of your resume using either the NDSU rubric, or the class Resume Checksheet found in the Course Content section. Include the marked up/edited draft and a signed copy of the Rubric or Checksheet with your submission. [You should consider the suggested changes and incorporate any revisions in the version to be graded.]

HW 3 (Cover Letter): Due: Sept 21
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.

Page 1: Include the position description of a job that you would want - preferably the same one used for the resume. As before, this should be a description of the job, not just the job title. A job description will include duties that will be performed and/or qualities or experience the employer is looking for.

In a separate paragraph, summarize (but be as specific as you can) the 3 most important things that you think the employer is looking for based on the job description. Your letter should be written with these in mind. [I will deduct up to 10 points if the job description does not adequately allow me to evaluate the letter, or if you do not summarize what they are looking for.]

Page 2: Write a cover letter which will accompany your resume to apply for the above position. Use the Cover Letter Checksheet and revise, revise, revise. Have someone else check it. Repeat the process until you would be proud to hand it to the person hiring for your dream job. Hand this version in.

Page 3: Print, complete, and sign the Cover Letter Checksheet indicating that you reviewed the letter against all listed criteria. You should only sign it if you honestly used it, but one letter grade will be deducted for not including the signed checksheet.
Pages 4-5 [optional]: If you wish to have your letter critiqued and graded a 3rd time by the instructor, you must have someone else (preferably but not necessarily from class) review a draft of your letter using the class Cover Letter Checksheet. Include the marked up draft from this person (and a checksheet signed by him or her) with your submission (revised after considering their suggestions).

HW 4 (e-mail thank you):  
Due: Oct 3
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 e-mail exactly as if it were being sent to a real interviewer, except you should write it to me.
- Be creative in addressing specific follow-up points relevant to the fictional interview.
- I suggest writing and editing in Word, but copying and pasting the text into your e-mail program. Please do not write or send from your phone.
- 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 e-mail.

HW 5: Interview questions  
Due: Oct 10
There is a list of common interview questions on Blackboard. Pick 5 of the bolded questions (at least 3 must be Behavioral Interview questions) and write out a short answer for each.

I won't be grading it based on grammar (since spoken language has a different standard than written language) but I will be looking for you to 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, try to 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.

Follow the Situation/Task/Action/Result (STAR) format to answer the Behavioral Questions. 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 Behavioral Questions are not answered in STAR format (loosely) or if you didn't provide enough detail for it be a useful response.