Course Proposal:

*University 301: Life Skills*

By current Drexel Students: Erin Sheridan, Samantha Bewley, Jessica Louie, and Irman Budwal
University 301 is a three-credit Life Skills class. This class is primarily for students who are going to be graduating soon. University 301 is a class that will teach basic non-academic skills that are essential for success after graduation. This class will teach the proper ways to clean, easy and healthy recipes, basic home and personal finances including budgeting and buying or leasing a house or a car, and how to plan and organize your life. Life Skills classes also increase general health of students because life skills help students manage difficult situations that they encounter in their everyday lives. It is very important to give young adults the preparation they need to handle difficult situations (Sahebalzamani). Life Skills lead to a better outlook of life among students and have a positive effect on emotional regulation (Haji). Since there are so many topics to cover in a short time, the class will focus on one topic for one or two class meetings and then move on to a new topic. The method of evaluation will be partially based on attendance and in class participation because this class is very hands on, there will also be five biweekly projects, a midterm, a final exam and a final portfolio consisting of the revised versions of the five projects.

Drexel’s mission statement states “Drexel University fulfills our founder's vision of preparing each new generation of students for productive professional and civic lives while also focusing our collective expertise on solving society's greatest problems.” To effectively prepare students for a productive civic life, a life skills course should be added to the curriculum to better the education of all students at Drexel University. In addition to the above, Drexel’s vision statement also states “Drexel will be the Philadelphia region's leading university excelling in high-quality experiential education, online learning, translational research, technology transfer and business incubation, and urban revitalization.” Adding a life skills class at Drexel is a part of this vision. To be a leading university, Drexel needs to start offering a life skills class as other
universities have already done. Adding a life skills class will only not make Drexel a better school, but it will make Drexel student’s better prepared for a successful life. President Fry states, “We must prepare students for success in a world changing more rapidly than ever before.” University 301 does just that.

As Drexel students, we are very prepared for the workforce after graduation, but we are not as well prepared in the non-academic skills mentioned above. While most of these skills can be acquired by trial and error in everyday situations after graduation, we think it would be better to learn these skills in a classroom. Making a mistake in a class does not have as many consequences as making a mistake in life after graduation.

Many other colleges and universities have added similar life skills classes to their courses offered. For example, Harvard offers free, noncredit life skills classes on many of life’s confusing topics to college aged kids. Harvard’s Office of Career Services offers these classes that are led by a leadership committee from across Harvard. The assistant dean, Julia Garret Fox says “Harvard students can really benefit from a fun introduction to the ‘real world’ before having to face it.” In 2007, the classes were filled to capacity and many had a waiting list. Other classes were already scheduled to be repeated.

Also, Bluefield State College also offered a class similar to our proposed University 301, the class was titled Emerging Scholars Adult Program. The program hoped to get 150 students, however, 344 students signed up and there was a waiting list with 40 students on it. While this class is geared more toward older students entering college for the first time, the class focuses on computer skills and life management skills, like University 301. This proves that classes like University 301 are successful and University 301 will be successful here at Drexel.
This course will fit nicely in any student’s schedule as a general education elective. The only prerequisite will be UNIV 101, which all freshman are required to complete. This prerequisite is to make sure that students know the basics about university life, the Drexel community and the Drexel co-op process. University 301 also has a level restriction; only juniors and seniors may enroll in the class because the class focuses on useful skills for after the student graduates from Drexel.
UNIV 301: Life Skills

Professor: Alison Novak, Ph.D.
Email: ann37@drexel.edu

Room: Gerri C. Lebow Hall 106
Tuesday and Thursday 12:30pm to 1:50pm

Office Hours: By appointment

Class Description

Your time at Drexel has given you all the skills necessary to succeed in life, however the application of these skills may need some work. This course has been specially designed to take all the skills learned in your academic lifetime and applies them towards real world experience. Topics of discussion include: paying off loans, home economics, personal finance, people skills and more.

Textbook

Life Skills 101: A Practical Guide to Leaving Home and Living on Your Own
Author: Tina Pestalozzi
ISBN: 0970133499

Course Objectives

As a result of this course, students will:

1. Gain knowledge in the application of practical life skills
2. Demonstrate proficiency in common financial practices
   a. Process common tax documents
3. Demonstrate proficiency in people skills and proper workplace etiquette
4. Develop skills and strategies to manage their transition out of college
5. Learn about campus resources that support their future career paths
6. Learn strategies to help them manage their everyday life

1 This syllabus has been adapted by our group from the COM 310: 003 Technical Communications syllabus by Professor Novak.
Grade Breakdown

Your grade in this course will be based on the following categories:

- Attendance and Participation: 20%
- 2 Exams: 10% each
- 5 Assignments: 10% each
- 1 Final Portfolio: 10%

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Attendance Policy

Attendance for this course is mandatory; each absence will result in the loss of points from your Attendance and Participation grade. Absences for a University approved reason should be discussed with the professor as soon as possible, and the missed class time must be made up.

Academic Honesty, Integrity, and Cheating Policy

For Drexel’s Policy on Academic Honesty visit: http://www.drexel.edu/provost/policies/academic_dishonesty.asp

Disability Policy

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations and services at Drexel University need to present a current accommodation verification letter ("AVL") to the instructor before accommodations can be made. AVL’s are issued by the Office of Disability Resources. Please advise me if you have a disability need that has been registered with the Office of Disability Resources (http://www.drexel.edu/oed/disabilityResources/).

Course Drop Policy

For Drexel’s Drop Policy visit: http://www.drexel.edu/provost/policies/course_drop.asp

Course Change Policy

The course schedule may change to accommodate for scheduling difficulties or new topics of interest. I will notify you through email and in class about schedule changes at least 24 hours in advance.
## Course Schedule

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
<td>Student Loans</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Student Loans</td>
<td>Money Management Assignment 1 Due</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Money Management</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>Personal Finance Assignment 2 Due</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Personal Finance</td>
<td><strong>Exam One In Class</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Organization and Time Management</td>
<td>Etiquette Assignment 3 Due</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>People Skills</td>
<td>Job Searching</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Interview Skills</td>
<td>House Hunting Assignment 4 Due</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Consumer Knowledge</td>
<td>Meal Planning</td>
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| Week 10  | Home Economics
*Class to Take Place in Food Lab* | Home Economics Assignment 5 Due |
| Week 11  | **Final Exam Date and Time TBD** | Final Portfolio Due Before Final Exam |
As a university wide course that is focusing on how to succeed in life there will be many components to the resources required to implement this class. Drexel already has most the resources needed for University 301. The resources needed include classrooms, professors, equipment, and software. All Drexel computers have Microsoft office already installed that includes Excel, which is the main program that will be used in the budgeting and home finance portion of the course. Drexel also has food labs, which have various equipment and tools that will be used in the home economics portion. The cost of the course would be relatively low since no new software or equipment needs to be purchased.

Some of the associated costs would consist of:

- Professors salary (est. $80,000-85,000)
- Cost of ingredients for cooking portion ($20 a student for basic ingredients)
- Utilities and janitorial services
- Reserved books at library
- Other personnel/faculty

Like the cost for the course, the cost for students will be relatively low since there is no actual textbooks to purchase but there will be regular books which will serve as a guide in this class which will be useful even after this course ends. The books that will be recommended are:

- “Life Skills 101: A Practical Guide to Leaving Home and Living on Your Own” by Tina Pestalozzi
- “Why Didn't They Teach Me This in School?: 99 Personal Money Management Principles to Live By” by Cary Siegel
Since there is a bit of finance and home economic portions to this course the bulk of the class will be held in a computer lab in Gerri C. Lebow Hall so everyone will have access to a computer since most of the personal and budgeting will be using excel. For the home economic portion such as easy recipes and food/kitchen safety, there will be one or two sessions in the kitchens in the Paul Peck building. This allows the students to have access to different types of kitchen equipment.

The professor that would be teaching this class is Alison Novak. For the cooking lab, the class will team up with the professor James C Feustel, who teaches about kitchen safety, techniques, and methods. And since this is a university wide course there will be certain departmental requirements like:

- Syllabus
- Attendance
- Participation
- Portfolio
- “Required” textbook

University 301: Life Skills, will give students the essential knowledge that is necessary for transition into the real world after graduating college. Rising or current seniors will learn the life skills no one teaches you in college: how to live on a budget, how to pay your loans and taxes, professional expectations and etiquette, how to go about purchasing or renting home, organizational techniques, and cleaning and cooking skills. The course is unlike any other course at Drexel, and would be valued by upperclassmen, which often don’t feel prepared for the transition into life on their own. Drexel has many courses focused on the academic skills needed, but few or none teaching the life skills that are necessary to live a fully satisfying and successful
life. The course has been designed by Drexel students for Drexel Students as a result of feedback from recent graduates, who feel that they and their peers are lacking these skills. The hands-on style of the class guarantees its success in teaching students new skills that they will retain and use after graduating.
Works Cited


Siegel, Cary. Why Didn't They Teach Me This in School? 99 Personal Money Management Principles to Live by. Print