

FYC 4931: Professional Development

Spring 2026

In-Person, 12150

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Student Hours in-person Mondays 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM & Wednesdays 10:00 AM - 12:00pm MCCB G085

Course Description

Provides professional development experience for students in FYCS including search for employment during their final semesters of undergraduate study and information regarding graduate education and research possibilities. Emphasis is placed on career placement, graduate education, practicum readiness, professional business etiquette and elements for a successful transition to the workforce.

Course Learning Objectives

After completing this course students will be able to...

1. Identify, articulate, and market their transferable and technical skills in a career setting.
2. Students will understand the difference between graduate degrees as well as identify the steps needed to apply to a program.
3. Access information about and understanding the differences between the major branches of human service careers, including social work, counseling, and nonprofit management.
4. Conduct a thorough job search, including identifying career opportunities, how to effectively network, answer interview questions and engage in salary negotiations.
5. Facilitate learning through class discussion, collaboration, and teamwork.

Course Overview and Purpose

This course prepares Family, Youth, and Community Sciences (FYCS) students for the transition from undergraduate study to professional practice. It emphasizes career placement strategies and graduate education opportunities. Students gain practical skills in job searching, practicum readiness, and professional business etiquette. The course builds confidence and competencies needed for workforce entry or advanced academic study. Its purpose is to ensure students are well-positioned for successful careers or graduate-level education in FYCS. Per [8.003](#): Instructional materials for this course consist of only those materials specifically reviewed, selected, and assigned by the instructor. The instructor is only responsible for these instructional materials.

Course Prerequisites

FYC 3001, FYC 3112, FYC 3201, and FYC 3401

Textbooks, Learning Materials, And Supply Fees

None required.

Instructor Interaction Plan

This is an interactive class with an exceptionally high level of student engagement. To make the most out of this class, attendance is strongly encouraged. Your attendance and participation are critical factors in your success in our class. This is a class on professional development, and as such, I would ask you to be professional by demonstrating regular engagement when appropriate. This course will be useful for your future academic, personal, and career success.

This course requires students to complete group assignments, quizzes, papers, electronic portfolios, and a mock interview. These components are designed to reinforce professional development skills, encourage collaboration, and prepare students for both workforce entry and graduate-level opportunities.

Required Technology & How To Obtain The Technology

To successfully participate in this course, students must have access to a reliable laptop and a stable internet connection. If you do not currently have these resources, the University of Florida offers several options to assist you:

- Laptop Access: Students may check out laptops through the UF Libraries or explore discounted purchase programs available through UF's Technology Hub.
- Internet Access: Free Wi-Fi is available on campus, and UF provides guidance for connecting to Eduroam for secure access. For off-campus needs, students can request assistance through UF's Student Affairs or explore local internet provider programs for students.

Technical Support

UF Computing Help Desk & Ticket Number: All technical issues require a UF Helpdesk Ticket Number. The UF Helpdesk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/> | 352-392-4357

Weekly Course Schedule

The course calendar may change due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., hurricanes, natural disasters). Refer to the “Date Revised” in the document header for updates. The instructor may modify any part of the syllabus as needed. All changes, including to the calendar, will be communicated promptly via Canvas Announcements and in class.

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT/ASSESSMENT DUE DATES
1	1/13	Introduction, Syllabus & Expectations Student Information Sheet	Drop/Add Begins 1/12
	1/15	Human Service Careers/Passion	Syllabus Quiz Due at 11:59pm
2	1/20	Human Service Careers/Passion cont. Compassion Fatigue	Wheel of Life
	1/22	Extension (Guest Speaker)	Defining FYCS Assignment Due at 11:59pm Human Service Careers Quiz Due at 11:59pm
3	1/27	FYCS Practicum Information	
	1/29	FYCS Practicum Information	Practicum Quiz Due at 11:59pm
4	2/3	Networking	Networking Fair February 7 th (Attendance Mandatory)
	2/5	Job Search	Networking & Job Search Quiz Due at 11:59pm
5	2/10	Email Etiquette Professional Skills Test Discussion	
	2/12	Technical vs. Transferrable Skills (SWOT Analysis)	Elevator Pitch Due at 11:59pm
6	2/17	Resume/CV/Cover Letter/Reference List	
	2/19	Resume/CV/Cover Letter/Reference List cont.	Resume Packet Due at 11:59pm

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT/ASSESSMENT DUE DATES
7	2/24	Resume/CV/Cover Letter/Reference List cont.	
	2/26	Interview & Salary Negotiations	
8	3/3	Interview & Salary Negotiations	
	3/5	Interview Prep	Interview & Salary Negotiations Quiz Due at 11:59pm
9	3/10	Professional Skills Test	
	/3/12	Practicum Proposal Follow-up Discussion (zoom)	All Training Certificates Due at 11:59pm Civic Literacy Requirement Due at 11:59pm Practicum Objectives Assignment Due at 11:59pm
10	3/16	UF SPRING BREAK	
	3/20		
11	3/24	An Introduction to Grad School Grad School Applications Personal Statement	
	3/26	An Introduction to Grad School Grad School Applications Personal Statement cont.	Grad School 101 Quiz Due at 11:59pm
12	3/31	Effective Communication	
	4/2	Business Etiquette in the Workplace	Practicum Proposal Due April 3 rd at 1pm
13	4/7	Leadership Style & Emotional Intelligence	
	4/9	Communication Challenge	
14	4/14	Alumni Week	
	4/16		Alumni Reflection Quiz due at 11:59pm
15	4/21	Course Wrap Up – Review End of Class Celebration	Career Reflection Due at 11:59pm ePortfolio Due at 11:59pm Last Day of Class Celebrations!
	4/23	UF Reading Day - End of Spring 2026, You Made It!	

Grading Policy

Course grading is consistent with [UF grading policies](#).

Course Grading Structure

Assignment Type	Point Value	Percent of Final Grade
Attendance & Participation	93	13%
Defining FYCS	23	3. %
Wheel of Life	9	1%
Elevator Pitch	19	3%
Content Quizzes (7)	65	9%
Communication Challenge	37	5. %
Professional Skills Test	93	13%
Professional Electronic Portfolio	93	13%
Career Reflection Essay	47	7%
Resume Packet	93	13%
Practicum Assignment	37	5%
Trainings	56	8%
Civic Literacy Completion	33	5%
TOTAL POINTS/PERCENTAGE	700	100%

Grading Scale

Grade	Points	Percentage
A	651-700	93-100%
A-	630-650	90-92%
B+	589-629	87-89%
B	581-608	83-86%
B-	560-580	80-82%
C+	539-559	77-79%
C	511-538	73-76%
C-	490-510	70-72%
D+	469-489	67-69%
D	441-468	63-66%
D-	420-440	60 – 62%
S	≤419	59%

A minimum grade of "C" is required for General Education credit.

Academic Policies and Resources

Academic policies for this course are consistent with university policies. See

<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

Late Policy

Assignments are submitted through Canvas and are due by 5:00 p.m. on the date indicated on the course calendar. There maybe a 7-hour grace period (until 11:59 p.m. on the due date) for some online submissions. Late points will not be deducted during this time.

- A grace period is intended to accommodate for any technical difficulties while trying to submit your assignment. If you wait until close to 11:59 p.m. before attempting to submit your assignment for the first time and experience technical difficulties, you will not be granted additional time as a result. You should attempt to submit by the scheduled due date (5:00 p.m.) and use the grace period to resolve technical issues that may arise, if any. Do not wait until 11:59 p.m. to submit for the first time as work will not be accepted late (after 11:59 p.m.) if something goes wrong.
- Assignments will not be accepted after the grace period ends without written instructor approval at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled due date. That is, approval must be obtained via email by 5:00 p.m. the day before an assignment is due.
- You are expected to complete all assignments within the course by the specified dates. Assignments that are not received by the time provided in the syllabus/course calendar will receive a zero (0) grade. That is, late assignments will not be accepted. Requirements for class assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/> .
- Please see university policy regarding university and medically excused absences. In the event of an unforeseen emergency (death in the immediate family, sudden illness, etc.), please contact your instructor as soon as possible. Be proactive and forthcoming. Failure to communicate with your instructor may result in a zero (0) grade.

To see the UF Policy on absences, review:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx#absences>

Make-Up Policy

Students are expected to make every effort to attend all class sessions. If you are unable to attend, you must proactively notify me by sending a message through Canvas prior to the class. Please note:

Students are permitted 2 excused absences per semester with prior approval from the instructor.

Exceeding 3 unexcused absences will result in your overall course grade dropping one letter grade.

Campus Health And Wellness Resources

Visit <https://one.uf.edu/whole-gator/topics> for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.

Please contact **UMatterWeCare** for additional and immediate support.

Software Use

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Course Assignments

Defining FYCS (23 Points)

Being able to define Family, Youth, and Community Sciences (FYCS) and articulate what the major means to you will assist in presenting this field in a clear, professional, and distinctive way. This assignment encourages students to reflect on the scope and purpose of FYCS, considering how it integrates family systems, youth development, and community engagement to improve quality of life.

Wheel of Life (9 Points)

The Wheel of Life is a visual tool used to assess how satisfied you are with different areas of your life. By rating each area, you can see where you're thriving and where you need to make changes.

Elevator Pitch (19 Points)

The elevator pitch is a brief, succinct sales pitch. It gets its name from the length of time it should take to complete the pitch; about the amount of time, it takes to ride several floors in an elevator (60 seconds). This pitch will be used in your ePortfolio as a marketing tool for future employers.

Content Quizzes (65 Points)

There will be 4 content quizzes over the course of the semester. Content quizzes may include multiple choice, matching, and short answer/fill in the blank questions. The quizzes will consist of ~10 - 15 questions.

Syllabus Quiz:

Students are required to complete a **Syllabus Quiz** to demonstrate understanding of course expectations, policies, and requirements. Please see the course calendar for the scheduled date. This assignment is worth **5 points**.

FYCS Practicum Quiz:

During Practicum Week, students will review and discuss all requirements for the Practicum Proposal. To ensure understanding of these expectations, students are required to complete the FYCS Practicum Quiz. This quiz will assess knowledge of practicum guidelines, proposal requirements, and professional responsibilities associated with the practicum experience. Please see the course calendar for the scheduled date. The quiz is worth **10 points** and must be completed by the posted deadline to receive credit.

Human Service Careers Quiz:

Students are required to complete the **Human Service Careers Quiz**, which assesses knowledge of career pathways, roles, and professional opportunities within the field of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences and related human service disciplines. This quiz is designed to help students connect course content to real-world applications and explore potential career directions. Please see the course calendar for the scheduled date. The quiz is worth **10 points** and must be completed by the posted deadline to receive credit.

Interview & Salary Negotiations Quiz:

Students are required to complete the **Interview & Salary Negotiations Quiz**, which assesses understanding of strategies for preparing for interviews and effectively negotiating salary and benefits. This quiz reinforces key professional development skills, including communication, self-advocacy, and career readiness. Please see the course calendar for the scheduled date. The quiz is worth **10 points** and must be completed by the posted deadline to receive credit.

Job Search & Networking Quiz:

Students are required to complete the **Job Search & Networking Quiz**, which evaluates understanding of strategies for conducting an effective job search and building professional networks. This quiz reinforces key career development skills, including identifying opportunities, leveraging connections, and using professional platforms to advance career goals. Please see the course calendar for the scheduled date. The quiz is worth **10 points** and must be completed by the posted deadline to receive credit.

Grad School 101 Quiz:

Students are required to complete the **Grad School 101 Quiz**, which assesses understanding of graduate school preparation, application processes, and expectations for advanced academic study. This quiz reinforces knowledge of key topics such as admissions requirements, funding opportunities, and strategies for success in graduate-level programs. Please see the course calendar for the scheduled date. The quiz is worth **10 points** and must be completed by the posted deadline to receive credit.

Alumni Interview Quiz:

Students are required to complete the **Alumni Interview Quiz**, which assesses understanding of insights gained from interviewing a program alumnus. This quiz reinforces connections between classroom learning and real-world professional experiences. For the quiz, students must submit a written reflection summary of an interview. The reflection should highlight key takeaways, lessons learned, and how the alumnus's experiences relate to the student's own academic and career goals. The reflection must be thoughtful, well-organized, and submitted by the posted deadline. Please see the course calendar for the scheduled date. The combined assignment is worth **10 points**.

Communication Challenge (37 Points)

Students will participate in a collaborative activity designed to test their problem-solving, communication, and teamwork skills in a fun and engaging way. The challenge will encourage creativity, critical thinking, and application of professional development concepts learned throughout the course. While the exact details will remain a surprise, students can expect an interactive experience that requires active participation and collaboration with peers.

Professional Skills Test (93 Points)

This assignment requires students to prepare for a circuit of 'tests' concerning several key professional skills. The Professional Circuit Test will take place during an assigned date and time (agreed upon by the instructor and student) and will include evaluations of the following professional skills: (1) résumé packet, (2) professional email to a prospective supervisor, (3) mock interview with a prospective supervisor.

Professional Electronic Portfolio (93 Points)

Students are required to create a professional portfolio using the guidelines discussed in class. The portfolio must be developed in a web-based electronic format, with Wix as the preferred platform. This portfolio should showcase academic, professional, and personal achievements in a clear and organized manner, reflecting the standards of professionalism emphasized throughout the course. The completed portfolio must be submitted as a link sent through Canvas email.

Career Reflection Essay (47 Points)

For this assignment, you are being asked to write a reflective career paper which demonstrates your thought process about your future. This is an exercise in taking stock of yourself as a candidate for future opportunities. *Simply writing about your hopes, dreams and plans will not be sufficient for a good grade.*

Resume Packet (93 Points)

As part of the Professional Skills Test assignment, students are required to submit a complete resume packet consisting of a resume, cover letter, and reference list. This packet may be general for future career goals or tailored to a specific opportunity. Students may use materials developed in a previous class or application (with permission of instructor); however, all submissions must follow the format discussed in class. This assignment is designed to strengthen professional readiness and ensure students can produce polished application materials that meet industry standards.

Practicum Assignment (37 Points)

For this assignment, you will need to re-write Practicum objectives using SMART objectives. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely. The most often reason Practicum proposals are not approved is due to poorly written objectives.

Trainings (56 Points)

Wix (19 points)

Using modern principles of web design, user experience, and digital communication, LinkedIn Learning's Wix training provides students with hands-on instruction in building professional websites. Through guided modules, learners practice and self-assess their ability to create, customize, and manage online platforms that can support career development, personal branding, and organizational outreach. This training emphasizes practical skills in design, functionality, and content management, helping students translate their ideas into polished digital spaces. Details regarding this training are available in our class Canvas Hub.

Creating a Career Plan (19 points)

Creating a Career Plan is a required training designed to help students and professionals take intentional steps toward building a successful future. The training equips individuals with strategies to identify career goals, assess strengths and interests, and develop actionable plans for advancement. Participants will learn how to explore opportunities, set realistic milestones, and adapt to changes in the workforce. This training emphasizes self-reflection, planning, and professional growth to ensure students are prepared for long-term success. Details regarding this training are found in our class Canvas Hub.

Leadership Presence (18 points)

Leadership Presence is a required training designed to help students strengthen their ability to communicate with confidence, build credibility, and inspire trust in professional settings. Through LinkedIn Learning modules, participants will explore strategies to enhance their personal presence, develop effective communication skills, and project professionalism in both individual and group contexts. The training emphasizes practical techniques for influencing others, managing impressions, and leading with authenticity. Details regarding this training are available in our class Canvas Hub.

Civic Literacy Completion (33 Points)

For this assignment, students are required to provide proof of completion of the Civic Literacy requirement, which is necessary for graduation in the upcoming semester. This documentation ensures that students have met the University's standards for civic knowledge and engagement. Completion of this requirement demonstrates readiness to participate as informed citizens and supports the overall goals of the FYCS program in preparing graduates for professional and community leadership.

Attendance & Participation (93 Points)

Attendance and active participation are required and count for a significant portion of the course grade. Students are expected to attend all scheduled lectures, group discussions, and required events, and to complete assignments on or before the posted due dates. Attendance will be recorded throughout the semester using varying methods.

Policy:

- Students are allowed 2 excused absences per semester with prior approval from the instructor. Examples include illness, medical appointments, family emergencies, or university-sanctioned events. Approval is at the instructor's discretion.
- After the 2 excused absences, the following rules apply:
 - Up to 3 total absences (excused or unexcused) are permitted. Exceeding this will result in a drop of full letter grade.
 - More than 5 absences without instructor approval (equivalent to two weeks of class) will result in failing the course, requiring the student to retake it the following semester. Any student who misses more than **5 class days without instructor permission** (equivalent to two weeks in a semester) will **fail the course** and be required to retake it the following semester. *No exceptions.*
- The instructor reserves the right to assign **zero points** for incomplete attendance assignments if the student did not attend the associated lectures or events.

