

Course Syllabus

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Welcome

Welcome to *Educ 399 Independent Study: Capstone in Education*. In this course we'll explore your past, present, and future. During your undergraduate studies, you've developed many knowledge, skills, and dispositions. In this course, you'll apply what you've learned as you enter the next phase of your career and your life.

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- (<mailto:kbuchana@uwsp.edu>) Office phone: (715) 346-2906 [is usually faster. In the subject line of the email, please include "205."]
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Intended Learning Outcomes

If you bring sufficient ability and apply reasonable effort to this course, you will improve your demonstrable knowledge, skills, and dispositions in how you:

1. Understand and appreciate how certain significant experiences shaped who you are today
2. Understand, appreciate, and apply your strengths
3. Prepare to apply your strengths, to be successful in your career and your personal life

This is the central enduring understanding I want you to develop:

I am most likely to lead a happy, productive life by understanding and appreciating where I come from, who I am, and where I want to go. Past experiences shaped me, including nurturing my distinct strengths as an individual. Moving forward, I should apply my strengths mindfully and strategically in my career and personal life.

This course focuses on these TASC Model Core Teaching Standards:

2. Learning Differences. The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.
10. Leadership and Collaboration. The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

Independent Study

Most of this course is online. We'll meet face-to-face at least twice: to discuss your choice of inspirational experiences, and to discuss your compiled essays. However, this is an independent study, which puts a great burden on you as a student to co-own the experience and be responsible for your learning. With that in mind, here is the advice I provide in a 100% online course.

Learning Online

This course is entirely online. While there are many advantages to this approach, there are some significant challenges. Unfortunately, online courses often have a higher drop or failure rate than face-to-face courses. There are some simple steps we can take to ensure you have a successful experience.

Since I won't be lecturing or facilitating other face-to-face activities, it's very important that you complete all the readings carefully. By "carefully," I mean taking enough time to process the ideas and check your understanding. For some readings, I provide study questions or other tools to help you check your understanding.

Since we don't meet as a class, it's very important that you communicate with me as needed. Email is an excellent way to reach me. I'm also happy to make an appointment to meet by phone or in person. Please don't hesitate to contact me, with questions about the course or assignments, questions about the reading or other content, problems in your life, etc. Don't worry about looking foolish or wasting my time.

Please read the directions for each assignment carefully. Depending on the assignment, you will email me, submit in Canvas, post to D2L under Discussions, or submit to the D2L Dropbox. If you are emailing me, please send one assignment per email, and use the correct subject. You can lose points by not submitting an assignment correctly.

Twitter

I have a Twitter feed that sometimes includes issues related to this course. I have two main goals for using Twitter: use a newer technology in my teaching and build connections with students. If you're already savvy with Twitter, I'm [@reach2grow](#).

I never post essential information only on Twitter. I use email and in-class announcements to keep you informed. If you follow my Twitter feed, I hope you find it interesting. But if you don't follow it, it won't interfere with your success in this course in any way.

Course Requirements & Grading

Directions and rubrics for all the assignments are in Canvas. I'm always happy to answer questions on an assignment, so please don't hesitate to ask. **I care about your success.** I'd rather clear up your confusion today than deduct points on an assignment tomorrow.

Please read the directions for each assignment carefully. Depending the assignment, you will email me, post to Canvas under Discussions, or submit to the Canvas dropbox. If you are emailing me, please send one assignment per email, and use the correct subject. You can lose points by not submitting an assignment correctly.

Every assignment is worth 1 point, with an unlimited option to resubmit. You may resubmit an assignment until I score it as 1 point.

For an independent study, I handle assessment differently. The Assignments page in the Base Camp has "Target Due Dates." I recommend trying to complete assignments at least as quickly as this pace. However, there is no penalty for submitting an assignment after a target due date.

Please save all email and assignments for this course until you see a final grade on your transcript or Degree Progress Report and you are satisfied with your grade. This includes email from me and email from Canvas. Please don't tell me "I did that but I deleted it."

Textbook & Supplies

There is one required textbook for this course. You choose between one of two books:

Rath, T. (2007). *StrengthsFinder 2.0*. New York: Gallup Press.

or

Liesveld, R., & Miller, J.A., with Robison, J. (2005). *Teach With Your Strengths: How Great Teachers Inspire Their Students*. New York: Gallup Press.

Amazon has both [StrengthsFinder 2.0](https://smile.amazon.com/StrengthsFinder-2-0-Tom-Rath-ebook/dp/B001CDZZI6/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1475252508&sr=8-1) [_ \(https://smile.amazon.com/StrengthsFinder-2-0-Tom-Rath-ebook/dp/B001CDZZI6/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1475252508&sr=8-1\)](https://smile.amazon.com/StrengthsFinder-2-0-Tom-Rath-ebook/dp/B001CDZZI6/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1475252508&sr=8-1) and [Teach with Strengths](https://smile.amazon.com/Teach-Your-Strengths-Teachers-Students-ebook/dp/B001UHOQ7A/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1475252457&sr=1-1) [_ \(https://smile.amazon.com/Teach-Your-Strengths-Teachers-Students-ebook/dp/B001UHOQ7A/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1475252457&sr=1-1\)](https://smile.amazon.com/Teach-Your-Strengths-Teachers-Students-ebook/dp/B001UHOQ7A/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1475252457&sr=1-1). You must purchase a new copy of either book. Each book comes with a unique access code for you to complete the StrengthsFinder online self-assessment. The code for a used copy probably won't work (if it has a code at all). Both books are also available on Kindle (with a code). FYI, you can read Kindle books on a computer, tablet, smartphone, etc., using the free Kindle app.

Which book should you choose?

- If you're continuing in a **career in education**, I highly recommend *Teach With Your Strength*. The first part of the book has some of the best, concise writing about teaching and learning that I've ever read. The second part of the book offers advice for understanding and applying your strengths in the special context of education.
- If you're transitioning to a **career beyond education**, I recommend *StrengthsFinder 2.0*. It offers better advice for understanding and applying your strengths in more general contexts, especially the business world.

There may be additional readings available free via Canvas or links to external sources.

Please let me know if you have difficulty getting supplies for this class, and I will discretely help you.

Dispositions & Conduct

I view my students as pre-professionals or current professionals. Your conduct in this course should demonstrate your qualifications for professional responsibilities (e.g., teaching and guiding young people). I will treat you as a professional, and I expect you to demonstrate your qualifications in many ways.

I especially encourage you to consider your professional presence and tone. This includes both face-to-face and online interactions with me and with your peers. For example, if you're teaching or presenting in a face-to-face class, I encourage you to have a professional appearance (e.g., business casual clothing). As another example, when composing an email, I encourage you to include a salutation (e.g., "Dear Dr. Buchanan"), complete sentences with correct conventions (e.g., spelling), and a signature (e.g., "Sincerely, Ima Student").

In a School of Education course, if you have concerns about the instructor you have the right to communicate with the Associate Dean: Lynda Fernholz, (lfernhol@uwsp.edu, 715-346-3223).

Class Climate

I'm dedicated to creating safe, inclusive, welcoming classes in which all students can succeed. This course is a Safe Zone for LGBTQ issues and more. I won't condone disrespectful or discriminatory language or behavior. I extend an open door invitation to all my students. If you feel unwelcome or unsafe in this course, or you have any concerns about your ability to succeed, please let me know. We can address the issue together, confidentially.

As a teacher, I align my policies and choices with my university's guidance, including the [UWSP Community Bill of Rights and Responsibilities](http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Pages/rightsandresponsibilities.aspx) (<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Pages/rightsandresponsibilities.aspx>).

Exceptional Needs

I'm dedicated to accommodating the needs of my students. I don't believe that equal treatment is the same as fair treatment. A course requirement like a deadline may be unfair to you, based on a life event or a disability. If I agree that the requirement is unfair, then I'm happy to make an accommodation. Here are some exceptional needs I have accommodated in the past: learning disability, physical disability, chronic illness, death in the family, car accident, sick child.

As a teacher, I align my policies and choices with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a federal law that requires educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. [Here is more information about UWSP's relevant policies](http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyinfo.pdf) (<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyinfo.pdf>). If you have a disability and want an accommodation, please register with the [Disability Services and Assistive](#)

[Technology Office](http://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx) (<http://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx>) and then contact me. If you're unfamiliar or uneasy with this process, please contact me anyways and we'll work through it together.

When contacting me about a life event or other exceptional need, please suggest the specific accommodation(s) you want (e.g., turning in an assignment late without a penalty, taking an Incomplete in this course).

Integrity

I expect you to come to class promptly and regularly, prepared to actively and fully participate in the activities. I expect you to treat me, your colleagues, and anyone else with respect and tolerance. I expect you to take responsibility for managing your life so that you complete all assignments on time. If you are unable to meet these expectations (e.g., attendance, assignments), I expect you to communicate with me and anyone else affected (e.g., your colleagues) as soon as possible, and to suggest a clear, fair plan to address the problem.

I expect you to complete your assignments with integrity. For most assignments, you will be free to use resources and people inside and outside of this course. Some assignments may even require this. However, I expect you to give proper credit for anything that isn't your own original work. I urge you to make intellectual integrity a central part of your professional identity. Professionals in a variety of fields routinely use other people's work (e.g., lesson plans in education). But accidentally or deliberately leaving off credit is professionally and morally wrong. I use anti-plagiarism tools. I don't expect my students to plagiarize others' work; rather, you can be confident that no one is plagiarizing your work (e.g., in a future class). If you are unclear on how to give proper credit, please ask me before turning in the assignment.

As a teacher, I align my policy on academic misconduct (e.g., cheating) with [Chapter 14 of the UWSP Bill of Rights and Responsibilities](http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf) (<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>). This is my general policy: I will allow you to redo the relevant assignment for no more than 50% possible, and you won't be eligible to earn higher than a B+ in this course (UWSP 14.04 (1) (d, e)). I will honor your right to a conference with me, to a written report from me, and to contest my decision (UWSP 14.06 (1, 3)).

I take cheating personally: it upsets and frustrates me. I care very much about your learning, not just scores. If you cheat, you hurt my feelings.

Dispositions Model

As a teacher, I align my policies and choices with my department's expectations. The School of Education has adopted [a model of the dispositions](http://education.uwsp.edu/central/soe_dispositions_model.pdf) (http://education.uwsp.edu/central/soe_dispositions_model.pdf) we expect from our students and graduates. I don't expect you to be at the final "Mastering" level in your dispositions. Instead, I offer this model for your own self-evaluation and goal-setting.

Acknowledgments

Many people have helped me develop my teaching identity and my materials. I am particularly indebted to: Lisa Bardon, Maysee Herr, Pat Shaw, Joy O'Neil, Carl O'Neil, Maysee Herr, Lynn Payne, and my other colleagues at UWSP; Rand Spiro and Jere Brophy at Michigan State University; and Manuel Mateo and Mary Jane Pelson in Portland, Oregon.

Course Summary:

Date	Details
	 Choose Your Inspirational Experiences (https://uwstp.instructure.com/courses/131932/assignments/419533)
	 Compile Essays (https://uwstp.instructure.com/courses/131932/assignments/459783)
	 Looking Back Essay (https://uwstp.instructure.com/courses/131932/assignments/446678)
	 Looking Forward Essay (https://uwstp.instructure.com/courses/131932/assignments/446723)
	 Meet with Kym #1 (https://uwstp.instructure.com/courses/131932/assignments/419554)
	 Meet with Kym #2 (https://uwstp.instructure.com/courses/131932/assignments/446728)
	 Respond to the Syllabus (https://uwstp.instructure.com/courses/131932/assignments/419448)
	 Who I Am Essay (https://uwstp.instructure.com/courses/131932/assignments/446692)