

ICSSC 305 Career, Culture, and Community

Summer 2025 | Tuesdays, 7:00pm - 9:00pm
Washington Community Scholars' Center
Eastern Mennonite University
Professor: Ryan M. Good, Ph.D. (ryan.good@emu.edu)

"You need a manifesto to recruit yourself into exercising your power."

- Charlotte Burgess-Auburn

Introduction

This class is structured around the project of writing a personal manifesto, as laid out in *You Need a Manifesto* by Charlotte Burgess-Auburn (2022). A manifesto, as she describes it, is an articulation of what you believe that can serve as a guide for making the decisions that shape your life. In her words: a manifesto is "a statement of purpose and a script for action" (p. 7).

Burgess-Auburn frames a process that moves through five stages, four of which create a loose thematic structure for this class: (1) Consider, (2) Collect, (3) Curate, and (4) Cultivate. In other words, we start by considering what's important to us, then we collect examples of language, images, and ideas that reflect these values, then we curate that collection, distilling it to that which most closely aligns with what is important to us, and finally we cultivate the manifesto we have written by sharing it and receiving and integrating the engagement of others.

We will follow these four stages in this class as we do the work of developing statements of purpose and scripts for action that will guide us personally and professionally. Integrated into this process, we will be meeting with two guest speakers, doing informational interviews, developing cover letters and resumes, and reflecting on what we're learning at internships, in the house, and in the city. This class is an invitation into the empowering work of personal and professional discernment, goal setting, and growth aligned with those things that are most important to us.

Course description and outcomes

This course supports and builds on the intercultural experiences of the WCSC program, including living in multicultural DC, working at an internship, and living in community at the WCSC house. In the class, students develop skills in leadership, communication, and handling conflict. Together, they will discuss goals and orienting values for their vocational identities, engage with guest speakers who share about their own career trajectories, and build nuts-and-bolts professional development skills, including conducting an informational interview and developing a cover letter and resume. This course is required for all students enrolled in the WCSC program.

- 1) Students will leave the WCSC program having processed and reflected critically on challenges, learning, and personal growth in the context of their internships, the WCSC house, and the city.

- 2) Students will develop skills in communication, understanding difference, and handling conflict through the experience of living in community in the WCSC house.
- 3) Students will be able to articulate the meaning of work, what makes work meaningful, and the roles that they hope professional or vocational work will play in their lives.
- 4) Students will develop a critical consciousness around styles of leadership and organizational cultures that reflect their own values and to which they aspire.
- 5) Students will develop confidence, experience, and skills for networking and informational interviewing to advance their career and vocational goals.
- 6) Students will learn to craft an effective cover letter and resume.
- 7) Students will learn to develop and articulate personal and professional goals, both near term and longer term.

EMU Core Community Learning objectives

In achieving the following objectives, this course satisfies the Community Learning requirement of the EMU Core.

- 1) Students will demonstrate community involvement.
- 2) Students will reflect on issues encountered in their involvement and integrate those reflections into further learning in that course.

EMU Intercultural Programs goals for cross cultural learning:

- 1) Cross cultural understanding – Students will develop an openness to new ways of experiencing the world through observing and interacting with people whose values, communication patterns, ways of knowing, and world view have been shaped by different cultures.
- 2) Cultural self-awareness – Students will develop an ability to understand and value their own cultures alongside the cultures of others.
- 3) Global awareness – Students will learn how social systems, structures, and institutions have differentially shaped the lives of people representing other racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and positionalities.
- 4) Religious understanding and formation – Students will reflect on the ways their faith, spirituality, and values differ from and are reflected in the lives of those around them.
- 5) Integration of learning – Students will critically engage the implications of what they are learning for their own lives, direction, life choices, and world view.

EMU Core cross-cultural learning objectives

- 1) Students will develop an awareness of others in relationship to themselves.
- 2) Students will develop an understanding of interconnectedness of social contexts, systems, or institutions between cultures.

Course outline

Week	Date	Topic and due dates
1	6/2 - 6/8	Orientation
2	6/10	Consider: Unearthing our values for work and life <i>Sun: Reflective journal #1</i>
3	6/17	Consider: Setting internship goals and navigating our biases <i>Sun: Reflective journal #2</i> <i>Mon: Goal setting reflections</i> <i>Mon: Informational interview plan</i>
4	6/24	Collect: What makes work meaningful? <i>Guest speaker: Bailey Dunn Philips</i> <i>Sun: Reflective journal #3</i> <i>Mon: Responses to Callings reading</i>
5	7/1	Collect: Claiming my strengths and approach to leadership <i>Sun: Reflective journal #4</i> <i>Mon: Target job opening and description</i> <i>Mon: CliftonStrengths reflection</i>
6	7/8	Curate: Effective job documents and the art of self-presentation <i>Sun: Reflective journal #5</i> <i>Mon: Community life self-reflection and assessment</i>
	Fri-Sun 7/11-7/13	Retreat in West Virginia
7	7/15	Curate: Taking care of yourself and navigating the unexpected <i>Guest speaker: Bianca Ward</i> <i>Sun: Reflective journal #6</i>
8	7/22	Cultivate: Workshopping cover letters and resumes <i>Sun: Reflective journal #7</i> <i>Mon: Cover letter and resume</i>
9	7/29	Cultivate: Expanding your network <i>Sun: Reflective journal #8</i> <i>Mon: Informational interview report</i>
10	8/5	Cultivate: Revisiting our values <i>Sun: Final reflection paper</i> <i>Mon: Final manifesto</i>
	Wed 8/6	The Final Feast

Course requirements

Preparation for and participation in class sessions (26%) – Preparation for class—including readings and assigned written reflections—and active engagement during class meetings and on retreat is expected of all students. I recognize that different ones of us find it easier to participate in different ways and that active listening is just as important as talking in any discussion. I will do my best to facilitate a variety of types of engagement. For full credit, however, I expect that your body language will communicate that you are present and engaged, and that you will make a diligent effort to respond to guest speakers and to participate in discussion. Please note that completion of community roles and engagement in community life are also included in your participation grade in this class. You will complete a self-reflection and assessment of community life and a subsequent 1:1 check-in meeting with me during Week 6. A grading rubric is posted on Moodle.

Weekly reflective journals (24%) – You will write and submit weekly journals. Your journal submissions are due on Moodle by **midnight on Sunday evenings**. For full credit, journal entries should demonstrate careful observation and thoughtful reflection about your WCSC experience. Journals should be a minimum of 300 words and should reflect the mechanics of proper writing. Journals are evaluated on a three-point scale. A grading rubric is posted on Moodle. You are invited (but not required) to consider engaging one of the suggested prompts at the end of the syllabus.

Cover letter and resume (15%) – Find a current job opening that interests you and prepare a cover letter and resume that you could use to apply for that position. You will submit the job description of the position you have identified (copy and paste it into a document) by midnight on **June 30**, along with an explanation of why you are interested in the position and why you are a strong candidate (250 words beyond the job description). Submit your cover letter and resume through Moodle by midnight on **July 21** and bring two hard copies of each document to class on **July 22**. We will workshop your job documents during class. A grading rubric is posted on Moodle.

Informational interview (10%) – Identify a professional contact who you respect, whose position or career path interests you, or who you would like to know better (or who you would like to have know *you* better). Submit a paragraph by midnight on **June 16** explaining who this person is and why you would like to interview them (250 words). Then set up and conduct the informational interview. You will submit a paragraph reflecting on the interview by midnight on **July 28**, including your assessment of how it went, the individual's name, why their experience is of relevance to you, and the date of your interview (250 words). We will discuss your interviews during class that week. A grading rubric is posted on Moodle.

Manifesto (10%) – Your final manifesto is due by midnight on **August 4**. You should submit either a text file or an image file that clearly conveys your manifesto. You will share your manifesto and reflections on the process during our last class period on **August 5**. For full credit, your manifesto should demonstrate meaningful effort and reflective work.

Final reflection paper (15%) – At the end of the semester, you will submit a final reflection paper that is an opportunity for stepping back and reflecting on your WCSC experience.

Assignment details are at the end of the syllabus. Your paper is due on Moodle by midnight on **August 3**. A grading rubric is posted on Moodle.

Texts

You will engage with two physical texts during this class, which WCSC will loan to you. All other assigned readings, podcasts, and videos can be accessed electronically through Moodle. Additional readings may be added over the course of the semester.

Burgess-Auburn, C. (2022). *You need a manifesto: How to craft your convictions and put them to work*. Ten Speed Press.

Isay, D. (2016). *Callings: The purpose and passion of work*. Penguin Books.

Policies and expectations

Come to talk to me

I am more than happy to speak with you about these courses, questions about assignments, or other concerns you may have. You are always welcome to stop by my office and ask if I'm available to talk. Best practice is to text me first, to save you the steps if I'm in a meeting or for another reason unavailable. We can also set up a time to talk in the future, go for a walk, or get coffee.

Respect for each other

I will do my best to facilitate a space where all voices and perspectives are respected. I expect the same from you. You do not have to agree with other people's opinions, but you do need to practice respectful listening and constructive dialogue. If at any point you feel that you have been disrespected or are uncomfortable with something that happened during class, please come and talk to me about it.

Electronics in the classroom

The goal of this class is to be present to and engaged with the work of learning that we are pursuing together. Thus, I ask that phones be on silent and put away during our class meetings. Laptops and tablets may be used to refer to readings or notes, but—for the sake of our time together—unless I specifically ask you to do so, internet or social media browsing are not allowed. I will endeavor to hold myself similarly accountable.

Academic integrity

At EMU, academic accountability means that community members are accountable to themselves, their colleagues, the university, and the fields of study in which they engage. To be academically accountable means to be able to give a transparent account of the academic work that we do. It means that we “leave tracks” and create trails so that others may learn where we started and how we ended up where we are. A transparent account for academic work involves producing and submitting one's own work in papers, essays, projects, quizzes and tests; correctly and consistently acknowledging sources used; factually representing research results, one's credentials, and facts or opinions; and appropriately documenting use of technology.

Generative AI (gAI) systems are rapidly improving in their abilities to assist us in different stages of the writing process. My expectation is that you document your use of gAI in any written assignments submitted in these classes. Simply include a footnote describing briefly the ways you used gAI in your process. I support the use of gAI in the writing process up to but not including the crafting of the words that you submit for a written assignment. That is, *do not copy and paste text output from a gAI system*. Unacknowledged use of gAI in developing or producing written work will be treated as plagiarism. Responses to violations of academic integrity will be handled according to the [Academic Accountability Policy and Procedures](#).

Late assignments

Unexcused late submissions of assignments will be penalized up to 10% per day. Late submissions of response blogs are eligible for up to half credit.

Grading scale

A (93-100); A- (90-92); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D+ (67-69); D (60-66); F (59 or below)

Disability accommodations

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your work in this course, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of Academic Access (<http://www.emu.edu/academics/access/>) on the third floor of the Hartzler library. This office will work with you to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. All information and documentation is treated confidentially.

Title IX

It is important for you to know that all faculty members are required to report known or alleged incidents of sexual violence (including sexual assault, domestic/relationship violence, stalking). That means that I cannot keep information about sexual violence confidential if you share that information with me. For example, if you inform me of an issue of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or discrimination I will keep the information as private as I can, but I am required to bring it to the attention of the institution's Title IX Coordinator. Incidents that have occurred on campus, at a campus event, and/or while a student at EMU require follow up by the Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to talk to the Title IX Coordinator directly, Sarah Olejniczak can be reached at 540-432-4849 or titleixcoordinator@emu.edu. Additionally, you can also report incidents or complaints through our online portal at <http://emu.edu/safecampus/>. You may report, confidentially, incidents of sexual violence if you speak to Counseling Services counselors, Campus Ministries pastors, and Health Services personnel providing clinical care. These individuals, as well as the Title IX Coordinator, can provide you with information on both internal and external support resources.

Please refer to the Student Handbook which can be found at <https://emu.edu/studentlife/> for additional policies, information, and resources available to you.

Course schedule

June 2 – June 8 Week 1 – Orientation

June 10 Week 2 – Consider: Unearthing our values for work and life

Values that guide your work and life. Communicating professionally. Introduction to informational interviewing.

Read:

You Need a Manifesto Chapter 1 (Commence) and Chapter 2 (Consider)

How to Ask for an Informational Interview (and Get a “Yes”) (2024). *The Muse*.

5 Questions to Ask During an “Informational Interview” (2021). *Harvard Business Review*.

Write:

(Sun) Reflective journal #1

June 17 Week 3 – Consider: Setting internship goals and navigating our biases

Your goals for this internship. Biases that shape us. Working with people who are different from me.

Read:

You Need a Manifesto Chapter 3 (Collect)

How to Write Successful Internship Goals (2025). *Indeed*.

Write:

(Sun) Reflective journal #2

(Mon) In preparation for setting goals for your internship, respond to the following questions:

- 1) What technical skills do you want to build through your internship?*
- 2) What background knowledge would help you perform better?*
- 3) What soft skills (i.e., interpersonal skills) would help you in this work?*
- 4) Who are two people at your internship that you’d like to know better?*

(Mon) Informational interview plan: Submit a paragraph explaining who you will interview for your informational interview and why you would like to interview them (250 words).

June 24

Week 4 – Collect: What makes work meaningful?

What kinds of work do you find most meaningful? How important should work be as a source of meaning in your life?

Guest speaker: Bailey Dunn Philips (She/They), Higher Educational Administrator and Student Advocate, Small Business Owner/Operator, Permaculturist, and Mom

Read:

Callings: The purpose and passion of work, by Dave Isay (2016). *(Select and read 10 conversations from this book.)*

Write:

(Sun) Reflective journal #3

(Mon) (1) List the 10 conversations you read (name and career from the table of contents). (2) What takeaways stand out to you about what meaningful work looks like? (250 words)

July 1

Week 5 – Collect: Claiming my strengths and approach to leadership

What strengths do you bring to the table? What styles of leadership do you admire?

Complete:

Take the CliftonStrengths Assessment, using the provided access code.

Submit:

(Sun) Reflective journal #4

(Mon) Target job opening and description: Submit the job description of the position you have identified (copy and paste it into a document), along with an explanation of why you are interested in the position and why you are a strong candidate (250 words beyond the job description).

(Mon) After taking the CliftonStrengths Assessment with the provided access code, read about the five strengths the assessment identified for you and write a reflection responding to these results (250 words).

July 8

Week 6 – Curate: Effective job documents and the art of self-presentation

Telling the story that gets you the job. Distilling your pitch.

Read:

You Need a Manifesto Chapter 4 (Curate)

How to Write a Cover Letter: Your Full Guide (with Tips and Examples) (2025). *The Muse.*

How To Make a Comprehensive Resume (With Examples) (2025). *Indeed*.

How to Write a Resume That Stands Out. *Harvard University Graduate School of Design*.

Submit:

(Sun) Reflective journal #5

(Mon) Community life self-reflection and assessment: Submit completed response on Moodle and sign up for a 1:1 meeting with Ryan.

**FRI - SUN
July 11-13**

WCSC Retreat in West Virginia

July 15

Week 7 – Curate: Taking care of yourself and navigating the unexpected

Balancing our work with caring for our families, friends, and ourselves. Figuring out what's next after the unexpected.

Guest speaker: Bianca Ward

Submit:

(Sun) Reflective journal #6

July 22

Week 8 – Cultivate: Workshopping cover letters and resumes

Peer workshop of cover letters and resumes

Submit:

(Sun) Reflective journal #7

(Mon) Cover letter and resume: Submit your cover letter and resume through Moodle and bring two hard copies of each document to class. We will workshop your job documents during class.

July 29

Week 9 – Cultivate: Expanding your network

Reporting on informational interviews. Communicating with and around power.

Come to class prepared to report on your informational interview.

Read:

You Need a Manifesto Chapter 5 (Cultivate)

Listen:

Knock Knock! Who's th— MANTERRUPTING COWORKER (2018). *Battle Tactics For Your Sexist Workplace* [Audio podcast].

Reflect:

What is your response to the podcast? Does it describe dynamics that you have witnessed or experienced? Whose responsibility is it to change assumptions and behaviors shaping whose voice is given greater authority in a group?

Submit:

*(Sun) **Reflective journal #8:** Write a letter to yourself in which you tell your future self the top 10 things you have learned this summer—insights that you don't want to forget. I will be printing out what you turn in and physically mailing this to you via USPS five months from now, so please include in your journal entry the address you want me to send it to (where you will be in mid-January 2026).*

*(Mon) **Informational interview report:** Submit a paragraph reflecting on your informational interview, including your assessment of how it went, the individual's name, why their experience is of relevance to you, and the date of your interview (250 words).*

August 5

Week 10 – Cultivate: Revisiting our values

Sharing final manifestos. Reflections on the summer.

Submit:

*(Sun) **Final reflection paper:** Assignment details at the end of the syllabus.*

*(Mon) **Final manifesto***

**WEDNESDAY
August 6**

The Final Feast

Optional journal prompts to consider...

Internship

- What is something you feel you've learned about yourself at your internship (e.g., the way you interact with others, the way you like to work, or the kind of place you'd like to work)?
- What at your internship challenges you the most? What gives you the most energy?
- What is most meaningful about working at your internship? Why?
- What areas of personal or professional growth are you working on right now?
- How has your internship affirmed, challenged, or created new ideas about where you would like to go with your career?
- Who at your internship is somebody you would like to emulate in your own career and vocation? Why? (Conversely: are there people whose examples you don't want to follow?)
- Has your internship (or moving around the city) created any dilemmas for you that you are wrestling with? Are there questions or issues you'd like to discuss with the group?

Group life

- What goals do you have for yourself in the context of group life? How will you (or how have you) worked toward achieving those goals?
- What are you learning about living with other people?
- What role(s) would you say you play in the context of this group house? How do you feel about this? Why?
- What dynamics or situations in the house are most challenging for you? How do you work with these challenges?
- Are there things going on outside of this house or outside of DC that are affecting you?
- What are you, as a group, doing well? What could you be doing better? What needs to happen (and what steps can you take) for the house to do those things better?

Integrating your WCSC experience

- What are some things you'd be excited to say you had a chance to do while you were in DC? (Or, what exciting things *have* you done that you'd recommend to others?)
- What are you thinking about your future? What things will be important to you in your future jobs, your future lifestyle, your future housemates or partners?
- What has surprised you most this semester?
- What stands out to you as a key learning or area of growth that you've experienced while you're in DC?

Final reflection paper

In *You Need a Manifesto*, Charlotte Burgess-Auburn states, “Synthesizing new experiences and knowledge into new beliefs and actions can only happen if you take the time to reflect on the new stuff and actually process it into the old” (p.84).

She also notes, “The things you learn can change you if you let them.” I am interested in hearing about what things you “let in” this term and how they might have changed you or altered your views.

Your final assignment asks you to step back and reflect on your WCSC experience. Please write a reflective essay in response to each of the following prompts, some of which are drawn from *You Need a Manifesto*:

- 1) **What have you learned about what you want to do?** How has this WCSC term affected your thoughts and plans about the type of work you want to do? About what makes work meaningful for you?
- 2) **What has changed about your perceptions, beliefs or values?** Tell the story of where you started on a particular issue and how you got to where you are now at the end of the term. What were the key factors that led to the shift?
- 3) **What does good leadership look like?** What characteristics of good leadership are most important to you? In what ways would you like to grow as a leader? How has your WCSC experience affected your vision for effective leadership?
- 4) **What new ideas do you want to champion?** How will you do so? Why are they important to you?
- 5) **What new behaviors do you want to put into practice going forward?** Be specific about what they are how you will fit them into your life and routines post-WCSC.

Include the questions as headings within your paper, separating the five essays. Each essay should be 300-600 words in length. In total, your paper should be between 1,800 and 3,000 words (approximately 6 to 10 pages, double spaced) and should follow proper rules of style and grammar.

Submit your final reflection paper on Moodle **by midnight on Sunday, August 3.**