

IDS 142: Living a Life of Significance Fall 2022

Welcome to The Hilltop! At BSC, our mission is to prepare students "for lives of significance." But what does that mean to you, and how do we accomplish this goal? How does one engage in various communities, support diverse views, and still live with integrity? How do the learning experiences and choices in college relate to crafting and living a life of significance? This course takes up these questions as a way of exploring the implications of joining a community of learners at Birmingham-Southern who prioritize living a life of significance. By the end of this course, you will have articulated for yourself what it means to live a life of significance and identified specific strategies for creating that life.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Mon/Wed, 11:00 – 12:20pm, Humanities Center 227

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Professor: Dr. Teddy Champion
Office: Humanities Center 121
Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday, 12:30pm – 1:30pm in person
Tuesday/Thursday 9:00 – 11:00am via Teams, and by appointment
Contact: rtchampi@bsc.edu
205-226-7841

I will often send out email announcements or lecture supplements via email. Plan on checking your bsc.edu email account frequently during the semester. We may also use Moodle to send out class emails.

OFFICE VISITS ARE HIGHLY ENCOURAGED!!

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is divided into three units, each of which adds to and builds on what it means to live a life of significance. **Unit 1** explores what living a life of significance means to you based on your own experiences and your analysis of interviews, podcasts, and other materials. **Unit 2** further investigates how others have lived their lives and by implication how they have defined living a life of significance. In **Unit 3**, we evaluate the extent to which specific communities support or constrain the possibility of living a life of significance. As part of this unit, you craft a flexible curricular and co-curricular plan for your time at BSC and living a life of significance.

PREREQUISITES: None

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course, we will:

1. Frame useful questions about learning and living a life of significance
2. Draw inferences based on experiences and observations
3. Compare, analyze, and synthesize across different examples and cases
4. Evaluate and critique situations based on justifiable criteria
5. Make short and long-term plans for effective learning and living a life of significance, including how to:
 - a. read, study, and manage time effectively
 - b. reflect on curricular and co-curricular engagement choices
 - c. identify and access mentors and mentoring relationships
 - d. engage responsibly, respectfully, and critically with a community of learners
 - e. articulate the relationships between learning in college and subsequent career and professional achievements and civic contributions

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

This course is about your success, and my role is to do all I can to ensure that success. I firmly believe that all students, given the right resources and conditions, can learn and succeed in this course and at BSC. My job is to provide the necessary resources and guidance to ensure everyone in the class can achieve at a high level. That includes structured use of class time, thought-provoking assignments and challenges, and articulated criteria for success. I have high expectations—I expect that you can and will be motivated to strengthen your critical thinking, writing, and oral communication skills and will take up the challenges presented by the assignments. I will collaborate with you to refine and clarify the work we are doing together. I value your perceptions and how they inform our investigations and considerations. More important to me are the questions we might raise together through our collaborative investigations as a class.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Burnett, Bill, & Dave Evans, *Designing Your Life*, 2016

Burnett, Bill, & Dave Evans, *Designing Your Life Workbook: A Framework for Building a Life You Can Thrive In*, 2018

Green, John, *The Anthropocene Reviewed: Essays on a Human Centered Planet*, 2021

Tyson, Neil deGrasse, *The Sky is Not the Limit*, 2004

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Responsibility 1: Attendance, Participation, & Engagement	16%
Responsibility 2: Mini-Assignments for Formative Feedback on Main Assignments	15%
Celebration 1: Defining the Life of Significance	12%
Celebration 2: Interview Project	15%
Celebration 3: Group Synthesis Presentation	12%
Celebration 4: Significance in Community	15%
Celebration 5: Curricular and Co-Curricular Plan	15%
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100%	

MAJOR COURSE ACTIVITIES AND REQUIREMENTS

This course requires attendance and participation at every class session; reading assigned pages from handouts and articles online; and group collaboration during class time and in out-of-class meetings. We call our assignments “Celebrations of Learning”! Below is a brief description of graded work, and I will hand out more detailed guidelines later in the term. My advice is to review these projects well in advance, put them on your academic calendar, and begin to plot your workload in each class you are taking across the semester.

Responsibility 1: Attendance/Participation/Engagement is a subjective grade based on your willingness to show enthusiasm in class and participate in class discussions. **ACTIVE AND INFORMED PARTICIPATION!** Diligent attendance is absolutely required. Tardiness is not tolerated. Absences, tardiness, sleeping, checking phones, etc., will all be noted and will affect your grade. Simply being present in class is not sufficient to receive an excellent grade. You must also make informed, meaningful, and consistent contributions to class discussion. Don't be shy, because your contribution to our class discussions is very important! Reading and discussing our writing are group activities, and your conscientious participation will be factored into your final grade. *Come to every class with something to say, ready to raise your hand, and engage in dialogue.*

Part of this responsibility includes reading assigned pages *before the due date*, and being ready to discuss the readings with our class. I have been known to give reading quizzes just to make sure you are keeping up.

Neil deGrasse Tyson's book, *The Sky is Not the Limit: Adventures of an Urban Astrophysicist*, at first might seem like a book for a science class, but I like it for our class because Tyson gains inspiration from his research to contemplate humanity's place in the big picture. I have come to the conclusion that scientists and social scientists have as much of a claim to the title of "philosopher" as people who actually call themselves philosophers.

The title *The Anthropocene Reviewed* might be intimidating at first, but "Anthropocene" simply refers to human activity and its impact on the natural world. Basically, John Green's book is a fun romp through different human experiences that we can discuss and review for ourselves. We will read some of these short chapters together, and then you will choose a couple of chapters to read with a small group and report back to the class to help generate discussion.

Designing Your Life (the book and the workbook) will give us an opportunity to think about ways to plan for our life of significance. It is not meant to give detailed prescriptions that you must follow, but my goal with this resource is to inspire you to be intentional about your short-term and long-term plans (knowing that you can always edit the plan in the future).

You will be allowed two unexcused absences this semester without incurring any grade penalty. Only absences with legitimate medical documentation or for legitimate college-related events will be excused. If you must miss a class due to involvement with athletics, family plans, etc., please alert instructor well in advance, and be sure to get all work done *before* you leave, rather than after.

Responsibility 2: Mini-Assignments for Formative Feedback on Main Assignments

For each unit, we will have brief assignments either in class or out of class, that build to the main assignment. These mini-assignments are low stakes, but they provide you with opportunities to practice and experiment with your thinking for the main assignments

Celebration 1: Defining the Life of Significance

An essay of 4-5 pages in which you draw from your experiences, readings, and other materials that we have examined as a class to answer the questions: *What does it mean to live a life of significance? By what criteria or measure might we judge a life as significant? What are the qualities, characteristics, actions, and attitudes associated with such a life?* **Due 9/15.**

Celebration 2: Interview Project

Conduct and write up an interview with someone about their educational and professional journey. Consider someone who falls outside of your usual circle, someone who you would not normally interact with but would like to, or someone who may have had a life experience from which you can learn or with which you identify. **Due 10/13.**

Celebration 3: Group Synthesis Presentation

In a small group, develop a presentation in which you reflect on the experience of conducting and writing your interview projects. What did you learn about conducting the interview? How did your interviews change, enhance, or challenge your thinking about what it means to live a life of significance? Given what you have learned, what specific recommendations would you make about crafting curricular and co-curricular plans in college that will result in a life of significance? **Presentation dates: 10/24 and 10/26.**

Celebration 4: Significance in Community

Identify, investigate, and evaluate a specific group or community you would like to learn more about. Gather as much information as you can... your aim is to determine the extent to which this community enables or constrains the ability of its members (or others) to live a life of significance as you have come to understand it. **Due 12/1.**

Celebration 5: Curricular and Co-Curricular Plan

Develop a curricular and co-curricular plan for your time at BSC, including a rationale for how this plan will help you achieve a life of significance as you understand it. This plan should include intention, flexibility, and exploration.

Before the due date, you will also schedule a one-on-one meeting with Dr. Champion to discuss this plan. **Due 12/5.**

Late or Missed Assignments: All assignments must be turned in when specified. If you are not present in class when a paper assignment is due, it is still your responsibility to submit your assignment before class begins. Late submissions will be penalized by one letter grade per day.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Our policies are in place in order to limit distractions and allow your fellow students to get the most out of our time together.

- No food is allowed in class. Drinks are allowed, but do not drink anything noisy or messy.
- You may **NOT** use laptops, cell phones, or other electronic devices during class time except during specific writing exercises. The temptation for distraction is simply too great. Plan to take notes on paper, then retype notes outside of class time. Exceptions may be made with documentation from the Office of Accessibility.
- Student responses, questions, and dialogue are encouraged during class time, but please refrain from interrupting your fellow classmates or the instructor.
- Respect the opinions of your classmates and instructor. Disagreements and debates may occur, but do not engage in personal attacks and argumentative tones, in or outside of class.

BSC RESOURCES FOR WRITERS AND READERS

Located in Humanities 102, the BSC Writing Center offers in-person and virtual peer-to-peer tutoring and quiet, supportive lab space to work on writing assignments. The Center's tutors are students from a wide variety of majors on campus and have the range to address student writing needs with discipline specificity. Supervised and assisted by BSC Writing Center directors, the tutors provide one-on-one consultations for any student at any point in the writing process. The BSC Writing Center is open Sunday-Thursday 4pm-8pm. To ensure a full 30-minute tutorial time slot, students are encouraged to be mindful of assignment-heavy weeks, keep track of due dates, and visit the Writing Center at their earliest availability during open hours. Please contact Dr. MK Foster or Professor Laura Tolbert (writingcenter@bsc.edu) with any questions or requests for virtual appointments.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR SUCCESS

BSC [Academic Resource Center](#) (includes the Writing Center, the Math Lab, and tutoring)

BSC Counseling Services 205-226-4717

[Crisis Center of Birmingham](#) 205-323-7777

- Crisis line, rape response, and recovery resources

[Magic City Acceptance Center](#)

- Great space for LGBTQIA2S+ adolescents that provide lots of resources

[YWCA](#) 205-322-4878

- Homelessness aid
- Domestic violence aid

TECHNOLOGY

Birmingham-Southern College uses the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS). Students are responsible for checking Moodle for course readings, assignments, and announcements. Work that is submitted late because of not checking Moodle is the responsibility of the student.

Logging into Moodle

1. Log onto the BSC access point by going to: moodle.bsc.edu.
2. Enter your BSC username and password.
3. The Moodle dashboard will open, and your courses will be displayed in the middle of the screen.
4. Select your course to begin.
5. The course welcome page will open. Read the welcome section and follow the instructions for getting started.

If you do not have your User Name, contact the IT Help Desk (see below)

This course (and most of your courses at BSC) will require the use of your **Student Outlook Email** account. All communication for this course should come through your BSC email account. I like to send updates via email, so please check regularly!

Microsoft Office 365 is available for free download to all current faculty, staff, and students. This can be easily downloaded from the [IT Helpdesk Webpage](#). You will need to sign in with your Birmingham-Southern User Name and Password to download and use this software.

It is expected all written assignments be completed with Microsoft Word since [Microsoft Office 365 has been provided](#) to all members of the Birmingham-Southern community. **If you use another word processing application (for example, Pages on Macbook), you must convert your document into a PDF or Word document prior to it being uploaded to Moodle. Otherwise, I cannot open your document! Please convert photos to .pdf, as well!**

[IT Helpdesk](#) offers telephone, email, and in-person support to all Birmingham-Southern students and employees. Please view the [Student Quick Guide](#) for information on how to access BSC technology tools. Hours of operation are listed below.

Hours of Operation

Email: helpdesk@bsc.edu, Monday-Friday, 7:30 am – 4:00 pm

Phone: 205-226-3033

24/7 Hotline via Apogee: 1-877-478-8861

Web address: www.bsc.edu/campus/it/helpdesk.html

Technology can be problematic: Internet connections can be slow or down; computers may malfunction; power outages can cause delays or the inability to connect. Technological issues are not acceptable excuses for late assignments. Be prepared and have a backup plan.

ACADEMIC ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with a disability that qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and require accommodations should be registered with BSC's Accessibility Office. If you are registered for academic accommodations, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss any accommodations that may be necessary. During this discussion you are not expected to disclose any details concerning your disability though you may do so at your discretion. If you have a disability but have not yet registered, please contact Dr. Sandra Foster, Assistant Director of Accessibility Services and Resources, at 205-226-7909 or smfoster@bsc.edu, or visit Norton 228. Keep in mind that no accommodation will be made unless and until the instructor receives official notification from the College.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Inclement weather or other events beyond the control of the College that might cause risk or danger to students, faculty, and staff may occasionally result in changes to normal College operations, including cancellation of classes or events; the calendar schedule may be adjusted.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Adhere to the Honor Code at all times: “As a member of the student body of Birmingham-Southern College, I recognize my responsibility to the traditions of the institution, to my fellow students and to myself. I recognize the significance of the honor system. I pledge that I have read and understand the Constitution of the Honor Council, including the Honor Code, and agree to be bound by its provisions.”

Much of the work in this class will be collaborative in nature so it is expected that you will discuss assignments with your classmates. However, when you turn in work as your own, you need to ensure that what you have written is your understanding of the concept and not simply copied or paraphrased from another source. You must cite and reference all sources. If you are unsure how to do this properly, please reach out to me. If you are found in violation of the Honor Code by the Honor Council, you will receive no credit for the assignment, test, or quiz in question.

Additional information on the Honor Code and violations can be found in the Birmingham-Southern [Student Handbook](#) and on the BSC website: <https://www.bsc.edu/campus/studev/honor-council/index.html>

TITLE IX

Birmingham-Southern College is committed to the creation and maintenance of a safe learning environment for students and the campus community. The College forbids any type of sexual or gender-based misconduct among its students, faculty, and staff. The College encourages all members of the academic community to report suspected sexual and gender-based misconduct to the appropriate authorities so that it can be investigated, remedied, and eliminated. BSC forbids retaliation against any person who has opposed, reported, or participated in an investigation concerning sexual or gender-based misconduct. See the BSC Title IX website (www.bsc.edu/titleix) for more information, including an online report form. If you or a peer have experienced such misconduct, there are faculty and staff members who are trained in supporting students by answering questions and helping them navigate this process. The list of advocates can be found along with other helpful resources on the Title IX website.

In accordance with federal policy, all College employees are required to report information related to discrimination and harassment which includes, but is not limited to, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual harassment. For this reason, if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the Title IX coordinator. As a student, you can report allegations of sexual misconduct to officials in Student Development (Assistant Dean of Students, Dana Bekurs; Associate Dean of Students, W. David Miller; Vice President for Student Development, David Eberhardt), Campus Police, or confidential resources in Counseling Services, Health Services, and Religious Life. Please refer to the [Title IX section](#) of the BSC website for more information on filing a report and available resources.

STATEMENT OF INCLUSION & EQUITY

IDS 142 supports an inclusive learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized and respected. As outlined in the Birmingham-Southern mission, the College challenges students to engage in their community and the greater world, to examine diverse perspectives, and to live with integrity. Assignments outlined in the course syllabus will address diversity consideration for communities, why those communities exist, who they serve, and how their practices reflect their values.

IMPORTANT DATES

September 5 – Labor Day Holiday (no class)
September 7 – Last Day to Add a Course, to Select “S/U”
September 14 – Last Day to Withdraw with Tuition Adjustment
September 21 – Last Day to Drop a Course Without a Grade
October 3 – Midterm Assessments Due
October 6-7 – Fall Break (no class)
October 12 – Last Day to Drop a Course With a Grade of “W”
November 23–25 – Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)