

# IDS 142: Living a Life of Significance

Fall Term 2022

Tuesdays and Thursday, 9:30 – 10:50, Harbert 102

Instructor: Katy Smith (she/her)

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Office Location: Inside the Krulak Institute, Norton 260

Student Hours: Monday, 9:30 – 11:30 and Thursday, 2:00 – 4:30

These are times when I am guaranteed to be in my office, although I may be available at other times. *You are strongly encouraged to schedule your visit on Handshake in order to ensure I'm not with another student.* You may find appointments available on Handshake outside of the hours listed above – feel free to book those as well! If you can't find a time that works for you, just let me know and we'll find an alternate time.



## Invitation

Birmingham-Southern states as its mission to prepare students “for lives of significance.” As an institution, we assert that, “The College fosters intellectual and personal development...by challenging students to engage their community and the greater world, to examine diverse perspectives, and to live with integrity.” No specific definition or prescription for living a life of significance is provided—thus inviting exploration and discussion about how the mission translates to one’s specific situation. What exactly does it mean to live a life of significance? How does one craft such a life? By what criteria does one assess the achievement of significance? How and in what ways does one engage the community, examine diverse views, or live with integrity? How do the learning experiences and choices in college relate to crafting and living a life of significance? These questions—about the meaning, purpose, and aims of schooling and life—are age old questions, confronted by each generation, each person, and each community. 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.



## Learning Outcomes

*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-term 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



### Overview

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 the third unit, 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.



### Main Assignments & Assessments

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

### Responsibility 1: 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. For example, we might complete a segment of an assignment, a flipgrid post about a topic related to the assignment, hold a one-on-one conference related to an assignment, or complete an in-class activity. These mini assignments are low stakes. **They provide you with opportunities to practice and experiment with your thinking for the main assignments.**

I promise to provide feedback to these materials in a timely manner so that you can put that information to use for the main project. Often that feedback will occur while we are in class as part of the activity or discussion. If you'd like feedback on something specific, just ask!

## Responsibility 2: Attendance, Participation, & Engagement

Our class time is precious and serves to support our work together. You should plan to prepare for class by doing any required readings and to engage in the class discussion and activities. All of our activities prepare you for the main projects and work towards investigating the main questions of the course. Attendance is required. **You should plan to meet for every class unless you are ill, have an emergency, or have a conflict that cannot be resolved (like sports travel).** Communicate with me and your classmates about your attendance. Missing class will impact your performance on the projects.

I promise to make class time worthwhile by preparing activities, discussion questions, and presentations that are relevant, meaningful, and engaging. If our class time is not helping us move forward in our investigations, I am not doing my job. I welcome your feedback on making meaningful use of our time together.



We only have one book for this course:

Palmer, Parker. *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*. Jossey Bass, 2000.

However, we'll be using a number of articles, videos, and podcasts; those will be organized by due date on the "Readings, Podcasts, and Web Links" page on Moodle.



### 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 clearly 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 ideas, opinions, and questions and how they shape our collaborative investigation of what it means to live a life of significance.



### 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. **Students are invited to share ideas and resources from their own communities and cultural backgrounds to enrich our work.**

### Accessibility Statement

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 accommodation, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss any accommodation 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](mailto: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.



**College Resources for Success** Good students go to tutoring. The best students go to tutoring before they fall behind. If in doubt, go!

### The Writing Center

Located in Humanities 102, the Writing Center offers in-person and virtual peer-to-peer tutoring and a quiet, supportive lab space to work on writing assignments. The Writing 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 Writing Center directors, our tutors provide one-on-one consultations for any student at any point in the writing process. During these consultations, tutors do not "edit" papers; instead, they assist students in addressing any potential writing issues, including content development, grammar usage, and citation formatting. Each tutorial is about 30 minutes long, free of charge, and available on a drop-in basis. There is no limit to how many tutorials a student may attend. Once logged in, a director will take your information and pair you with a tutor for your 30-minute tutorial.

The Writing Center is open Sunday-Thursday, 2pm-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. Anna Williams or Laura Tolbert ([writingcenter@bsc.edu](mailto:writingcenter@bsc.edu)) with any questions or requests for virtual appointments.

### **The ARC (Academic Resource Center)**

The ARC offers free tutoring in more than 23 subjects with trained peer tutors. While this is not a resource you will need for IDS 142, I strongly encourage you to visit the ARC for your other classes – especially those chemistry and biology courses! 😊 You can find the tutoring schedule and information on making an appointment here:

<https://www.bsc.edu/academics/arc/index.html>. For questions or help making an appointment, contact Dasha Maye at [arc@bsc.edu](mailto:arc@bsc.edu).



### **Honor Code**

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 be sure that what you have written is your understanding of the concept and not simply copied from another source. You must properly 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.

### **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](http://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.

## Calendar

Class meets T & Th from 9:30 – 10:50 in Harbert 102

Week & Class Dates	Tuesday 9:30-10:50, Harbert 102	Wednesday	Thursday 9:30 – 10:50, Harbert 102	Friday – Monday
Unit 1: What does it mean to live a life of significance?				
Week 1 (Aug. 25)			Introductions and setting ground rules	Schedule and come to an appointment with me!
Week 2 (Aug. 30 & Sept. 1)	Review syllabus & finalize class norms  Activities: Who are you?	Read Palmer, Ch. 1 & 2  <b>Post reading response on Moodle by midnight</b>	Discussion and in-class exercises	Read Palmer, Ch. 3  Readings and Ted Talks on narrative identity
Week 3 (Sept. 6 & 8)	Narrative identity and failure  Time management!	Listen to podcast on the “good enough” life  <b>Short writing: Failure re-telling</b>	Introduce Assign. 1 & complete task analysis  Writing Center guest  <b>Lecture and Arts Event – 11:00 – Munger Auditorium</b>	<b>By Friday midnight:</b> Flipgrid response to L&A speakers  <b>By Sunday midnight:</b> Flipgrid response to two peers  <b>By Monday midnight:</b> Respond to peer responses
Week 4 (Sept. 13 & 15)	Opinion continuum!	Work on Assignment 1	TBD depending on where we are with Assignment 1	<b>Submit Assignment 1 draft by Sunday noon</b>

Week 5 (Sept. 20 & 22)	No class! One-on-one essay conferences Monday & Tuesday	Edit Assignment 1 in response to conference feedback	Peer review of Assignment 1	<b>Assignment 1 due Sunday midnight</b>
Unit 2: How do others live a life of significance?				
Week 6 (Sept. 27 & 29)	Task analysis Assignment 2  Networking – finding the people you need and asking for help	Generate list of at least 3 potential interviewees. <b>Draft emails or phone scripts for contacting each.</b>  Listen to podcast interviews	Activities: Interviewing/being interviewed  Developing good questions	Contact your first choice to be interviewed (and second and third choice if necessary) and schedule the interview for Oct. 6 – Oct. 13.  Develop questions and bring to next class.
Week 7 (Oct. 4 & 6)	Guest speaker (video)  Discuss proposed questions	Revise questions.  Conduct interview by Oct. 13  Read interview article	FALL BREAK	Revise questions  Conduct interview by Oct. 13  Read interview article
Week 8 (Oct. 11 & 13)	Activities: Organizing information	Conduct interview by Oct. 13  Schedule one-on-one meeting with me  Possible reading or podcast	Task analysis Assignment 3  Guide to group work	<b>Submit draft of Assignment 2 by Sunday noon.</b>

Week 9 (Oct. 18 & 20)	No Class! One-on-one meetings with me Monday and Tuesday to review Assignment 2 draft	Revise Assignment 2 in response to conference feedback	Assignment 3 task analysis  What makes a good presentation?	<b>Assignment 2 due Sunday midnight</b>  Work with presentation group. Bring all materials to next class.
Week 10 (Oct. 25 & 27)	What makes a good audience?  In-class work time	<b>Finalize presentations</b> - Every group should be ready to present tomorrow	Assignment 3 presentations and active listening	
Week 11 (Nov. 1 & 3)	Assignment 3 presentations and active listening		Discuss takeaways from presentations  Task analysis Assignment 4 and brainstorm topics  Activity: Community critique	Finalize Assignment 4 topic. Make a list of questions you have about researching it.  Readings on community
Unit 3: How does community shape living a life of significance?				
Week 11 (Nov. 8 & 10)	Library guest speaker: Researching your topic (and beyond!)  Activities: Being in and of community	Research your topic  Reading on cultural criticism	What does it mean to be a critic?	Work on your project
Week 12 (Nov. 15 & 17)	Activity: Marginalization and oppression in community  In-class work time	Finish project	Assignment 5 task analysis  Guest speaker: Forecasting your life	<b>Assignment 4 due Sunday midnight</b>  Create plan for Assignment 5 – What information do you need? Who do you need to talk to? What



				do you need to explore? Bring plan to class.
Week 13 (Nov. 22 & 24)	<p>Present creative works from Assignment 4</p> <p>Share ideas and plans for Assignment 5 – peer feedback</p>		<p>THANKSGIVING</p> <p>Eat all the things!</p> <p>Watch all the games!</p> <p>Take all the naps!</p>	
Week 14 (Nov. 29)	Wrap up and review			