

# IDS 295 – THE SECOND SEMINAR: DESIGNING A LIFE THAT MATTERS

Thursdays

9:30-10:50am

DeWitt 247

**Instructors:** Professor Shannon Schans  
Office: DeWitt, Boerigter Center  
Contact: [schans@hope.edu](mailto:schans@hope.edu), o: 616.395.7950

**Teaching Assistant:** Justine Watson, [Justine.watson@hope.edu](mailto:Justine.watson@hope.edu)

**Office hours:** immediately following class & by appointment

The deepest vocational question is not *What ought I to do with my life?*  
It is the more elemental and demanding *Who am I? What is my nature?*  
-Parker Palmer

## GENERAL

The 2-credit Second Seminar will help students in further investigating their story, strengths, interests, and clarifying their direction at Hope College and beyond. The course provides an opportunity for students to better understand themselves (e.g. one's history, choices, values, beliefs, direction) in relationship with their understanding of their context and of others' views and context. The course also offers methods of helping students design a meaningful future in light of their self-understanding. In short, it is 2-credit interdisciplinary course on vocational discernment, life meaning, and planning to design a meaningful future.

## COURSE GOALS

More specifically, in this course students will

1. Understand the concept of vocation and calling in the Christian theological tradition.
2. Evaluate various perspectives on key issues and questions of life meaning and purpose from perspectives within the humanities and social sciences (e.g. *What makes a life significant? What is the good life? How does one develop identity commitments? What is happiness? Can one control what one will do and become?*).
3. Develop a clearer understanding of and commitment to one's skills, interests, strengths, and values.
4. Understand the requirements of, and evaluate one's interest in, various academic majors and professional options.
5. Prepare oneself to declare a major, or identify viable academic options to more intentionally pursue, as well as consider other steps for the future.
6. Be able to seek multiple perspectives as they approach a variety of problems or situations.
7. Demonstrate tolerance and curiosity about others' beliefs.
8. Be able to identify and articulate ways in which one has been shaped by culture.
9. Interpret the dynamics of power and privilege and how they impact them personally as well as others.

10. Be able to appreciate the interdependence that exists between their lives and actions, and those of their counterparts in other cultures.
11. Be able to describe their own culture with sophisticated knowledge and awareness.
12. Grapple with several views of a well-lived life in order to make informed judgments about obligations to ourselves and others.
13. Be able to engage with others different from them in empathic and effective ways.
14. Be able to articulate multiple perspectives in a variety of context.
15. Be able to communicate with those who are different from them effectively and respectfully.

**Global Learning** - This course is flagged as a Global Learning-Domestic course at Hope college.

Therefore, the course will support the students toward the following goals:

1. *Curiosity*: To stimulate students' eager pursuit of new knowledge and ideas, and openness to new perspectives.
2. *Self-awareness*: To help students become more aware of themselves as shaped by culture and of how one's values and beliefs inform one's decisions and assumptions about others.
3. *Responsibility*: To cultivate students' sense of responsibility for the welfare of others and for their own actions, so that they grow as ethical individuals and engaged citizens.
4. *Empathy*: To nurture students' development of empathy, sensitivity and compassion towards others.
5. A focus on historically marginalized groups in North America, including racial and ethnic minorities and women.
6. Examine issues of difference, intolerance, inequality, justice, and power and understand the interplay of these complex concepts and structures.

#### **SAMPLE COURSE TASKS**

- Read and discuss important works on vocation, life meaning, and identity development.
- Assess one's skills, talents, passions, strengths, and values through
  - reflective reading and writing
  - multiple career and personality inventories
  - engaging in service as a means of skills application
  - dialoging with others to better understanding their skills, talents, passions, strengths, and values
- Research the academic majors and professions that most closely align with those strengths and interests, using a combination of web-based research and live interviews.
- Draft an academic plan which will include both a curricular component (e.g. declaring a major, meeting an advisor, planning courses) and a co-curricular one (e.g., informational interview, internship, service, leadership opportunity, other academically-linked student organizations).

#### **COURSE READINGS**

Bill Burnett and Dave Evans, *Designing Your Life*. New York, NY: Random House, 2017.

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

Mark R. Schwehn and Dorothy C. Bass, eds. *Leading Lives That Matter: What We Should Do and Who We Should Be*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2006.

Other articles as assigned

### ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

There are **200 possible points**. Grading for this course is will be administered on the following scale:

95 - 100%	(189-200 pts)	= A
90 - 94%	(179-188 pts)	= A-
87 - 89%	(173-178 pts)	= B+
83 - 86%	(165-172 pts)	= B
80 - 82%	(159-164 pts)	= B-
77 - 79%	(153-158 pts)	= C+
73 - 76%	(145-154 pts)	= C
70 - 72%	(139-153 pts)	= C-
60 - 69%	(119-138 pts)	= D
59% and below		= F

Weekly assignments: (150 points - 16 at 10pts each, lowest one dropped)

Many of the course's activities (e.g. readings, career inventories, academic research, professional interview) include a written reflection response, quiz, or some other weekly investment.

Summative Reflection and Academic plan: (40 points)

The closing assignment for the course will be the development of a written summative reflection and academic plan describing a) your current sense of self-understanding with regard to your strengths, vocation, direction, and other perspectives on key issues and b) the steps and activities you will engage in over the next couple years in order to pursue your academic, personal, and professional goals.

One on one meetings: (10 points)

Participation with faculty and TA in 1-2 reflective 1-on-1 meetings

### LATE WORK and SUBMISSION POLICY

Assignments will be submitted via a printed copy in class on the day it is due, in order to receive potential full points. If you are absent from class, you still are required to submit the materials on-time (in which case you may submit them via e-mail).

Any work turned in late can receive a maximum of ½ of the available points if turned in within one week of the due date. Work submitted later than one week will not be accepted.

All responses should be typed (with the exception of a few assignments where you will be writing by hand) using a standard font type (i.e. Times, Calibri) and size (i.e. 11 or 12pt).

**Extra credit** points are available for conducting 1 additional academic or professional informational interviews.

**There is no final examination**

### ATTENDANCE:

You are allowed two absences. Consider these your sick days or personal days. You get two to do with what you would like. But after they are gone, they are gone. For every absence after the two, we will lower your overall grade ½ grade (e.g. lower a B to a B-). Being late or leaving early will count as a ½ absence. Exceptions to the attendance rule are rare (though if something extraordinary happens, come see us). We highly recommend you save the two allowed absences for unplanned surprises such as illness, family emergencies, as this is what they are intended for.

If you have perfect attendance for all classes, you will receive an extra 10 points.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students will conduct themselves in accordance with the school policies regarding academic integrity and plagiarism (which essentially is using and not citing another's words or ideas - [www.hope.edu/lib/plagiarism](http://www.hope.edu/lib/plagiarism)). Please be sure to only submit your own work, and clearly attribute quotations, paraphrases, and unique ideas to the proper sources. Plagiarism (even accidental) equals an immediate "F" on the assignment. Severe cheating (or a second offense) typically means failing the course. If you are in doubt about how/when to cite a source and cannot figure it out, let me know, I'm glad to help. Here are some common errors to avoid:

- Trying to get enough information from others (either verbally or by reading their responses) so that it looks like you have done the assignment;
- Changing another person's paper and making it different enough so that it looks like your own work;
- Copying, or cutting and pasting, from the Web film and book analyses, or paraphrasing summaries from books and articles (such as Cliff Notes), and passing these off as your own without acknowledgment.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS:**

Hope College is committed to providing equitable learning environments. If you have a temporary or permanent condition that requires accommodations (conditions include but are not limited to : mental health , attention-related, learning, vision, hearing , physical or health related), you may call Disability and Accessibility Resources (DAR) at 616-395-7925 to meet with a Disability and Accessibility Resources specialist or visit the DAR website: <https://hope.edu/offices/disability-services/> to request accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor (s) and Disability and Accessibility Resources. Accommodations may be requested at any point in the semester but you are encouraged to initiate the process early as accommodations will not be granted retroactively. You and your instructors will receive an email from DAR verifying accommodations that have been approved.

### **MISC**

The instructor reserves the right to make syllabus adjustments to more adequately meet the objectives of the class.

Please feel free to bring up alternative suggestions to the instructor. This class is a conversation, and that can include negotiation over the syllabus and assignments.

You should create a plan to save and organize all class assignments. You will look back and reuse many of the course assignments throughout the semester.

### **PARTICIPATION**

Please be prepared to invest yourself in the assignments and discussions in the class. Because this class asks you to explore *your* strengths and interests and perspectives, it necessitates a particularly active engagement in the class. The role of the instructors and assignments in the class will be to assist you in your explorations, and the "learning" in the class will occur in proportion to the energy you invest in the assignments and activities. YOU are one of the primary texts in this course. I hope you do not get bored!

Also, be present, not only for your sake, but for the sake of others, and for what you bring to them.

## SAFE SPACE, CONFIDENTIALITY, and RESPECT

Because of the personal nature of this class, sometimes activities and discussions will touch on sensitive areas. Please honor a confidentiality policy that states you will never discuss with anyone outside of our classroom environment something one of your classmate’s has said. Also note that at any time with no questions asked students are welcome to simply “pass” on a question they do not want to respond to in a small group discussion.

Please be sure to respect every voice. This is also a good time to practice the discipline of listening.

### SACRED SPACE and CELL-PHONE USE

Because one of our class goals, and part of discerning vocation, is to be fully present in your context, there is no cell phone use in the classroom. Including before class begins. Do not have them out in the classroom. Please power them down and put them away before you walk through the door. I want you present with your thoughts and engaged with others whenever you are in the classroom. If you need to check a text, look up a resource, respond to a call, etc (which I know happens), that is very fine, but please do so before you enter and/or please leave the classroom as needed.

If you have a potential emergency and need to be available via cell phone, please let me know prior to the start of class.

### FINALLY:

We are excited you are here! We hope you will find this class to be interesting, challenging, relevant, and fun! We are looking forward to supporting you and journeying with you this term.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Date and Topics	Readings and Assignments (Due)	In Class
<b>Week 1: Thurs 8/29</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course pre-survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction to class</li> <li>What I hope we learn</li> <li><i>Activity:</i> Career Survivor</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2: Thurs 9/5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Let Your Life Speak</i> Reading Response 1: chapters 1-3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce vocation model</li> <li><i>Activity:</i> My Timeline (past)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3: Thurs 9/12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calling Interview</li> <li><i>Let Your Life Speak</i> Reading Response 2: chapters 4-6</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imposter Syndrome</li> <li><i>Activity:</i> “What Did They Major In?” Kahoot</li> <li>Major Myths</li> <li>Begin COPS</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4: Thurs 9/19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading (with quiz): <i>Leading Lives that Matter</i>, Vocabularies “Vocation” section</li> <li>COPS + Majors and Careers handout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levels of Self and Vocation</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5: Thurs 9/26</b> With Megan Scheldt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Leading Lives that Matter</i> Reading Response 1: “Are Some Lives More Significant than Others” section</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informational Interviews (Megan Scheldt)</li> </ul>

<b>Week 6: Thurs 10/3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Leading Lives that Matter</i> Reading Response 2: “Can I Control What I Shall Do and Become” selections</li> <li>• Complete MBTI</li> <li>• Tell us what interviewees you’ve contacted</li> </ul>	•
<b>Week 7: Thurs 10/10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inventories Response: StrengthsFinder, and MBTI</li> <li>• Mindfulness Log</li> </ul>	• Ryan’s story
<b>Week 8: Thurs 10/17</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informational Interview #1 due</li> <li>• Informational Interview #2 due</li> </ul>	• Shannon’s story
<b>Week 9: Thurs 10/24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Designing Your Life Matter</i> Reading Response 1: introduction, chapter 1-2</li> <li>• Informational Interview #3 due</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Activity</i>: Values Inventory</li> <li>• <i>Activity</i>: Skills Inventory</li> <li>• <i>Activity</i>: Career Taboo</li> <li>• <i>Activity</i>: Majors Against Humanity</li> <li>• <i>One-on-Ones</i> with Professors</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10: Thurs 10/31</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Designing Your Life Matter</i> Reading Response 2: chapter 3-4</li> <li>• Informational Interview #3 due (revised date)</li> </ul>	•
<b>Week 12: Thurs 11/7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Leading Lives that Matter</i> Reading Response 3, “Must My Job Be the Primary Source of My Identity” and “Is A Balanced Life Possible” selections</li> <li>• VIA Strengths Inventory</li> </ul>	• Anna Bonnema – Becoming a discerning person (pre odyssey plan)
<b>Week 13: Thurs 11/14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Designing Your Life Matter</i> Reading Response 3: chapter 5-8</li> </ul>	• <i>Activity</i> : Best Term (building on discerning person)
<b>Week 14: Thurs 11/21</b> With Amy Freehafer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resume draft 1</li> <li>• Inventory Summary</li> </ul>	• Leveraging your strengths in conversations and resumes (Amy Freehafer)
<b>Week 15: Thurs 11/28</b> <b>THANKSGIVING NO CLASS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Designing Your Life Matter</i> Reading Response 4: chapter 9-11</li> </ul>	•
<b>Week 16 Thurs 12/5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving Forward – Academic Plan</li> </ul>	• Major declarations
<b>Week 17 Exam Week</b> Exam Week – No Class		