

## **EDPS 105 – Academic & Career Planning Course Overview**

### **Welcome to the Exploratory Studies Family!**

Our mandatory, 3 credit hour, academically rigorous course is the cornerstone of our program and key to your student's exploration process. Parents and families are a student's #1 most vital support and feedback resource during the transition into college and their first semester. So, how can you help?

One of the **BEST** ways you can assist your student through their major and career exploration process is to engage them in pressure-free conversations about what they are learning in EDPS 105 (and other courses) throughout the semester. Ask them how the material they are encountering changes or confirms their current major/career ideas. Most importantly, encourage them to keep an open mind and to "try new ideas on for size" first before discarding them. Sometimes the major that seemed the least likely at first turns out to be an excellent fit later on.

EDPS 10500 is a hybrid course, but don't let that scare you! It's not an online course. The strength of the hybrid course is that it uses class time for active and supported student engagement with a topic. This tends to result in better learning and more immediate feedback than might be gained from the typical lecture, recitation, and homework experience. The hybrid course design is popular at Purdue.

Knowing the outline of the course can give you some key projects and points to discuss with your student. **Here is an overview of the topics and activities we cover in EDPS 10500:**

**Community Building:** The first step is to get to know each other and start to work in groups. This is an active learning classroom, so students do most of the talking! Students spent most of the in-class time spent working together, hearing each other's stories, and discovering their similarities and differences.

**Reflective Writing:** Reflection involves revisiting and processing what students are learning in class and in their college experience. Through this process, they clarify the connections between new and already established information. If they consistently practice reflective writing and thinking, they will be able to express their strengths and career goals confidently to others.

**Success in College:** Students learn about academic integrity, campus help resources, first-semester reflections and wisdom from past Exploratory Studies students, organizational and anti-procrastination tips, Road Trip Nation professional interviews, and decision-making strategies.

**Self-Directed Search (SDS):** This is the first assessment students complete in EDPS 10500. The SDS is NOT intended to prescribe a single major or a career path, but to open their eyes to potential interests, engaging work environments, and transferable skill sets -- helps them to see the bigger picture! For example, since the SDS looks at ALL job types, it might suggest some that do not require college. Encourage them, as we do, to think about and research the skills and tasks these jobs might require. Then have them brainstorm how those skills might translate to a similar job or major that requires a bachelors or professional degree. For best results, encourage them to answer the assessment **HONESTLY** based on who they are NOW rather than what they hope they will be four years from now.

**StrengthsQuest (SQ):** This Gallup-penned inventory is a student favorite. SQ identifies their top five strengths, and then describes how the unique interrelations of those strengths can be leveraged to accomplish personal and career goals. It is a complete turnabout to focus on the power of our strengths

rather than to focus on conquering our weaknesses. We spend time in class comparing strengths and sharing how our strengths can be used in academic and career planning. If you are interested in this inventory, you can take it, too! It's around \$20 on Gallup's website:

<https://www.gallupstrengthscenter.com/Purchase/en-US/Product?Path=Clifton%20StrengthsFinder>.

**Majors at Purdue and Plans of Study:** Plans of study are complex, but very useful. We teach students to understand the main components of a plan, such as math and science requirements, and then analyze the plan for personal fit and goals. Understanding plans of study helps students efficiently squeeze in study abroad, internships, and co-operative education experiences. It also makes for a better conversation with their advisor and with faculty, who can then use their expertise to tease out the finer points of the plan with the student.

**Student Interview, Evaluation, and Reflection:** Students use their knowledge of their plan of study to interview a junior or senior in their major(s) of interest. In the reflection phase, they link their own experiences with what they learned from the interview. We then ask them to tie this interview, their assessment results, and their plan of study together during the evaluation phase. Making meaningful connections between these seemingly disparate sources of information and experiences often prompts amazing "a-ha" moments with our students.

**The World of Work & Work Values:** Students find and share information about important challenges they might face as they move into the work world. The topics for research and class discussion will include generational differences, globalization, social media, work-life balance, the synthesis of STEM and Liberal Arts Education, technological advancements, and economic forces - all of which will influence career options and decisions over time. Students also take a Forced Choice Values assessment in addition to several other in-class activities with the purpose of helping them create a Top 5 Core Values list for themselves. Our value systems underlie every decision we make (whether we realize it or not). The purpose of the values class is to help students bring what is most important to them to the forefront of their mind as they make critical major/career decisions now. Values also can change/shift throughout different parts of our lives so this critical thinking skill of reflecting on values is invaluable.

**Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI):** This assessment examines preferences along four personality scales. You have probably heard of people being referred to as an "introvert" or an "extravert." The creators of the MBTI coined those terms! During class discussions, students examine how different preferences are used to narrow or broaden their career scope. They examine how these results might affect group dynamics, study and learning styles, job preferences, work environment choices, and more.

**Strong Interest Inventory (SII):** The SII is a well-researched assessment. Central to it is the idea that if one has likes and dislikes in common with someone who is happy in a career, then one might be happy in that career, too. This gives them a TON of great information (an 11- to 14-page report), which can help students narrow down choices and give them surprising new areas to research.

**Family Influence:** If students are to have the full picture of where they may want to go, it is critical that they spend time reflecting on where they come from. We ask them to examine their family career history and to think about how your lives together helped weave their own story. In class, students share their stories in small groups, so they can experience other perspectives and histories.

**Using Inventory Results:** Our jobs and our lives requires us to be able to clearly articulate, through both speaking and writing, who we are and what we want. Fortunately, EDPS 10500 builds in many opportunities for practice! Recruiters who come to campus list communication as one of the top critical skills they look for in their candidates. The sooner students understand how to tell other people who they are in a succinct and practiced way, the better!

**Career Information Research:** This assignment familiarizes students with excellent online Purdue and national resources that focus on career and major information. We also teach them how to critically evaluate websites. This is often the favorite assignment of the semester.

**Career Story Interview, Evaluation, & Reflection:** Students then build upon this career research outline by interviewing a professional working in a career of interest. They cannot interview parents or family members (as they should already know your career story), so this is a great opportunity for you to pull on your networks to help your student find a fantastic interviewee! It is important for students to hear new stories as often as possible so they can begin to relate to how career unfold over time.

After interviews are conducted, we spend time in class sharing what we learned! Through discussion, students often discover how fluid and uncertain people's career paths can be. People build careers in stages - choice by choice, and opportunity by opportunity. And many choices and opportunities cannot be anticipated! It seems to give them the freedom to see their major choice as one of many versus feeling unrealistic pressure to know what they are going to do for the REST OF THEIR LIVES right now.

**Your Future:** We end the EDPS 10500 course with fun exercises that illustrate how unexpected things happen to everyone. We often must make daily decisions based on incomplete information. Therefore, how can reflecting upon our core values and unique strengths help us embrace the inevitable disappointments, coming successes, and constant change we will encounter? Our main goal is that students gain better decision-making tools, plus a strong sense of who they are and why they are here.

**Theory of Planned Happenstance:** While we do not dedicate a specific class to this career theory, we weave its tenets into the class content. This theory suggests that none of us can predict the future - we can only prepare ourselves to recognize and take advantage of opportunities as they appear. To do this, we need to practice persistence, flexibility, curiosity, and optimism. We need to be willing to take some risks. We want your student to see the benefits of both planning **and** flexibility as they move through this important time of their lives.

Thank you for taking the time to read this outline of our class. We hope this gives you the information to engage your student in meaningful conversations about EDPS 10500 and encourage them to participate fully in the exploration process.

***The Exploratory Studies Advising Team and the EDPS 105 Instructor Group***