

IB 592: Career and Skill Development in IB

Fall 2023 Syllabus

Course Overview

- CRN 64406; 2 credit hours
- 12:30-2:10 PM Tuesdays, 4004 Natural History Building
- Prerequisite: Restricted to graduate students within the School of Integrative Biology. This course is mandatory for MS in IB graduate students.
- Our Learning Management System (LMS) for IB 592 will be Moodle and our course site can be found by visiting learn.illinois.edu. Students will also have an option to participate in Discord.
- Instructor: Christina Swanson (she/her), Career Connections, Academic Advisor
 - Office: Natural History Bldg. Room 2002
 - Contact: sillima2@illinois.edu or DM on [Discord](#)

Course Description

A successful career in the sciences requires you to identify and communicate your unique set of skills and experiences to broad audiences - often outside of academia or your specific field. IB 592 helps to build these skills while also developing professional skills to better compete for positions in professional school, jobs in industry, non-profit, or government. Students will also explore career options available with an advanced degree in IB . This course is designed to teach students these skills with focused in and out of class exercises. By the end of the semester students will have a portfolio with tailored application materials, a framework of their skills and experiences, career options in their field, a professional online presence, and an expanded network in their field of interest.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- construct informed decisions about the next steps in career development and the requirements necessary for a variety of career opportunities in integrative biology.
- develop scholarship tools and techniques for critical reading and effective communication of your personal narrative to defined audiences.
- apply strategies for effective applications for grants, job positions, and professional schools.
- critically evaluate peers on their construction of career milestone activities such as draft application materials.

Textbooks

There are no formal textbooks for this course. Rather, please refer to the required weekly readings and optional books of interest, websites, and e-Reserve information all listed and linked in the overview of each weekly module on Moodle.

Grading

Grade Distributions

Category	Weight
Assignments	25%
Community Participation	30%
Dossier Milestone 1	5%
Dossier Milestone 2	10%
Dossier Milestone 3	20%
Final Dossier and Reflection	10%

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	85-100
B	80-84.5
C	70-79.5
D	60-69.5
F	Below 59.5

Course Components

This is a **2 credit hour** course. You should plan to spend between **6-8 hours** on this course each week.

Each week will begin with a weekly overview on Moodle, which will explain what the weekly module is about, what learning outcomes you are expected to achieve, and in what activities you will participate. Due dates of specific assignments appear on each week's Moodle overview page. All components are worth 100 points (unless otherwise noted), with their respective weights shown in the "Grading" section of the syllabus. Course instructional activities are explained in greater detail below:

Assignments: 30%

Pre-Class Prep (2 pts each): Each module will contain a list of assigned readings/resources. Activities to complete before class will often accompany these resources and will be graded within the Pre-Class Prep category. Expectations for student work in the lessons include evidence of critical thinking on the reading/resource content--a good faith effort to reflect on the questions. This space in the weekly module is mainly for students to frontload content and think critically. Feel free to post out in the Moodle Q & A Forum for further clarification.

Surveys (2 pts each): The introductory survey allows us to tailor the course to your needs and the end of course survey will help immensely in the refinement of the course for future semesters. We do use the feedback on both surveys to make changes to the course and appreciate the time you spend reflecting and sharing your experiences!

Career Presentations (6 pts): Here students will present on potential careers of interest. Students will have choice in which careers to perform this guided-inquiry deep-dive into, along with scaffolded benchmarks along the way to better understand key aspects of the career's expectations and outcomes. Students will present and peer-assess their findings in a presentation. This project aims to provide support in the somewhat daunting experience of career exploration so that students can develop autonomy and confidence in finding their next steps.

Community Participation: 30%

(2 points each class) Community participation in any learning environment is essential to your commitment to engagement with a course. Each week on Wednesdays from 10-11:50am there will be an in-person class meeting. These sessions will typically involve a series of group activities/discussions, based on the weekly Pre-Class Prep. Thus it is essential that students complete the weekly resources/activities before coming to our weekly meetings. These meetings will sometimes bring in a guest lecturer from UIUC, industry, or governmental organizations. You are required to attend and meaningfully participate in all of these sessions (the lowest score will be dropped). Active participation includes being prepared with required pre-reading content, providing feedback to peers, speaking and listening in groups, and asking questions of peers and speakers.

Students are also encouraged to participate in our course's social community through the Moodle Social Forum or through Discord. *Discord will be used as an optional supplement to the course, as a community space to connect with professionals, peers, alumni, and others to further your career. We will also post opportunities regularly such as jobs, research, internships, volunteering, and useful resources.

Dossier Project: 30%

Students are required to complete a semester-long Dossier Project showcasing deeper research into their individualized next career steps and a collection of documents that help to define the student's cohesive narrative—i.e. a dossier. Using instructor and peer feedback, this project will include expansions of weekly course assignments. This project includes defined milestones (see below for more information), required meeting check-in with instructors, a Dossier Draft for instructor review, and finally a Mock Interview from the Career Center.

Milestone 1: Career Foundations

- Identify Your Community (1 pt)
- Values/Goals (2 pts)
- Life + Career Design (2 pts)

Milestone 2: Defining and Refining

- Annotated Job Ad (2 pts)
- 1:1 Meeting (2 pts)
- First Draft Application Materials (4 pts)

Milestone 3: Adapting to Your Audience

- Tailored Application Materials (CV/resume; Cover letter/statements— 4 pts)
- Building Online Presence (5 pts)
- Informational Interview: Connecting With Your Community (4 pts)
- Mock Interview (4 pts)

Final Dossier and Reflection: 10%

Here you will have a chance to integrate a semester of insights and training to improve your dossier. This is a chance to build a reference library for your life-long career journey, so focus on the places that you either saw the most growth opportunity or that you don't want to forget in the future. Your reflection will be, similarly, a note to your future self who has likely forgotten a lot of what you learned in the class and might not be very motivated. This is meant to be something that will be actionable for you when you need to use it next. We will be looking for substantive effort, self-reflection, and substantial revisions/improvement/additions to at least 3-4 different areas of your dossier.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week (Date)	Topic	GUEST INSTRUCTORS (tentative)	Major Assignments Due
1 (Aug 22)	Introductions Professional Connections	Alumni Career Consultant: Steve Caldwell (1:15-2:00) Alumni Guest: Madeline Keleher	
2 (Aug 29)	Career Opportunities: Visualizing Your Career Success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Panel • Career options overview • Intro to Career Features • Leveraging your network to identify and move towards your career goals 	(1-2 PM) Career Panel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark DiMartino • Xander Hazel • Tyler Hedlund • Jess Hoffelder 	- Pre-class Prep: making the most of your semester -Intro survey
3 (Sep 5)	Deciding on Your Future: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to life and career design • Designing your career foundation (your goals, values, curiosity, what you enjoy) 	(1-2 PM) Alumni guest: Savannah Donovan	-Pre-class Prep: Design foundations - how to make tough career decisions -Dossier Project Milestone 1: Identify your community
4 (Sep 12)	Career Features Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spotlight career options we are personally interested in as a class 	<i>none</i>	-Career Presentation -Dossier Project Milestone 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your Values
5 (Sep 19)	What You Have to Offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and articulating your skills, experiences • What are employers, recruiters, program managers, academic positions looking for? • How do I translate this into formal application materials? • Translating your skills and experiences for non-academic audiences 	(12:30-1:00) Alumni guest: TBD (1:10-2:10 PM) Grad College Career Office	-Pre-class Prep: How to decipher a job ad -Dossier Project Milestone 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your Life+Career Design
6 (Sep 26)	Finding Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships and other opportunities beyond the RA/TA • Navigating the job search • Professional and grad programs 	(12:30-1:15 PM) Hannah Darcy - IB PhD Alum () Alumni Guest: Joe Frumkin	-Pre-class Prep: Leveraging Handshake for a quick and easy job search

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harnessing the power of your community of connections 	(1:15-1:30 PM) Cherie Morris - Actalent Services Recruiter Lead, Sciences	
7 (Oct 3)	<p>Wellness Week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No class this week. Intended as a mid-semester respite and time for Portfolio Prep, 1:1 instructor meeting, and setting up your mock interviews 	<i>none</i>	
8 (Oct 10)	<p>Building and Maintaining your Professional Portfolio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover Letter & Application Overview 	<p>(12:30-2PM) Alumni Guest: Matt Sosna</p> <p>(1-2 PM) Writers Workshop</p>	<p>-Pre-class Prep: Hacking the application: think like a boss</p> <p>- Schedule a Mock Interview with The Career Center</p> <p>- Dossier Project Milestone 2: Annotating your Opportunity /Job Posting: Defining what the employer/committee is looking for</p>
9 (Oct 17)	<p>Building and Maintaining your Professional Portfolio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resume & Recruiter Insights In-class workshop 	(1-2 PM) Eli Lilly Science Recruiting Lead	<p>- Schedule Writers Workshop consult</p> <p>-Dossier Project Milestone 3: First draft of application materials</p>
10 (Oct 24)	<p>Marketing Yourself for Career Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branding and tailoring Creating an authentic, cohesive, and compelling narrative Online professional presence, developing an authentic web presence 	(1:00-2:00 PM) Online presence: Grad College Career Office	-Pre-class Prep: What's your story?
11 (Oct 31)	<p>Application Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer-lead structured feedback on tailored application materials Holistic review of professional portfolio 	<i>none</i>	<p>Pre-class Prep: Application Revision Guide</p> <p>-Dossier Project Milestone 3: Tailored application materials: Adapting to your audience</p>
12 (Nov 7)	<p>Leadership Development: Charting your Course as a Leader in STEM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clifton's Strengths workshop Leadership Opportunities What makes a great leader (to you)? 	<p>(1:00-2:00 PM): Leadership Center, Clifton's Strengths</p> <p>12:30: Alumni Guest: Lauren Hostert??</p>	<p>-Pre-class Prep: Leadership Assessment</p> <p>-Dossier Project Milestone 3: Online presence (LinkedIn, Handshake, blog, etc.)</p>
13 (Nov 14)	<p>Mastering the Art of Negotiation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and articulating your worth What's up for negotiation? 	(12:30-1:30 PM) James Dahl: Geis Business	-Pre-class Prep: What are you worth?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies for negotiation conversations 		-Dossier Project Milestone 3: Informational Interview, connecting with your community
14 (Nov 28)	<p>Successful Interview Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking like an interviewer Applying interviewer insights to hack the interview process 	<p>(12:30-1:30 PM) The Career Center</p> <p>(1:30-2:00) Alumni guest: Anthony Murphy</p>	<p>-Pre-class Prep: Interview Basics</p> <p>-Final Dossier and reflection</p> <p>- Mock Interview Reflection</p>
15 (Dec 5)	Next Steps	None	- End of semester survey
16 (Dec 12)	Finals Week (no class)		

Accommodations

In general, to obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students should contact both the instructors and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible (<https://www.disability.illinois.edu>). You can contact DRES at 1207 S. Oak Street, Champaign, (217) 333-1970, or via email at disability@illinois.edu.

As accommodations are typically helpful to all, you do not need a DRES letter for accommodations, but you do need to communicate early and often about how we can meet your needs. **You can reach out to Christina (sillima2@illinois.edu) if you anticipate any barriers to participation this semester.**

Attendance

We realize that you have a life beyond the scope of this course. However, if you are unable to complete an assignment/attend class because of other obligations, you should notify the instructors ahead of time. It is good practice to prepare/post any assignments early before a planned absence.

Regular class attendance is expected of all students, but the lowest participation score for class attendance will be dropped to allow for extenuating circumstances, particularly as we realize many are still dealing with the effects from the Covid pandemic.

Following University policy, all students are required to engage in appropriate behavior to protect the health and safety of the community. Students are also required to follow the [campus COVID-19 protocols](#).

Students who feel ill must not come to class. In addition, students who test positive for COVID-19 or have had an exposure that requires testing and/or quarantine must not attend class. The University will provide information to the instructor, in a manner that complies with privacy laws, about students in these latter categories. These students are judged to have excused absences for the class period and should contact the instructor via email about making up the work.

Students who fail to abide by these rules will first be asked to comply; if they refuse, they will be required to leave the classroom immediately. If a student is asked to leave the classroom, the non-compliant student will be judged to have an unexcused absence and reported to the Office for Student Conflict Resolution for disciplinary action. Accumulation of non-compliance complaints against a student may result in dismissal from the University.

Again, students should inform instructors in advance of missing class and generally adhere to the guidelines specified in the UIUC Student Code (http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part5_1-501.html).

Grading Philosophy

I do not view grading as a punishment or reprimand for not knowing the answer, but as critical feedback that is used to advance your understanding of self, others, and content. These are opportunities to learn and grow – everyone can improve, so everyone will receive constructive comments. If my comments do not help you, or you are left with questions, please let me know and we will figure out another way to provide you with feedback. This should never be a stressful process, but this does not mean it will be without the mental burn of a good brain work out!

I always welcome feedback on my grading, teaching, or communication of concepts. Please feel free to come to me with any comments, questions, or concerns.

Make Up And Late Assignments

Those with pre-approved absences can submit their homework, reflection, and follow-ups the following class period (e.g. conference presentation). Those with eligible absences* and documentation will receive an extension for all due work (e.g. death in the family).

Late assignments are not accepted, but there will be opportunities to revise your assignments for a higher score. *Please consult the Student Code Article 1, Part 5 to check whether a particular reason for absence is eligible for late submission of work: http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part5_1-501.html.

Inclusivity

The effectiveness of this course is dependent upon the creation of an encouraging and safe classroom environment. Exclusionary, offensive or harmful speech (such as racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, etc.) will not be tolerated and in some cases will be subject to University harassment procedures. We are all responsible for creating a positive and safe environment that allows all students equal respect and comfort. I expect each of you to help establish and maintain an environment where you and your peers can contribute without fear of ridicule or intolerant or offensive language.

While we strive to include as many voices and perspectives as possible, this course is by no means wholly representative of the diversity of backgrounds, paths, perspectives, and values in the various possible careers after graduation. All of you bring your own unique set of experiences, perspectives, and knowledge that will complement and enhance what we have to offer, and we are excited to hear what you bring to the group. Everyone's ideas and backgrounds will be respected and valued in this safe, welcoming space. We are glad to have you!

Everyone is welcome and heartily encouraged to participate in this safe space.
Hate has no home here.

Support

Basic needs insecurity is common among college students and the negative impacts are real:

- Increases difficulty in concentrating and studying, lowers retention, and decreases graduation rate.
- Generates and/or elevates depression, anxiety, insomnia, headaches, and burnout.
- Lowers morale and motivation, reduces creativity, hinders communication, decreases productivity, increases absenteeism, and decreases social opportunities.

Students who are hungry, burned-out, depressed, preoccupied with issues like money are less likely to succeed academically, socially, and personally. ***The [Community of Care website](#) has a huge list of campus resources that may help you.***

If at any point in the semester you are struggling with mental health issues (anxiety, depression, grief, PTSD, addiction, cultural struggles, coming out, etc.), inconsistent access to nutritious foods, housing or financial instability, or lack of access to any other basic needs, know that I have an open door and can help point you to the many resources on campus to help. Seeking support is healthy and courageous.

Mental Health

Significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, substance/alcohol misuse or interferences in eating or sleep can have an impact on academic performance, social development, and emotional wellbeing. The University of Illinois offers a variety of confidential services including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, psychiatric services, and specialized screenings which are covered through the Student Health Fee. If you or someone you know experiences any of the above mental health concerns, it is strongly encouraged to contact or visit any of the University's resources provided below. Getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do for yourself and for those who care about you.

- Counseling Center (217) 333-3704
- McKinley Health Center (217) 333-2700
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255
- Rosecrance Crisis Line (217) 359-4141 (available 24/7, 365 days a year)

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

Community of Care

As members of the Illinois community, we each have a responsibility to express care and concern for one another. If you come across a classmate whose behavior concerns you, whether in regards to their well-being or yours, we encourage you to refer this behavior to the Student Assistance Center (217-333-0050 or

<http://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/referral/>). Based on your report, the staff in the Student Assistance Center reaches out to students to make sure they have the support they need to be healthy and safe.

Further, we understand the impact that struggles with mental health can have on your experience at Illinois. Significant stress, strained relationships, anxiety, excessive worry, alcohol/drug problems, a loss of motivation, or problems with eating and/or sleeping can all interfere with optimal academic performance. We encourage all students to reach out to talk with someone, and we want to make sure you are aware that you can access mental health support at McKinley Health Center (<https://mckinley.illinois.edu/>). Or the Counseling Center (<https://counselingcenter.illinois.edu/>). For urgent matters during business hours, no appointment is needed to contact the Counseling Center. For mental health emergencies, you can call 911.

Food Assistance and Wellbeing Program

Among college students, 35-51% report experiencing food insecurity. At UIUC around 1 in 5 students experience food insecurity. Proper nutrition has been linked to positive brain function and better academic outcomes; don't settle for the "right of passage" of living on cheap, processed food. There are several community and campus resources to get you the nutrition you need to succeed. You can find them here:

<https://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/resources/students/food-resources/>

Instructor Responses and Office Hours

Questions posted via email or to Discord generally will be answered within 48 hours. If possible, students are encouraged to answer questions posted by other students on Discord rather than waiting for an instructor's response.

Another way to communicate with the instructors is to make use of the virtual office hours or DM on Discord. The instructors will be available for office hours via Zoom by scheduled appointment (just email us!) and will be checking Discord frequently. You can also make an appointment using Christina's booking system:

<https://go.illinois.edu/BookCareerConnections>.

Academic Integrity

All students are responsible for reading the University of Illinois Student Code (<https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/>). Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Examples of academic dishonesty include the following:

- Cheating
- Fabrication
- Facilitating infractions of academic integrity
- Plagiarism
- Bribes, favors, and threats
- Academic interference
- Examination by proxy
- Grade tampering
- Non-original works

Should an incident arise in which a student is thought to have violated academic integrity, the student will be processed under the disciplinary policy set forth in the [Illinois Academic Integrity Policy, using the FAIR system](https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4/1-401/) (<https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4/1-401/>). If you do not understand relevant definitions of academic infractions, contact your instructors for an explanation within the first week of class.

Platforms & Technology Requirements

We will be using the following platforms in class this semester:

- Moodle
- Google Slides
- Slido (<https://www.sli.do>)
- Discord* (<https://discord.gg/k5ZgDy2UDJ>)

All class sessions will have a Zoom link for you to join if you are unable to come to class in person AND get prior approval to join us synchronously. You will need the following to participate in virtual class:

- Access to internet for synchronous Zoom sessions
- Device with audio and video capabilities

*Discord will be used as an optional supplement to the course, as a community space to connect with professionals, peers, alumni, and others to further your career. We will also post opportunities regularly such as jobs, research, internships, volunteering, and useful resources.