

Thursdays 11-12:30pm

115 Barrows Hall

Instructor: Allison Lee Hall, M.A.

426 Barrows Hall

allisonhall@berkeley.edu

Office Hours: by appointment

PURPOSE:

Many undergraduates have the goal of graduate school in mind, but what is “graduate school,” exactly? This course is designed to help students explore and demystify graduate school, beginning with understanding the difference between professional and terminal degree programs. It is also designed to help students figure out which type of program is right for them. Once students have a stronger understanding of graduate school and the different types of programs that exist, we will delve into the logistics of preparing to apply to graduate school, including standardized test prep, writing a statement of purpose, and asking for letters of recommendation. Finally, we will glimpse into the lives of current graduate students and gain perspective into what graduate school is really like.

Although in part practical, this course is taught from a developmental perspective. Students will learn what they should expect during the transition to graduate school, and they are encouraged to process their feelings or perceptions about the prospect of attending graduate school, as well as the actual transition. Special attention will be given to discussing the pressures students face as they prepare to make this transition (familial, financial, personal, etc.).

Note: This course is not designed for students who have already begun to apply for graduate school; however, those students are highly encouraged to attend any of the Open Forums.

MENTORING COMPONENT:

Students will be mentored throughout the semester by the instructor. In Week 13, after completing a Graduate School Mentee Questionnaire based on what you’ve learned throughout the semester about what kind of graduate programs you’re most interested in, you will be matched with a current graduate student at Berkeley. Mentors and mentorees will be introduced during the final class meeting, with the idea that they continue their relationship throughout the mentoree’s transition to graduate school.

OPEN FORUMS:

Many of the seminar sessions will involve guest speakers who will speak in an open forum or panel format. Students who are not enrolled in the course are welcome to attend these sessions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Grading for this course is based on a Pass/Not Pass basis. To receive a Pass in the course, students must complete all assignments, participate in class discussions, ask thoughtful questions especially to guest panelists, and come to class having done the required readings or research.

A breakdown of grading:

Attendance & Participation	20 possible points
Reflective Paper #1 (due Feb 2)	20 possible points
Online self-assessment & Career Center Appt.	10 possible points

Graduate Programs Presentation (due Feb 9)	10 possible points
Statement of Purpose Draft (due March 22)	10 possible points
Graduate School Mentee Questionnaire	10 possible points
Reflective Paper #2 (due May 3)	20 possible points

Late papers are automatically marked down 5 points a day.

A passing grade for the course is a 70 or higher.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students with more than three unexcused absences automatically do not pass the course.

UNITS: 2 Units P/NP

Weekly Breakdown

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

January 19

Overview of the semester and course syllabus. Resources for graduate school advising on campus.

To Do: 1) **Reflective Paper #1** - Where are you at in terms of applying to graduate school? If you've only just begun to think about graduate school, that's fine. At this point, what kind of program do you think you might be interested in? What are some careers you may be interested in following graduate school? What are your hopes in terms of graduate school? What are your fears? This paper should be 2-3 pages and is **due at the beginning of the Week 3/February 2 class meeting.**

2) **Complete the FOCUS-2 self-assessment online.** Visit <https://career.berkeley.edu/Plan/FOCUS-2.stm> to complete the self-assessment. By Week 5 of the course, complete a 45 minute appointment OR 15 minute mini appointment with the Career Center to discuss your completed self-assessment. Note: appointments at the Career Center are on a first-come, first-served basis, so do not wait to complete this appointment. For more information visit: <https://career.berkeley.edu/Info/MakeAppt.stm#mini> To complete this assignment, you must **print the confirmation email you receive once you've scheduled an appointment, and ALSO get the counselor's business card signed and dated on the back. (Due Feb 16th)**

WEEK 2: WHAT IS GRADUATE SCHOOL? WHY ATTEND IT? WHEN ATTEND IT?

January 26

In this seminar, we will demystify graduate school. What is the difference between professional and academic degree programs? What is a masters degree? What is a Ph.D.? Why does one pursue those degrees? What careers do they lead to? When should I apply? And how do I begin to search for programs?

To Do: 1) Explore Career Center webpage regarding graduate school:

<https://career.berkeley.edu/Grad/Grad.stm> 2) Read "Timetable for Applying to Graduate School"

<http://gradschool.about.com/cs/overviewtimetable/a/timetable.htm>

WEEK 3: WHAT GRADUATE PROGRAM IS RIGHT FOR YOU? (Open Forum)

February 2

A panel composed of Cristina Mora, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Jesekah Odom, B.A. 2011, and a representative from the Career Center will talk about how to go about finding the graduate program that is right for you. DUE: Reflective Paper #1 is due at the beginning of class.

To Do: Graduate Programs Presentation. Do research on **two** specific programs that you are currently interested in (one must be outside of California). Find out the different aspects of the program such as the Carnegie classification of the school, type of degree, graduate admissions requirements, course load, areas of specialization, faculty, graduate placements upon completion of degree, cost of living, school fees, and other financial considerations (moving, etc.). This information should also be incorporated in your in-class presentation next week and will serve as the basis of your 5 minute in-class presentation next week.

WEEK 4: SAMPLE GRADUATE PROGRAMS

February 9

Students will give a 5 minute presentation on **one** of the two potential graduate program they are interested in applying to. More discussion will take place surrounding the differences between different types of graduate programs. **DUE: Graduate Programs Presentation (I will collect your notes/outlines for both programs).**

To Do: 1) Review some of the undergraduate research opportunities available on campus by visiting research.berkeley.edu.

WEEK 5: THE ROLE OF RESEARCH (Open Forum)

February 16

A staff member from the Undergraduate Research office will give a presentation on the role of research in graduate programs, as well as the value of doing research while still an undergraduate. In addition, student and alumni representatives will discuss their research experience while at Cal, and how it relates to their career and graduate school goals. **DUE: Confirmation of completing the FOCUS-2 assessment and meeting at the Career Center (see week 1).**

To Do: Look at the basics of the GRE: www.ets.org/gre/

WEEK 6: STANDARDIZED TESTING (Open Forum)

February 23

A representative from a testing review center will discuss the differences between the GRE, LSAT, GMAT, MCAT, and other tests, and will provide an overview of strategies offered in prep courses.

To Do: Read "How to Write a Statement of Purpose" <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Statement-of-Purpose>

WEEK 7: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (Open Forum)

March 1

Gloria Chun from the Social Science Diversity Office will discuss tips on how to write an effective statement of purpose for graduate school applications.

To Do: 1) Begin drafting your Statement of Purpose, due at the **beginning of class on March 22.**

2) Read “Recommendation Letters; Choosing Referees” and related links

<http://gradschool.about.com/od/askingforletters/a/askrec.htm> Bring list of faculty whom you might ask for a letter of recommendation.

WEEK 8: LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION (Open Forum)

March 8

Irene Bloemraad, Associate Professor of Sociology, will discuss a good letter of recommendation, samples, and how to obtain one.

To Do: Update your resume & bring it with you to the next class. If you don't have one, create a draft one from a template in Word.

WEEK 9: RESUME BUILDING AND INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

March 15

A representative from the Career Center will discuss how to package and present yourself more effectively. We will look at sample resumes including our own, and we will discuss the role of the interview in the graduate application process.

To Do: Finalize Statement of Purpose and turn in during next class session.

WEEK 10: FINANCIAL AID AND PAYING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL (Open Forum)

March 22

A panel of students & staff will talk about how to obtain funding for graduate school and alternatives for financing a graduate education. Information from the Graduate Fellowships Offices will be distributed as well.

Due: Statement of Purpose.

To Do: Visit the UCLA GRAPES web-site for potential funding sources <http://www.gdnet.ucla.edu/grpinst.htm>

Week 11: SPRING BREAK!

No class meeting

WEEK 12: TRANSITIONS

April 5

A discussion will take place around the transitions and potential hopes and fears students have surrounding the change from undergraduate to graduate school, with special attention given to the pressures students face including familial, financial, and personal.

To Do: Fill out the Graduate School Mentoree questionnaire and bring it with you to your individual appointment.

WEEK 13: INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING & MENTOR MATCHING

week of April 12

No class meeting. Students should set up an individual appointment with the instructor for a 15-minute review of where they're at in terms of graduate school. Make sure you bring your completed Graduate School Mentoree questionnaire with you to the meeting.

To Do: 1) Read "What is Graduate School Like?" <http://gradschool.about.com/cs/transitions/a/like.htm>
2) Prepare a list of three questions for the graduate student panel on what it's really like to be in grad school.

WEEK 14: WHAT IS GRADUATE SCHOOL REALLY LIKE? (OPEN FORUM)

April 19

A panel of graduate students will come and talk about what graduate school has been like for them to date, along with what they're planning to do after graduation.

WEEK 15: CONCLUSION & MENTOR/MENTEE INTRODUCTIONS

April 26

In this final class meeting, we will review what we've learned about graduate school. Students will also be introduced to their mentors and get an opportunity to hear from them directly.

To Do: Reflective Paper #2 – Look back on your reflective paper #1. Where are you now at in terms of applying to graduate school? At this point, what kind of program do you think you might be interested in? What are some careers you may be interested in following graduate school? Be sure to address what's changed since you wrote paper #1. What are your new hopes in terms of graduate school? What are your new fears? What's the same? This paper should be 2-3 pages and is **due in the Soc 198 box in 410 Barrows by the time the office closes (4:00pm sharp) on Thursday, May 3rd.**