
Instructor: Jeff Dahlseid, Ph.D.

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Office: Nobel 221C, Phone: x6129

Readings: The Different Drum by M. Scott Peck,

Jayber Crow by Wendell Berry, and Big Questions Worthy Dreams by Sharon Daloz Parks

Class: M-F 10:30-12:20

Classroom: Vickner 303

Office hours as arranged

URL: gustavus.edu/~dahlseid/NDL207/

Description and Course Outline:

The term *mentor* conjures up the image of an individual who takes an apprentice. This class will explore the idea that a community might take on the characteristics of a mentoring community. It aims to help students develop as mentors and consider how to utilize mentors in their own journeys of vocational discernment and exploration, equipping them with important transferable skills and perspectives that will help them influence the character of their future communities. We will discuss readings and films, and engage class guests, to address one of four questions each week: what is mentoring?, what is community?, what is a mentoring community?, and how should it be done? We will explore these through reflective journaling, short papers, interviewing community members, and a final creative project in which you propose your answer to “how should it be done?” at Gustavus.

Course Learning Objectives:

My learning objectives for this course are for you to:

- Gain knowledge and understanding of community as well as mentoring, as practiced individually and by communities.
- Gain experience, skill and practice with reflection
- Develop your abilities to be and benefit from good mentors.
- Explore mentoring as an aspect of vocation
- Invest yourselves in your present community

Approach to Learning:

It is my hope that your experience in this course will be different from experiences in regular semester courses, and even other January term courses you may have had. The nature of the January term is quite different from a regular semester, both in providing unique opportunities and characteristic limitations. However, I hope this course is different for more than these reasons.

This course will be guided by the structure of the four questions identified above, the texts, and the planned schedule (yet to be finalized) but I suggest that the course to be run in such a way so as to allow the influence of spontaneous contributions that arise. Thus, while the primary reading and schedule are planned, we may add to or change the emphases of the reading or alter the schedule as needed. The course will be guided by its goals and engaged through questions, but it is my hope that it will remain dynamic enough to provide us all with the best experience possible.

Furthermore, in addition to the topical focus of the course, it will be a explicit goal of this course to identify and attempt to take on the characteristics of a mentoring community. This will provide a fantastic opportunity for exploration and a primary vehicle for experiential learning (new emphasis for J term).

This course is listed at the 200-level because it will draw upon material presenting a variety of perspectives and require you to use and share knowledge and perspectives gained from other classes in various disciplines and your experiences to inform and enrich the class and our experience together in it. You will need to employ the same in your course project. I encourage you to bring learning from your experience elsewhere to bear upon your learning in this course and to share the same with the members of the class.

Finally, we will use class time primarily to engage in discussion and group work focusing upon the course topic. The success of this approach will depend heavily upon our collective preparation for our class meetings and will require significant time outside of scheduled class. It is my hope that together we can cultivate an environment of active learning. Because of this approach, you should expect effective learning to come from reading the material and otherwise preparing for each class meeting **ahead** of time including preparing questions, points for clarification, or ideas for discussion in class. You are **required** to attend class, both physically and mentally, to give yourself every opportunity to learn the material. As participation is a significant aspect of this course, absences (in mind and/or body) will be a basis for a lower course grade. If your attendance is challenged by a crisis or emergency, please contact me as soon as possible. I will try to make arrangements for valid circumstances. I value and expect your participation in classroom learning. I expect everyone to work hard, but if you are having problems with the course please let me know. I am here to help you learn.

Course Activities and Requirements:

Participation: Your engagement in this class is important for the success of you and the class. Both your attendance and your participation in class discussion and activities will be a basis for evaluation in the class. Attendance should include having both your body and mind present. For participation in discussion, I will consider both the quantity and quality of contributions. In terms of quantity, both making no contributions and dominating a discussion (i.e. in order to “score” more contributions) will be viewed negatively. Common guidelines for civil discourse apply; be respectful in agreement and disagreement. In term of quality my suggestion is simply to be thoughtful and authentic.

Reflective Journal: A central aspect of this course will be reflective practice. As part of this effort, you are to set aside a minimum of 30 minutes each weekday for reflective journaling. For each experience, you are to make an entry in your personal journal pertaining to one or more of the topics of the class. However, it is recognized that some days you may use more time for reflecting and write less, whereas other days you may write much. The focus of your entries is not to be constrained, but should include the questions and related topics from the course. You are encouraged to pursue this at a very personal level. I will respect and not read entries marked confidential. A consistent pattern of trivial (short and/or insignificant) entries may be taken as an indication of poor performance in this aspect of the class.

Interviews: A significant element of this class will include engaging the Gustavus community with the topic of this class. This will include conducting and documenting interviews with a minimum of three members of the Gustavus community as part of your exploration of this topic and as preparation for your final project. All three interviews must be applicable to your final project; if one fails to yield this result, you will need to conduct more until you have three that do. You may choose (and are encouraged) to conduct more interviews to enrich your experience, perspective, and final project. You will need to provide a legible transcript of the questions used and answers obtained for this assignment.

Short essays: You will be asked to write three position essays, providing a personal response to the first three questions of the class. It is expected that you will draw upon class readings, our discussion, your journaling, you experience, and possibly also outside reading, other classes, and your interviews, as appropriate. Citations are expected for the sources used, including use of a formal bibliographic format or style. Essays are due the Monday following the week that focused upon a question (see schedule). No specific page limit will be enforced; 2-3 pages (double spaced) as offered as a guideline only. Essays will be evaluated on both the quality of the writing and the content.

Final Project: The culminating project for the course will be some creative engagement of the question for the last week of the course, which is due at the end of the term (1/27). Projects might be a paper, a web page, a poster, a portfolio, a speech, a presentation, etc. The intent and hope for this assignment is that these projects will provide student voice in the discussion of Gustavus as a mentoring community, so the final form of the project would best take a shape that is accessible to the community for their consideration. Projects can be done individually or in pairs. If you wish to work in a larger group, I will entertain proposals for group project ideas. In any case, I would request that you converse with me in the development of your project idea/plan.

Grading breakdown:	Attendance	10%
	Participation	20%
	Reflective journal	10%
	Interviews (3)	10%
	Short essays (3)	30%
	<u>Final project</u>	<u>20%</u>
	Total	100%

Final grades will be assigned according to a straight percentage scale. The following percentage scale will serve as a **guideline** for letter grade assignment:

- 90-100% = A
- 80 - 89% = B
- 70 - 79% = C
- 60 - 69% = D

Class e-mail policy: I typically use e-mail to help manage my courses and field questions, so I require that you use your **Gustavus** e-mail account. The advantages to this system include speed, avoided trips to Nobel Hall for simple questions, and a generally smoother running course. Here's the protocol. **When you have questions, e-mail them to me.** If your question is very specific, I will reply directly. If the question seems potentially interesting to the entire class, I will forward the question (anonymously) and my reply to the class. I will assume you do not object to sharing your question unless you specifically state so. As I may refer to e-mail questions in class and I use e-mail for general class announcements, **I encourage you to check your e-mail before class.** Campus rules for alias use apply and abuse will not be tolerated.

Given the nature of this class, it is my hope that we can also use the course alias as a discussion list. I encourage you to make use of it to share your thoughts, insights and questions with the members of the class; the alias is **jt-ndl-207-001**.

Academic honesty:

It is my expectation and policy that everyone will participate in this class in an honest and honorable way; I will not tolerate academic dishonesty. While I encourage working together to promote effective learning, the written work you submit on behalf of an assignment must be your own. Dishonesty includes plagiarism, which is presenting someone else's ideas or words as your own. It is your responsibility in all written work to credit sources from which you draw ideas and language with proper referencing. Gustavus has an Honor Code and, by virtue of being a student here (as well as your signed agreement from course registration), you have agreed to uphold the Honor Code. In this course, you are required to sign the following statement for papers or projects (though it applies to all of your work): "On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, nor tolerated others' use of unauthorized aid in completing this work." Central to the code is non-tolerance for violations. Though you are not expected to police others' actions, under the code (and in this class), failure to report a violation of which you are aware also constitutes an honor code violation. Documented violations will result in a zero for the assignment in question, will be reported to the Dean's office, and may result in failure of the course. If you have questions concerning particulars of academic honesty, please see me.

Feedback: I am very enthusiastic about being and becoming an outstanding educator, both for you and future students. I welcome constructive suggestions about how to improve class, my teaching, and the course. I expect to learn from you this semester how I might teach better. I invite you to discuss your suggestions with me in my office at any time.

Students with disabilities: Appropriate accommodations will be made for students with specific, documented disabilities of a physical, psychiatric or learning nature. Related information will be kept strictly confidential. Please contact either me or Laurie Bickett (x7027) in Academic Advising if this applies to you.

Note this syllabus and schedule are subject to change at the instructor's discretion.