



Human Development and Family Science Program  
A joint program of the College of Education and Human  
Development and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences  
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<http://hdfs.gmu.edu/>

**HDFS 300.001 Individual and Family Services Delivery (3:3:0)**  
**Spring 2016 | Tuesday/Thursday, 9:00-10:15AM | Thompson Hall 1020**

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**Course Description**

Overview of human services delivery with a focus on families. Explores the historical and social contexts as well as the theoretical orientations of systems that shape delivery of services to families. Examines: 1) economic and cultural barriers that prevent families from gaining access to services; 2) social policy surrounding services for families; 3) ethical and legal issues in family services.

**Nature of Course Delivery**

This course utilizes a distributed learning format requiring active participation of all students. Students are expected to complete all class readings prior to each session so as to engage in active dialogue, productive learning, and critical reflection. Activities will include instructor presentation, small-group discussions, student presentations, videos, and whole class sharing to support course content. In addition, a Blackboard online component of coursework is required.

**Learner Outcomes**

Upon completing this course, the student will:

1. Be knowledgeable about theories and methods of helping individuals and groups in various service settings
2. Be able to use ethical guidelines to make appropriate decisions
3. Understand and be able to apply knowledge about laws protecting clients' rights
4. Have the skills required to identify, find, apply for, and successfully carry out a human services internship
5. Be able to write a brief program/project/grant proposal with budget in spreadsheet format.

**Professional Standards**

This course is aligned with the following standards established by the National Council on Family Relations:

**Families and Individuals in Societal Contexts** - An understanding of families and their relationships to other institutions, such as the educational, governmental, religious, and occupational institutions in society.

**Professional Ethics and Practice** - An understanding of the character and quality of human social conduct, and the ability to critically examine ethical questions and issues as they relate to professional practice

**Family Life Education Methodology** - An understanding of the general philosophy and broad principles of family life education in conjunction with the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate such educational programs.

## Required Texts

Arditti, J. A. (2015). *Family problems: Stress, risk and resilience*. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell

LeBlanc, A. N. (2003). *Random Family*. New York: Scribner.

You can purchase the book(s) at the bookstore or online (i.e., Amazon). In addition to the textbook, supplementary readings are uploaded as PDF files on our Blackboard site. [Please note: You are expected to take responsibility for obtaining copies of all required reading in time to prepare for class each week.]

This course uses Blackboard provided through the University. To access our Blackboard site, please use Mozilla Firefox (a free downloadable browser that is most compatible with the Blackboard software). Then go to [mymasonportal.gmu.edu](http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu) and log on using your GMU ID and password. For help logging onto Blackboard, contact Teaching and Learning with Technology [see <http://itusupport.gmu.edu> or call 703-993-8870]. **The instructor cannot assist you with log-on problems.**

## GMU Policies and Resources for Students

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- d. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

## Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

## Core Values Commitment

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles [<http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>].

## For GSE Syllabi

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

### ***Collaboration***

Collaboration is an important human activity that involves shared responsibility in promoting healthy, productive lives, and educational success. We commit ourselves to work toward these goals in genuine partnerships with individuals, families, community agencies, schools, businesses, foundations, and other groups at the local, regional, national, and international levels.

### ***Ethical Leadership***

In all professions represented by the college, leadership is an essential component denoting ability and willingness to help lead professional practice to higher levels. We commit ourselves to practice ethical leadership through deliberate and systematic attention to the ethical principles that guide all leaders in a moral society.

### ***Innovation***

We have a history of creating dynamic, innovative programs, and we are dedicated to continue creating innovative approaches in all areas of our work. We commit ourselves to seeking new ways to advance knowledge, solve problems, improve our professional practice, and expand on our successes.

### ***Research-Based Practice***

The best practice in any discipline is based upon sound research and professional judgment. We commit ourselves to basing our instruction, scholarship, and policy recommendations on well-established principles that, wherever possible, emerge from research and reflection on its implications for professional practice.

### ***Social Justice***

Social justice embodies essential principles of equity and access to all opportunities in society, in accordance with democratic principles and respect for all persons and points of view. We commit ourselves to promoting equity, opportunity, and social justice through the college's operations and its missions related to teaching, research, and service.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

### **Emergency Procedures**

You are encouraged to sign up for emergency alerts by visiting the website <https://alert.gmu.edu>. There are emergency posters in each classroom explaining what to do in the event of crises. Further information about emergency procedures exists on <http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert>.

## **Course Requirements**

### **General Requirements**

1. The completion of all readings assigned for the course is expected. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities, it is imperative that students keep up with the readings and participate in class.
2. Attendance in class and/or online is important to students' learning; therefore, students are expected to make every effort to attend class sessions and/or complete online modules within the designated timeframe. Absences, tardiness, leaving early, and not completing online modules in the designated timeframe may negatively affect course grades. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must call the instructor and leave a message or send an email before class. The following policy is from the university course catalog:

*Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because*

*class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.*

3. In line with Mason's policy that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious holidays, students shall be given an opportunity to make up, within a reasonable time, any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. **It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observations in advance of the class that will be missed.** Notice should be provided in writing as soon as possible.
4. During face-to-face and live online meetings, cell phones, pagers, and other communicative devices are not allowed in this class. Students must keep them stowed away and out of sight. Laptops or tablets (e.g., iPads) may be permitted for the purpose of taking notes only – when indicated by the instructor. Engaging in activities not related to the course (e.g. gaming, email, chat, etc.) will result in a significant deduction in their participation grade.
5. It is expected that assignments will be turned in on time (**at the beginning of the designated class.**) However, it is recognized that students occasionally have serious problems that prevent work completion. If such a dilemma arises, students should speak to the instructor **prior to the assignment due date.** If the student does not communicate with the instructor, a late penalty will be applied.
6. Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when responsible for a task, students will perform that task. When students rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, they will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind), students will ask for guidance and clarification.

### **Written Assignments**

All formal written assignments will be evaluated for content and presentation. The American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition (APA) style will be followed for all written work. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. (Use spell check!) If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work. When in doubt, they should check the APA manual. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the Mason library web guide at <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/>. Students may consult the Writing Center for additional writing support.

#### ***When writing, students will do the following:***

1. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
2. Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.
3. Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. (Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.)
4. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

## Grading Criteria

97-100	A+	87-89	B+	77-79	C+	60-69	D	Below 60	F
93-96	A	83-86	B	73-76	C				
90-92	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-				

## Grading Policy

All CEHD/CHSS undergraduate and graduate students are held to the university grading policies as described in the Academic Policies section of the current catalog, which can be accessed at <http://catalog.gmu.edu>

## Specific Course Assignments

Assignments	Due Dates	Percentage of Grade
Attendance & Participation	Ongoing	10
Quizzes (2 @ 10 points each)	Feb 11, Mar 24	20
Career Mapping Assignment	April 28	30
Random Family Summary	See Course Schedule	20
Final Exam	May 5	20
TOTAL		100

### I. Attendance and Participation (10%)

**Because active participation and engagement are imperative for optimal learning, preparation for and participation in in-class as well as online activities will be evaluated based on the following criteria:**

1. Students attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period.
2. Students complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class as is evidenced by their ability to discuss and write about the concepts presented and examined in the texts as well as participate fully in related activities.
3. Students are actively involved in in-class and online learning experiences as is evidenced by (1) participating in all activities, (2) engaging in small and large group discussions and in-class exercises, (3) completing written work related to the activities, and (4) supporting the participation and learning of classmates.
4. Students show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-class and online discussions, activities, and written reflections.

### II. Quizzes (10 points each = 20% total)

There will be two take-home quizzes that will cover class lectures, notes, discussions, videos, and readings. The quizzes will not be cumulative.

### **III. Career Mapping in Family Services (30%)**

This assignment is designed to help students explore their career goals through self-reflection and discussions with experts in the field, as well as prepare for related internship(s) and their career beyond undergraduate studies. Students will not only consider their desired careers but they will spend time interviewing individuals in related positions. Moreover, students will begin to search for their internship as well as prepare their cover letters and resumes.

**Instructions:** Complete each of the 10 sections as instructed (see attached). Do not forget to include: the informational interviews, your resume, cover letter, and the advertisements for your internships.

### **IV. Random Family In-Class Exercise and Summary Paper (20%)**

This 5 page MAX double-spaced summary paper (including references in APA style) corresponds with the reading of Leblanc's book, *Random Family*. The purpose of the assignment is for students to think about the lived experiences of the individuals and families described in the book and analyze the role human service workers and institutions played in narrative. The purpose is also for students to learn more about family life in under-resourced and marginalized communities and to examine and consider the ways in which you would intervene based on the best practices delineated throughout the course.

For this assignment, students will form groups and each group will thoroughly examine the section of the book assigned to understand the ecologies surrounding the individuals and families. Students will be invited to react to the book, to the characters and families described, and to the ways in which the individuals and families are impacted by the policies and practices in place to respond to their needs. Groups will be invited to share their thoughts and analyses during class and lead class discussions.

Next, student groups will be challenged to develop multiple and complex intervention strategies to support family functioning and promote resilience based on course readings and their own examination of the extant literature on best practices and policy interventions.

**Each student will write a brief summary (5-pages MAX) responding to the following questions:**

- 1) What section did you cover for the group assignment? What are your reactions to this book overall? What parts of the narrative stood out for you the most and why? (1 page)
- 2) Identify and describe three human service systems/institutions that were prevalent in the lives of family members. Explain the roles played and whether you thought the system/practitioner was culturally competent, attuned and responsive to individual and familial needs. (1 page)
- 3) Next, discuss at least one intervention strategy that you would employ to support the well-being and health of an individual and/or a family described in the book. This intervention should be based on evidence and best practices discussed throughout the course and in the research literature. How would you implement this strategy? What would it take to implement (cost, personnel, community partners)? How would you know if you were making a difference? (1-2 pages)
- 4) Utilizing concepts from class lectures, discussions, and/or readings (i.e., theory and intervention, self-aware professionals, case management and counseling, etc...), analyze and reflect upon your assumptions and beliefs about families in under-resourced neighborhoods and how your perspective has changed as a result of reading this book. (About 1 page)

**Be sure to include references.**

### **V. Final Exam (20%)**

There will be an in-class final exam at the end of the semester to examine your understanding of course concepts and policy and practices responses to family problems. This exam will be discussed in detail in class.

## Course Topics and Calendar

**NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed. If changes are made, you will be notified of the changes in class or by your university e-mail address.**

Week/Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments DUE
<b>Introduction and Conceptual Overview</b>		
WEEK 1: January 19-21	<p><b>Introduction to the Course and Each Other; Syllabus Review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please read over syllabus carefully and ask questions for clarity as needed</li> <li>• Check Blackboard</li> <li>• Introduce yourself to class</li> </ul> <p><b>Introduction to Individual and Family Services Delivery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careers in HDFS</li> <li>• Discuss Career Mapping Assignment</li> </ul>	READ: Syllabus
WEEK 2 Jan 26-28	<p><b>Conceptual Underpinnings: Family Problems – Family Resilience</b></p> <p>Theoretical Considerations From deficits to strengths: Implicit bias, cultural attunement and responsiveness WATCH: <a href="#">The Danger of the Single Story</a></p>	READ: <b>Arditti:</b> Ch 1: Introduction and Conceptual Overview
<b>Part 1 &amp; 2: The Construction of Family Problems across Diverse Contexts</b>		
WEEK 3 Feb 2-4	<p><b>Social Inequality and Marginalization</b></p> <p>Perspectives on queer families The stigma of families with mental illness</p>	READ: Arditti: Ch 2-3  <b>TAKE HOME QUIZ 1</b>
WEEK 4 Feb 9-11	<p><b>Social Inequality and Marginalization</b></p> <p>Incarcerated parents Low-income fathers Childhood adultification</p>	READ: Arditti: Ch 4, 6, 11  <b>DUE 2/11: QUIZ 1 by 11PM</b>

<b>WEEK 5</b> Feb 16-18	<b>Social Inequality and Marginalization</b> Social disparities in family health Food insecure families	READ: Arditti: Ch 5, 7
<b>WEEK 6</b> Feb 23-25	<b>Parenting and Caregiving in Diverse Contexts</b> Families and Foster Care Grandparents rearing grandchildren Caring for older Adults	READ: Arditti: Ch 8-10
<b>Parts 3 &amp; 4: Family Challenges over the Life Course and Policy/Practice Responses</b>		
<b>WEEK 7</b> Mar 1-3	<b>Family Challenges over the Life Course</b> Intimate partner violence Abuse in later life Adolescent romantic relationships and risks	READ: Arditti: Ch 14-16
<b>WEEK 8</b> Mar 8-10	Spring Break: Consider reading <i>Random Family</i>	
<b>WEEK 9</b> Mar 15-17	<b>Family Challenges over the Life Course</b> Substance abuse Military Families	READ: Arditti: Ch 13  <b>TAKE HOME QUIZ 2</b>
<b>WEEK 10</b> Mar 22-24	<b>Emergent Challenges</b> Immigrant, refugee, and asylee families Unaccompanied minors <b>No class 3/24</b> —Use time to organize groups for Random Family Exercise	READ: Arditti: Ch 20 Vesely <b>DUE 3/24: QUIZ 2 by 11PM</b>
<b>WEEK 11</b> Mar 29-31	<b>Policy and Practice Responses:</b> Strengthening family resilience What works, reforming systems, rebuilding communities  <b>Preparation for Random Family Exercise</b>	READ: Arditti: Ch 17-21



**Application: Responding to Family Problems, Building Resilience**

<b>WEEK 12</b> Apr 5-7	Random Family Exercise Group Presentations and Intervention Strategies	READ: Random Family Part I-II
<b>WEEK 13</b> Apr 12-14	Random Family Exercise Group Presentations and Intervention Strategies	READ: Random Family Part III-IV
<b>WEEK 14</b> Apr 19-21	Random Family Exercise Group Presentations and Intervention Strategies	READ: Random Family Part V  <b>DUE 4/21: Random Family Summary</b>
<b>WEEK 15</b> Apr 26-28	<b>Professional Ethics and Values--</b> Cultural Competence, humility, and diversity Career Mapping Wrap-Up Course Evaluation	<b>DUE 4/28: Career Mapping in Family Services Paper</b>
FINAL EXAM	May 5: Final Exam period 8:30am-10:15am	

## **INSTRUCTIONS for Paper 1: Career Mapping in Family Services (60 points)**

This assignment is designed to help students explore their career goals through self-reflection and discussions with experts in the field, as well as prepare for related internship(s) and their career beyond undergraduate studies. Students will not only consider their desired careers but they will spend time interviewing individuals in related positions. Moreover, students will begin to search for their internship as well as prepare their cover letters and resumes.

**Instructions:** Complete each of the 10 sections as instructed. Do not forget to attach: the informational interviews, your resume, cover letter, and the advertisements for your internships.

### **Section 1: My Dream Jobs**

What are your top three dream jobs (today)? Aim high, but stay in reality. Don't write down rock star unless you can sing. If you need ideas, The Bureau of Labor and Statistics is a great place to research occupations, salaries, etc... Take a look at the jobs they have listed: [http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_stru.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_stru.htm) and pick one. You can also use your textbook to get more information on various career options. Be as specific or as broad as you need to be. If you know that you want to be a therapist, but you are not sure what type, then do some research and list the three types that interest you the most. Finally, go as high up the career ladder as you can, and do not list stepping-stone positions. For example, do not list child care provider if you want to run your own daycare center someday—list child care director. However, if your dream job is to be a Supreme Court justice, you may also want to list being a Supreme Court clerk, so that you can interview one. For this section of career mapping, create a small table that indicates the job titles and a three-four sentence description of the job.

### **Section 2: Completed Informational Interviews**

Schedule and conduct informational interviews with **three** individuals that have your actual dream jobs. A minimum of 2 of these interviews should be conducted in person unless they are out of state, in which case you may interview them on the phone or by email, but you must have permission from the instructor to do this. For example, if you want to teach in New York state, you should interview at least one teacher from that school system, but you should also interview a teacher from Fairfax County (in person) so that you are able to learn the differences between the two systems. Do not interview the principal if you want to be a teacher, and vice versa. And do not interview recruiters of any kind unless you want to be a recruiter.

They must all have your dream jobs, starting with number one, and each dream job should be represented. You should explain why you want to interview the individual in the space allotted, particularly if the individual does not have one of your listed dream jobs, or if you have interviewed two people with the same title. Some rules: no relatives, no one on campus (unless you get me to make an exception for a really good reason), and most important, *you may not conduct an informational interview with any person with whom you are planning to discuss internship possibilities.*

You may ask your interviewees anything that you would like, but you must include the 5 questions listed below. Write up each interview (minimum 1 page each), and identify the answers to the required questions.

1. On a typical day, what do you do?
2. What part of this job do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?
3. From your perspective, what are the problems you see working in this field, and what new programs or ideas are most promising?
4. What training or education is optimal for this work?
5. Based on the experience I've had so far, what type of an internship or further work experience do you think would be most useful for me to enter this field? In other words, what is the path to your position?

### Section 3: Reflections

Finally, write 3 paragraphs (one for each interview) on how the interview helped you to determine your career path. What did you learn? What had you not realized about this job or thought about before? Also, what have you learned from other research you have been doing about your career goals? Have you changed your mind so far or been able to narrow down your ideas? What do think you will learn from this class (FMSC 383) that will be most useful in your future career?

### Section 4: Getting Specific about My Career Goal

Hopefully, after all those informational interviews & additional research, you have a pretty good idea of your current career goal/s. Please write about it here. If you haven't gotten all the details yet, here are a few good websites: Career Planner website, <http://www.careerplanner.com/DOTindex.cfm>, has over 12,000 job titles with position description, and of course, the Bureau of Labor Statistics is an excellent resource for job information, [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov). In a table, include the following information for each job: Name of position; type of organization in which you would work; work conditions and characteristics of interpersonal relationships in this position; job description; salary range.

### Section 5: Additional Education/ Training/ Work Experience (paid or unpaid) Required for my Career Goal

You may have learned about additional training and education requirements from your informational interviews or other sources. Information about graduate schools can be found at Petersons Planner: <http://www.petersons.com>. Training can include language acquisition, specific skills as professional writing, specific computer programs, etc... It can also include certificate programs. Idealist.org, Action Without Borders at <http://www.idealists.org> lists numerous volunteer and internship opportunities in the nonprofit sector, as well as nonprofit paid work opportunities. What kind of work experience do you need before you can achieve your career goal? How, where, and when will you obtain this training (be specific)?

### Section 6: Internship Search

The primary purpose of this section is to help you find an internship that fills the requirements for HDFS 498 and HDFS 499. The deadline for signed contracts is right around the corner, so start looking now! All HDFS majors must choose internships that will be acceptable for HDFS 498 and HDFS 499. That means they must be local, offer a minimum of 10 hours a week (mentoring positions do not usually offer enough hours), and you must be currently qualified for them.

Things to know: internships can be paid, they do not have to be advertised as an internship, and they can be advertised as a part time job. However your current job will not count as an internship unless you make arrangements for special new responsibilities as a part of your internship. Internships should involve direct service with clients, and minimal administrative duties. Finally, in order to register for HDFS 498 and HDFS 499, all internships must be approved by the HDFS program coordinator, and you must have a completed contract submitted by the deadline.

If you already have your internship arranged, and your contract signed & submitted, use this section to find internships that might be useful for your particular major or in addition to the one you are already doing. It should still be a position for which you are currently qualified.

Write a few sentences that indicate what you are hoping to get out of this internship.

### THEN

- Utilize newspaper help wanted ads and/or Internet search engines, such as Idealist.org., Craig's list, etc... to locate **3 human service internship positions** that sound interesting as possible placements for you for HDFS 400 and HDFS 450.
- **Print out the description and necessary qualifications for each internship position to pass in with this assignment.**
- **Attach to each print- up a typed paragraph or two addressing the following points:**

- Write: (a) the title of the position; (b) the organization offering the position; (c) the location of the organization; and (d) how you located the position.
- Why did you choose this position description for this assignment? Why is it interesting to you? How do you think you might benefit from working in this position? What types of skills and experiences will you likely acquire? How might this help you for your future?
- What is your plan & timeline for pursuing this internship? Do you need to call the organization, send them a resume, set up an interview, etc... Attach dates to each item in your plan. If you are enrolling in HDFS 498 next semester this timeline needs have an internship secured date that is at least two months prior to the beginning of the internship semester.

## Section 7: Cover Letter

*Please write a cover letter and attach a current resume. Follow the listed guidelines – if you have questions about any of the following, I would be happy to answer them...*

- Your cover letter should be addressed to the contact person at one of the aforementioned internships sites. That person must have a name, so if it is not listed in the advertisement, call the agency, and get it.
- It should be professionally formatted. If you are unsure about this, use a Word template, or look up sample letters on the internet.
- It should also have no grammar or spelling errors (for example, no single sentence paragraphs). Double check any word that you have capitalized in a proper dictionary, not on the internet, and make sure that your letter is APA style, which means use a lot of commas, particularly at the end of a series, and before and and because.
- Style and content should be professional and restrained. You want the tone of your letter to be informative, and not obsequious, but you also don't want to sound overconfident.
- Common mistakes: writing that you are an excellent writer or communicator in one sentence, and then having a grammar mistake in the next. It is probably best NOT to say that your are an excellent writer unless you are a journalism or an English major, or have a GPA over 3.75. Most of us are merely good writers, which should be demonstrated and not stated in a cover letter.
- Other common mistakes: overwriting. Try not to use phrases such as: I am looking for a fast-paced environment; I am passionate about \_\_\_\_\_; I am an exceptional \_\_\_\_\_, and I am uniquely qualified. Think of your cover letter as a first date: courteous, enjoyable, not too much, and not too little.
- You don't have to spell out all of your qualifications in your letter, just reference your resume, "As you can see from my resume, I have extensive experience working in customer service." Something like that.
- EVERY cover letter should include **your plans to follow-up with the addressee**. It may feel forward or awkward, but you are probably going to have to call them in a week and find out what the status of the job search is anyway, so you may as well let them know, "With the hope that I might be a good fit this position, I've attached my resume for your review. I will be calling you in one week to arrange an interview."
- Your cover letter should be 2 or 3 paragraphs and no longer than 1 page.

## Section 8: Resume

- Your resume should have no grammar or spelling errors (for example, no periods at the end of incomplete sentences).
- It should be no longer than 1 page, so choose listed items wisely, and should be professional.
- Education should be at the top of your resume. Do not include high school – this is assumed. Only include GPA if it is above a 3.0. A section on relevant coursework will probably be more informative than excessive or repetitive detail on minor job responsibilities.
- If you are a Family Science major, you anticipate receiving a Bachelor of Arts – please make sure this is correct on your resume and list the anticipated general date, for example Spring 2015.
- If you are a double major, please make sure that this is correct on your resume. A common mistake is for students to list this as a double degree, which is inaccurate.

- It is very trendy right now to include general skills and summary sections on resumes, but these are generally only recommended for individuals with extensive work history in the same area, and are recognized by potential employers as fillers when this is not the case.

### **Section 9: Career Preparation Timeline**

First, fill in the time line for your college years up until now. Include all information that is relevant to where you are now (for example: declaring your major, pivotal courses or life experiences). Then, map out the path you need to take to achieve your dream job. Look over the previous sections and make sure each plan you listed for obtaining education and training, and work experiences that you need for your career goal is listed on the timeline below (be sure to include your required HDFS internships and any additional internships). Don't forget personal plans! This should be listed in a table with Year # during college and Year # post-college, and a description of what goals you will accomplish.

### **Section 10: Alternative Scenarios**

Expect to change—we all do. As you come closer to your career goal, you may become less sure, for any of a variety of reasons, that it is really the appropriate goal for you. Often these are just jitters that will resolve themselves as you get still closer to your goal. Other times, though, they are an indicator that this goal is not right for you. When this happens, it can be scary, but it's not as scary if you know that there are other career options that you can enjoy.

Select 5 alternative career choices from the Martin book, describe each briefly, how it differs from your dream job in terms of the job itself, the education required, the salary, and why it is a good alternative career choice for you.