

Psychology 680

Spring, 2018

Course: In the last millennium, erstwhile program director Dean Ginther created this course as an internship at Ericsson in Dallas. I've resurrected it as a more generic "apprenticeship," covering a broad range of practical skills for surviving academic life post PhD...

Text: *The Compleat Academic*, Darley, Zanna, & Roediger, 2nd edition, APA.

The Basics: Keep in mind that a syllabus sometimes shifts a little as the course unfolds. I say that by way of noting the importance of class attendance, as you will be held responsible for any change in plans announced in class. The other basic admonition every syllabus must include is that cheating (broadly defined) is not allowed. Or, as the university likes me to say: "All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)." If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating please see me. Also, note that "Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must go through the Academic Support Committee. For more information, please contact the Director of Disability Resources & Services." Last... Be advised that only qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, even license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

Format: This is a graduate seminar. Come prepared to talk and contribute. I'd like for you to buy and read the book (it really is good), but it will be a true discussion course

Grades: If you do what is asked, you'll make an "A."

The Instructor: I am Tracy B. Henley, PhD. I should be in the main office every day before class. If that is not good for you, see me after class and we can find an alternative time for an appointment. You can also contact me at tracy.henley@tamuc.edu.

The Schedule of Events

Jan 17 A General Discussion About the Course and What YOU want to get from it
A Prolegomena on Program History
Discuss the Attached Paper

Topic 1 In the Beginning...

Post-Doc or Not?

How to Find an Academic Job

Where do I Look?

What can I realistically expect to land?

How to write a Vita (see model)

How to write a cover-letter - what not to say
What do search committees really look for?
What is a job interview like?

Realistic Salary Expectations

Homework: Create a Vita for Next Week

Homework: Skim Chapters 2-4, 6 & 18

Topic 2 Review Vitae

Now that you have a job...

Realistic Work Load, Start-Up, Travel, Research, etc expectations

What is a real "day in the life" of a Professor like?

Can you write 3 pages (or 3 hours a day)?

Soapbox: Interruptions and "busy work"

Finding a Mentor/Being a Mentor

How to Find a Non-Academic Job

Homework: Skim Chapter 5

Homework: Review an issue or two of *Teaching of Psychology*

Topic 3 Discuss what you found in *Teaching of Psychology*

On Teaching...

Selecting Textbooks

Finding Options

Understanding your audience

Costs

"Level"

Will they read it?

Dealing with Book Reps

Making Syllabi

Quasi-contractual

"Required" texts

May be used to evaluate you

New faculty expectations for students

Homework: Create a Syllabus for *Introductory Psychology*

Topic 4 Review Syllabi

Homework: Skim Chapters 7 & 10

Topic 5 On Research...

How to begin a program of research

Specialists vs Generalists

Attending Conferences

What to do at SWPA (etc)

Networking, not learning

How to publish an article

APA Style - plus what

Picking a journal

Where do I Look?
What can I realistically expect this to land?
How to tell good journals from bad ones
Do your homework and read the fine print

Writing a cover letter
Realistic Timetable

Homework: Review Sternberg Handout

Homework: Skim Chapters 8-9

Topic 6 Discuss Sternberg's Tips

More On Research...

Writing Books and Such

Text books vs Trade books
Finding a Publisher
Prospectus and sample chapters
Pleasing many masters
Timeline
Is it worth it?
Royalties
How it is received

Writing grants

How to locate external funding
Government Grants
Private Foundations
How to Write A Proposal
The Politics of How Proposals Get Reviewed
Realistic Expectations

Homework: Find and skim some articles by the current faculty

Topic 7 Discuss what you have read

Final Thoughts on Research...

Co-Authoring
How research relates to promotion and tenure
Soapbox: The importance of being a good writer
Questions?

Homework: Skim Chapters 12-13

Homework: Learn about Stoicism and/or Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*

Topic 8 On Service...

Departmental Citizenship
Departmental Politics

Understanding your place in the bureaucracy - Marcus Aurelius
The care and feeding of secretaries

Faculty Meetings

Soapbox: Apathy

Doing service

Attending "stuff," volunteering, etc
Being a Book/Journal Reviewer
Odds and Ends
Keeping Office Hours
Advising
Writing reference Letters
Consulting

Homework: Skim Chapter 11

Homework: Skim The University's Policies and Procedures online

Mar 21 No Class - Spring Break

Topic 9 The Big Picture...

Dress for Success
Professional Ethics
 Why telling the truth is actually important
 Harassment and Discrimination
 Data Security
 Reporting grades and such
 Research Ethics
 Staying Current
Intellectual Property
 Copyright basics for your own work
 What is work for hire?
 This isn't a 9 to 5 job, or is it?
 Navigating promotion & tenure
 The Broad Strokes
 Annual Evaluations
Socializing with peers and students out of class

That leaves 4 Classes in which we will have Guests. Once they are all set then I will assign dates to the "Topics"

May 3 A Final Discussion

How to be an academic failure: an introduction for beginners By Carl Elliott
(this abridged version was edited by me)

How to be an academic failure? Let me count the ways. You can become a disgruntled graduate student. You can become a burned-out administrator, perhaps an associate dean. You can become an aging, solitary hermit, isolated in your own department, or you can become a media pundit, sought out by reporters but laughed at by your peers. You can exploit your graduate students and make them hate you; you can alienate your colleagues and have them whisper about you behind your back; you can pick fights with university officials and blow your chances at promotion. You can become an idealistic failure at age 25, a cynical failure at 45, or an eccentric failure at 65. If failure is what you're looking for, then you can hardly do better than the academic life. The opportunities are practically limitless.

Picking a graduate school: this is where it all starts. Where should you go to get a headstart on disillusionment? Well, it depends on what kind of failure you want to be. If you want to flame out early, the choices are easy. One way is to pick out a third-rate university department staffed by bitter faculty members with Ivy League degrees. These people have spent years resenting the fact that their degree from Harvard or Princeton has landed them in a dismal backwater in Illinois, and they will take it out on you with a vengeance. Another way is to go straight to a high-powered department where the pressure is so intense that you pop a blood vessel after year one. When you get out of the hospital, you will find you are so intimidated that you cannot bring yourself to put a single word on paper, for fear that you will not be able to defend it properly. A third way is to pick a university department where the topic you want to work on is scoffed at and marginalized. You will then develop a defensiveness and sense of inferiority about your career that will stay with you for the rest of your life. It is an ideal way to get started.

The place to get a running start on failure is when you pick your dissertation advisor. It helps to mix and match: if you're a woman, try an aging man going through a mid-life crisis; if you're a Republican, try a feminist or a Marxist. If you tend to be the fragile type, what you need is an advisor whose eyes roll back in ecstasy at the prospect of humiliating a student in class. I like to think there are three different kinds of choices here. Door number one? Professional jealousy. Door number two? Intellectual property disputes. Door number three? Sexual harassment! You win! In fact, play your cards right and you may even get all three: an advisor who hits on you, steals your ideas, then torches your career out of envy.

What about professional mentors? you ask. Shouldn't I just apprentice myself to a more senior failure who can guide my career? Good question. One strategy is to find a senior or mid-career scholar whose own career is stalled. If you're lucky, she'll be desperate to hang onto some shred of credibility and will still have a couple of hefty research grants. She'll hire you on as a research assistant, have you write up some papers for her, then add on her name as a co-author. I know what you are thinking. You are thinking: isn't this a recipe for success? Publications with a well-known co-author? Maybe so, but that's only in the short term. Soon you will find yourself angry and

embittered at sharing the credit for your paper with someone else simply because they pay your salary. You will confront them, quarrel, and before you know it: Presto! You've gotten the sack! Out you go, without even a proper letter of recommendation. Your career is effectively finished.

This brings up the tricky topic of academic publishing. If you are intent on failure, I would recommend not writing any scholarly articles at all. If you insist on writing, then make sure you write well. The paradox of writing academic articles is this: the worse the writing, the more likely the paper is to be published. Most academic journals have an unwritten rule to this effect. If you send them well-written articles, they will keep rejecting them until you rewrite the articles using the passive voice, arcane jargon and pages of irrelevant footnotes. So if you want your tenure bid to be turned down, or hundreds of rejection letters when you apply for jobs, you had better forget about bad writing. Bad writing results in publication, and publication results in jobs, promotion, and tenure.

Don't get me wrong. Bad writing does not inevitably lead to success. Done properly, it can lead to failure too. When that happens, you know you've really found something special. In the failure business, bad writing is its own punishment. Experienced writers will tell you, there is nothing quite like that sinking feeling you get when you see one of your badly written articles in print. Especially when the argument is wrong, or patently stupid, or you have made a lame joke that isn't funny. Of course, most academic articles are never read by anyone apart from the journal editor and a couple of anonymous reviewers. But occasionally some of your professional colleagues take notice, or even start quoting sentences from your bad articles in their own articles, and then things can really take off. Some people call this professional humiliation rather than failure, but I say take what you can get. Humiliation counts for something too, doesn't it?

What if you succeed despite all this and find yourself working at a major university, maybe even with tenure? Does this mean it's all over? It might seem so, unless you count boredom, alienation and general professional crankiness. Of course there are the inevitable departmental quarrels. You can whine about office space, hiring decisions, and graduate students. You can pitch the occasional fit about your parking space. You can work up a good head of resentment about your meager salary. But these are generally classified under the heading of "self-inflicted professional misery" rather than "professional failure." Let's be honest here. Despite your best efforts, you may actually find yourself enjoying the academic life. Students look up to you; you can hang around with professional colleagues as odd as you are; and you get to spend a lot of time sending e-mail messages to your friends. You even get a sabbatical every seventh year. You might start to look around at your friends practicing dentistry or proctology or punching a clock in an accounting office and start to think, "Hey, this isn't that bad. What can I do to ruin it?"

Carl Elliott is an associate professor in the Center for Bioethics at the University of Minnesota.