

Keystone 490 Vocation and the Meaning of Success

The term “vocation” comes from the Latin roots “vocare” (to call) and “vox” (voice) and means “calling.”

The idea of vocation exists in religious traditions around the world. In a vision, the Native American visionary and healer Black Elk heard a song that said: “Behold, a sacred voice is calling you; all over the sky a sacred voice is calling.”

Instructors

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Augsburg General Education Requirements

This course meets the Keystone requirement for Business majors. If you are an Augsburg student with a different major, please check with your department to see if this course will count as your keystone course.

Required Readings

Davis, Adam, editor. *Hearing the Call across Traditions*. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths, 2009. (Selected chapters)

Hartman, Laura P., Joseph DesJardins, and Chris MacDonald. *Business Ethics: Decision Making for Personal Integrity and Social Responsibility, 3rd Edition*. NY: McGraw-Hill Irwin, 2014.

Lieder, Richard J. and David A. Shapiro. *Whistle While You Work: Heeding Your Life’s Calling*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koheler Publishers, Inc., 2001.

Rath, Tom. *StrengthsFinder 2.0*. (You have to purchase this book in order to receive the codes to take the test online. You will also read selections from this text.)

Tieger, Paul D. and Barbara Barron-Tieger. *Do What You Are: Discover the Perfect Career for You Through the Secrets of Personality Type*. Little, Brown and Company, 4th edition, 2007. (You should purchase it if you can; if not, tell us so we can get you a copy. Take the MBTI exam online at <http://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>. It will take about 15 minutes to take the test, and you will get your results right away.

Schwehn, Mark R and Dorothy C. Bass, editors. *Leading Lives that Matter: What We Should Do and Who We Should Be*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006. Selected chapters. (You do not need to buy this.)

You will also be given additional articles to read.

Course Description

The keystone course is a signature feature of Augsburg’s Core Curriculum and supports the goal of preparing students to become effective, informed and ethical citizens. As you leave Augsburg to pursue your place in the world the keystone course is intended to provide an opportunity for you to bring together all facets of your education for reflection and connection.

KEY490 has been designed to address the particular perspectives of the majors in Business Administration and remain true to the **mission of Augsburg College**:

*Augsburg College educates students to be **informed citizens, thoughtful stewards, critical thinkers, and responsible leaders**. The Augsburg experience is supported by an **engaged community** that is committed to **intentional diversity** in its life and work. An Augsburg education is **defined by excellence** in the liberal arts and professional studies, guided by the **faith and values** of the Lutheran church, and shaped by its **urban and global settings**.” (Mission of Augsburg College)*

This course seeks to provide you with opportunities that will fulfill **the Augsburg Promise**, which begins with the following premise: “*We believe we are called to serve our neighbor.*” In order to help you serve your neighbor as best you can, the Augsburg Promise is to help you grow as **informed citizens, critical thinkers, thoughtful stewards, and responsible leaders**, by providing an education that helps you develop the following four key aspects of life:

1. A Living Faith
2. A Global Perspective
3. Active Citizenship, and
4. Meaningful Work

Our work in the course will encourage us to answer the following questions:

- What are my core beliefs? Who or what grounds my values and decisions?
- What people have significantly influenced my life and choices?
- What have I learned during my undergraduate career thus far? How has Augsburg College’s mission and promise impacted me?
- What skills, talents, and abilities do I have to offer the world?
- What are my obligations to myself, my family, others, my employer, and the broader community?
- What does it mean to be a good and thoughtful steward of economic and environmental resources?
- How do I understand my vocations (callings)? How do I balance my gifts and passions with the needs of the world, including the needs of people who are poor, the natural environment, and others, and authentically respond to the call that I sense in my life?
- What do I think is a “successful” life? What kind of success do I strive for?
- What goals, values, ethics, and beliefs guide me as I transition from Augsburg to the broader community?
- How have my experiences in Mexico this semester shaped my understanding of the God or that which calls me, myself as a person who is called, the world to which I am called, and how I want to live out my callings through meaningful work and in all aspects of my life?

Given the understanding of vocation as calling, the course will address the following four questions that encapsulate all of those listed above:

1. Who am I (as a person who is called)?
2. Who or what is calling me? (God? Justice?)
3. To whom am I called (my neighbor/the world, etc.)?
4. What is the nature of my callings (vocations)

Obviously we cannot answer these questions definitively during the semester, but by working together we hope that each of us will be challenged and supported to wrestle with these issues. The course has been organized into units to help us focus on these questions. We will use texts, guest speakers and excursions, films, case studies, and class discussions to help us form preliminary answers to some of these questions.

***We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring,
will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.***

Little Gidding (No. 4 of 'Four Quartets') by T.S. Eliot

Due to Augsburg's emphasis on **critical thinking** and the fact that this version of the course is taught in Mexico, where this a large emphasis on gender studies within the study abroad program, you will be asked to think critically about gender – specifically about women's changing roles within business and society and the ways in which gender has sometimes limited people's understandings of their callings and/or their abilities to live out their callings due to sexism. Therefore, you will have the opportunity to meet directly with Mexican and other women business leaders.

Related Films (Some may be required, whereas others will simply be recommended)

- *The Inside Job*
- *Good Will Hunting*
- *Side Effects*
- *Wall Street*

YouTube and other iTunes U. links for speakers such as Bill George, Peter Drucker, and others.

Outcomes

By the end of the semester you will:

1. Identify the curricular and co-curricular components of your college education and articulate how you will translate the theories, ideas, and values learned into your life in meaningful ways.
2. Describe how issues of faith, diversity, and related educational experiences, such as your travels in Mexico, have transformed you and explore how your understanding of these concepts and your vocation calls you to live intentionally.
3. Recognize your criteria, core values and beliefs and connect them to current issues in the business field.
4. Explore how issues of diversity, ecology, nationality, politics, and justice influence business practices.
5. Review the questions that shaped your search for meaning and your understanding of Augsburg's concept of vocation and evaluate the commitments and conclusions that have emerged during your education.
6. Understand more about your personality and perceptions of the world, and recognize how they influence your vocation as a team member and as a leader.
7. Articulate a more sophisticated understanding of your own vocation and what it means to you to be "successful" in life.

Format

The course will include lectures, reflection and discussion, as well as several excursions and guest speakers who will talk about their own vocations in different areas of the business world. Your role in asking questions, discussing texts, and presenting papers is crucial. **Integral to the course will be a rural educational seminar and a seminar in Mexico City.**

Potential guest speakers and excursions may include the following:

- Talk with *Nahua* indigenous people about their vocations in Amatlán de Quetzalcoatl.
- Talk with Mexicans from diverse theological backgrounds.
- Talk with people in diverse areas of business about their vocations. Potential speakers include people involved in management, marketing, human resources, accounting, and product design.
- Visit small businesses.
- Visit a *maquiladora* (assembly plant) and talk with the managers and workers about international business in Mexico
- Discuss “free trade” and Mexican business people’s perspectives on the pros and cons of NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement between Mexico, the U.S.A., and Canada.
- Discuss “fair trade” and visit at least one “fair trade” business.
- Visit Boing, a Mexican worker-owned company, and discuss the challenges of running a socially responsible business with the management (during trip to Mexico City).
- Visit businesses in an indigenous village and talk with members of the land council about cultural and ethical issues related to doing business in an indigenous community.
- Meet with a founding partner of Enterprising Solutions Global Consulting, an international firm that works in the area of development finance and corporate social responsibility to discuss ethical issues and corporate social responsibility
- Visit Coca Cola or another company and discuss their corporate social responsibility policies.

Course Themes and Projects

1. **Reflection Papers and/or Oral Presentations:** Throughout the semester you will be expected to reflect upon your own values and vocation, as well as improve your writing and speaking skills by writing papers and giving oral presentations on a variety of topics, as listed below in the course requirements. Themes include your identity, core values, faith and/or philosophical beliefs, your ideas about personal and social responsibility, your personal code of ethics and guiding principles, business ethics and sustainability, and authentic leadership, among others, as all of these are key issues related to the concept of “vocation” (i.e. “calling”).
2. **Who Inspires and Motivates Me, and Why? What are Their Vocations?** You will be asked to identify two people who have significantly influenced you and/or inspired you as a person: one should be a famous person (living or dead) whose life and actions inspired you, and one should be a person you have personally met who has served as a role model or mentor for you. What are the vocations (callings) of these two people, not just in terms of their paid work but other callings to family, community, society, etc., and what do they have in common? When you write, try to create a title for your paper that shows the links between these two remarkable people who have inspired and motivated you. What do they have in common that inspires you, despite any differences between them?

Why do you see them as role models, and in what ways do you strive to be like them in your individual and/or professional life? (Please note, graduate school applications and interviews frequently include questions like this. 😊)

3. **Personal and Social Responsibility/Stewardship: Who are My “Neighbors,” and what are My Obligations to Them?** Most faith traditions discuss obligations to both God and others. Therefore, whether you are rooted in a religious tradition and/or inspired by moral and philosophical beliefs, what do you see as your obligation to others, including poor people, the natural environment, and others? What is the source of that obligation? Moreover, what is the scope of that obligation? In other words, if you are called to serve your neighbor, who is your neighbor? This unit is an important part of the course because it asks you to look at yourself and beyond yourself as you “reflect critically on the beliefs and values you use while acting in a diverse world” and “reflect on Augsburg’s understanding of vocation and compare it with your own sense of vocation.” It also asks you to reflect on what it means to be a “thoughtful steward” of economic and environmental resources. For example, are you or your business called to be “environmentally sustainable?”
4. **Is the Market Moral, and Can I Be Moral While Participating in the Market? (Is Corporate Social Responsibility Possible?)** You will study key issues in business ethics today. You will specifically examine several case studies of businesses that have acted in ways that can be considered “unethical,” as well as “anti-ecological,” as well as businesses that are striving to be ethical, socially responsible, and environmentally sustainable. Analysis of these case studies will help us meet several of the objectives for the course: connect current issues in the business field to your own values, choices and vocation and exploring how issues of diversity, class and nationality influence business practices. In the end, you will identify the key aspects of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and identify places within the market where CSR is being practiced.
5. **Skill Development:** During the semester, you will have the opportunity to develop your portfolio, learn about interviewing skills, and craft your cover letter and resume. In addition, you will develop your writing and oral presentation skills, as mentioned above.
6. **Oral Presentations:** In most jobs you will often to complete a project within a short time period and synthesize a lot of information quickly in order to meet a deadline. To help you develop this skill, you will have to give 15-minute oral presentations in which you will demonstrate your understanding of basic concepts and business issues from required readings and films.
7. **Portfolio Project:** Throughout the semester you will develop a portfolio. The portfolio project will help us meet the course objective that states that you will “identify and reflect upon the ways you have been transformed by your college experiences with special attention given to your major fields of study.” In addition, the portfolio project will help you prepare for upcoming interviews and job applications. The portfolio project will also help us answer following questions: *What have I learned during my undergraduate career? What have I learned from my semester abroad? What skills, talents, and abilities do I have to offer the world?*

Course Requirements (100%)

1. Active Class Participation: 15%
2. Papers: 30% (15% each)
 - Personal and Social Responsibility/Stewardship: Who are My Neighbors, and what are My Obligations to Them?
 - Corporate Social Responsibility: the Morality of the Market, My Core Values and Vocation.
3. Short Oral Presentations in Class: 15% (5% each)
 - Presentation # 1: Who Inspires and Motivates Me, and Why? What are Their Vocations?
 - Presentation #2: Key Themes from Chapter 2 of *Business Ethics*
 - Presentation # 3: Key Themes from Chapter 5 of *Business Ethics*
4. Final Presentation: Ways in Which My Vocation(s) and Understanding of Success Have Been Affirmed, Challenged, and/or Changed Over the Course of the Semester: 15%
5. Portfolio Project: 30%

You will be given a separate handout about the portfolio project, as well as a sample portfolio. Please note that you will be given feedback without grades on individual pieces of the portfolio, which must be submitted on time so that they can be discussed in class that week. However, you will be able to revise each piece of your portfolio before submitting the final version at the end of the semester. The final version will be graded and will be useful to you as a professional.

 - List of college courses by semester, 10 sentences, a one-paragraph reflection on your major, and one paragraph on what you learned from attending a liberal arts college with Augsburg's mission and promise statement
 - Your Personal Mission Statement
 - MBTI Profile – short reflection; see sample portfolio and portfolio instructions
 - Your Strengths
 - Your Goals
 - Professional Code of Ethics
 - Statement of Personal Guiding Principles
 - List of 5 companies that you might want to work for; see list of websites sent via email
 - Job Announcement , Cover Letter and Resume
 - Portfolio Introduction and Short Profile

The final portfolio is due during the last week of the semester. The final version should be mistake-free and include a title page and table of contents. (See the imperfect sample portfolio.) The contents should be placed in the following order:

- Table of Contents
- My Personal Portfolio Introduction
- College Courses Completed
- Freshman Year
- Sophomore Year
- Junior Year
- Senior Year
- Ten Sentences, a one-paragraph reflection on your major, and one paragraph on what you learned from attending a liberal arts college with Augsburg's mission and promise statement

- Integrating Paragraph
- My Statement of Guiding Principles
- My Personal Mission Statement
- My Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
- My Strengths
- My Goals
- My Resume

Additional Comments

Explanation of Grades

Augsburg's grading system uses the following definitions:

Grade	Grade Points	Description
A	4.00	Excellent
A-	3.67	
B+	3.33	
B	3.00	Good
B-	2.67	
C+	2.33	
C	2.00	Satisfactory
C-	1.67	
D+	1.33	
D	1.00	Poor
D-	0.67	
F	0.00	Failure

A "Pass" grade is C/2.0 or above.

Grading Policy and Late Assignments

You must submit assignments on time. If you need an extension, you must talk to us **in advance** to negotiate a new deadline. If you have not been given an extension in advance and you turn in a late assignment, you will be docked half a grade. If you are more than one week late, you will be docked a full grade. No assignments will be accepted more than two weeks after the original deadline; a "0" will be given after that. Assignments due near the end of the semester will not be accepted after the last day of the semester.

Augsburg Honesty Policy

You are expected to follow the Augsburg Honesty Policy which is printed in the program manual. We assume that you have read the honesty policy, understand it, and are following it. Except when the assignment expressly encourages group work, it is assumed that all course work will be your own. You may not copy other students' work. The first occurrence of plagiarism will result in the failure of the assignment. A student who commits plagiarism a second time will fail the course.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

Students with formally diagnosed learning or physical differences have legal rights to course modifications. Those who qualify should identify themselves to the instructor as soon as possible in order to obtain extra assistance.