

# Portland State University Mentor Training Syllabus

## Course Description:

Welcome and congratulations on being a finalist for the University Studies Peer Mentor Program! The primary purpose of this 4-credit course is to introduce new Undergraduate (UG) and Graduate (GR) Mentors to the University Studies Peer Mentor Program and process. Through an inquiry-based approach, this participatory and experiential course will introduce students to mentoring in a general education program and will explore the skills, concepts, and experiences needed to become Peer Mentors in the University Studies (UNST) program. Undergraduates and graduates will have a similar base course experience, which will be differentiated by the type of course that UG and GRs will be mentoring as well as the kinds of activities and readings that may be explored to complete the experience. UGs are in Freshman Inquiry (FRINQ) and GRs in Sophomore Inquiry (SINQ).

University Studies (UNST) Program mentors are not situated within a particular field. Rather they are training to become educators and mentors in an *interdisciplinary* program, which combines perspectives from many different subject areas. As such, mentors will work with one or many “themes” during their time as mentors in the program. Therefore, this course has been developed to practice interdisciplinary *teaching* and *learning*. We will explore topics and themes that will provide the skills and experience necessary to work with mentees and faculty across the disciplines.

A main focus of spring training will be the 4 UNST goals. Training will also focus on a number of key themes related to mentoring and higher education, including: (a) the worldview(s) that guide our teaching and learning; (b) the goals and structure of UNST and Freshman Inquiry and Sophomore Inquiry (FRINQ and SINQ); (c) the meaning and purpose of mentoring in your lived experience; (d) how Peer Mentors successfully work with mentees and faculty; (e) an understanding of non-dominant leadership and how mentors are leaders; (f) the importance of creativity, collaboration, and reflection in the classroom; (g) writing pedagogy and how writing relates to critical thinking; (h) and how to create learning communities where mentees can learn in ways that offer diverse perspectives and question cultural norms, strengthen their connection to a sense of place, and become transformed into more engaged and empowered individuals. Through role modeling, course readings, class discussions, group projects, guest speakers, and personal reflection, we will learn both with *and* from one another to further develop our understanding of education and what it means to mentor.

The purpose of this class is to bolster your skills as a mentor *and* as a student. Class participation and quality work are absolutely necessary to thrive in this course. No student enrolled in/auditing this course can “dial it in” and flourish.

## The Four UNST Goals ([www.unst.pdx.edu](http://www.unst.pdx.edu))

Four goals will thread through this course and form the foundation of the University Studies general education curricular model. Familiarize yourself with the meaning and application of these goals as you imagine yourself as a mentor.

1. Diversity of Human Experience
2. Communication

3. Inquiry and Critical Thinking
4. Ethics and Social Responsibility

### **Course Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course you will be able to:

- Define mentoring, general education, and peer leadership in higher education.
- Describe a variety of approaches to mentoring and express your personal approach to mentoring as it is shaped by your lived experience and your new understandings.
- Explain the structure and goals of the University Studies Program at Portland State University.
- Apply your knowledge to the development of lesson plans for mentored inquiry sessions.
- Negotiate the meaning of a collaborative learning community as a student and mentor.
- Develop an understanding of strategies to help students improve their writing and critical thinking skills.
- Develop participatory learning activities for students in higher education to support success.
- Identify the personal skills and attitudes that are necessary to be a successful as a Portland State University mentor, specifically in relation to engaging diverse populations and supporting the full range of human diversity and cultural experience.
- Apply discussion techniques and other useful mentor activities for working in class, especially in conflict and collaborative situations.
- Understand the range of campus resources available to support students in higher education.

**Instructional/Learning Needs:** We have an office on campus to support you and/or students with disabilities. Students needing or meeting an accommodation pursuant to federal, state, or institutional education regulations should immediately notify us. We support your means of learning and welcome a collaborative conversation about how we can be of further assistance. Please contact the Disability Resource Center 503.725.5664 (503.725.4150, TTY or Relay 503.725.4178) to document a disability and receive additional support services. We welcome opportunities to discuss anyone's learning needs and ways to make our learning community more inclusive and inviting.

**Campus Assistance for Writing:** The PSU Writing Center provides assistance at no cost to undergraduate and graduate students at: <http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/>

### **Library Resources:**

We have fabulous connections to the University Libraries that will be available to you as a mentor. You can access library databases and other resources at: <http://library.pdx.edu> The library has also put together online guides for SING and FRINQ Instructors and Mentors. These two guides are not meant to be shared with students directly, but are designed to provide mentors with the necessary tools to support students. They contain a number of activities and learning objects, and you can pick and choose what might be relevant to you:

<http://guides.library.pdx.edu/sinq>

<http://guides.library.pdx.edu/frinq>

They have also created a wonderful set of general research guides for students taking SING and FRINQ classes (all UNST courses using d2l should have a link to these):

<http://guides.library.pdx.edu/unstsinq>

<http://guides.library.pdx.edu/unstfrinq>

There are some fantastic resources on these sites, and I think you'll have fun wandering through the various activities, videos, and tips.

### **Desire to Learn (D2L):**

This course is supported by the online platform, Desire to Learn (D2L); however, it is not a fully online course by design. To access the syllabus and other documents online go to: [www.d2l.pdx.edu](http://www.d2l.pdx.edu) Although we will be using D2L to support our learning, this is not an online course, and assignments should be submitted in person and not turned in via D2L. DROP BOX? (Email us if off site).

### **Course Expectations:**

- **Environment of Respect:** Respectful disagreement and diversity of opinions are encouraged. You will be challenged to think critically about the impact of cultural differences, which may include identities such as gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, physical and cognitive ability, sexuality, religion, home languages, and other forms of diversity. You are encouraged to ask difficult questions and share comments. Please be respectful of others as we listen to and try to understand and learn from one another.
- **Cooperative Learning:** In this course, learning is a collective process in which we have the opportunity to help each other generate meaning throughout the term. As collaborators in this learning process, participation is paramount. At the same time, please recognize that being a member of a community means making space for all participants. The richness of this class will depend on the comments, questions, insights, and active participation that you bring to class.
- **Personal Responsibility:** You are expected to engage fully in this class and take action if you need help. Please communicate any concerns about assignments, deadlines, or classroom activities. Mentors are expected to role model personal responsibility to their students, so right here in training is a great place to practice.
- **Academic Integrity:** Please adhere to university policies. Please take special note of policies regarding plagiarism and course withdrawal. The University's Code of Student Conduct may be found at <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/conduct.html>.

### **Required Course Readings:**

There is one required class book. Additional reading materials will be provided in class. You may purchase the required books on your own. OR: You may check out one of our ~30 copies from the Mentor Library in week 1 to return in week 9.

Newton, F. B., & Ender, S. C. (2010). *Students helping students: A guide for peer educators on college campuses* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

**Class Content and Required Activities:**

Note: All written assignments should be double-spaced and should have a header with your last name and page number. While we will not enforce the use of a particular citation method, but we want you to challenge yourself to become more familiar with formal citation styles that you will be teaching your students (e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago, depending on the instructor and discipline). Cover pages are not necessary in order to save paper.

**Punctuality and Attendance:**

Punctual attendance and active participation is critical for this class and is required. Class meetings will be participatory and require all members to be present. Remember you are preparing for a mentor position, where you are required to role model this for your own mentees, and it is a required part of this leadership position as well. Please come to this class prepared (e.g. read, take notes, prepare questions) and be a vocal participant as well as an active listener.

**Communication and Email:** We will be co-teaching the course this quarter, so you should email both of us through our PSU email accounts if need to get in touch with us. If you have one, always use your PSU email account when you contact us. We will try to respond in a timely fashion. Here are few things to keep in mind for this quarter and as you consider introducing your students to the world of academic and professional email. When emailing, identify yourself in your email and state your question or comment as clearly and as concisely as possible. Before sending, please make sure you have exhausted other avenues for answering questions.

- Do your best to use clear subject lines.
- Remember that email may not be an appropriate form of communication for all types of questions and issues. In some cases, I may ask or require that we set up a time to meet in person, or you might benefit from picking up the phone rather than writing.
- Outside of situations that require a more immediate response, we consider 48 hours to be a reasonable period in which to respond to emails. Please plan accordingly.
- We cannot fill in students who miss class on the details of a particular lecture or discussion *through email*. Please seek this information from your fellow students or see me during office hours.

**Total Points Available for Your Assignments and Activities (to be handed out in class):**

<i>Reflection Paper 1:</i>	<i>50 points</i>
<i>Reflection Paper 2:</i>	<i>50 points</i>
<i>Reflection Paper 3:</i>	<i>50 points</i>
<i>ePortfolio Activity:</i>	<i>50 points</i>
<i>Mentor Session Report:</i>	<i>50 points</i>
<i>Lesson Plan:</i>	<i>50 points</i>
<i>Class Participation, Communication &amp; Attendance:</i>	<i>100 points</i>

**TOTAL POINTS = 400 points**

### **Grading Scale:**

We grade to support and challenge you, and we do expect you to complete high-quality work that represents the great students and humans that you have proven to be in becoming a mentor finalist. Participants in this course are encouraged to strive for outstanding grades (P, A, or B+ equivalent).

Pass or A grade:	400 – 370 points (94 – 100%)
Pass or A- grade:	360 – 369 points (90 – 93%)
Pass or B+ grade:	340 – 359 points (92 – 85%)

**\*\*No Pass or B, B-, or below = All points falling below 339**

**\*\*A grade of no pass, B, or B- does not qualify you to mentor (you would need to reapply and take training)**

### **Grading Rubric (for all assignments – worth 50 points each):**

All assignments and activities will be graded using these 5 primary qualities (worth 10 pts. each):

1. On time
2. Hard copy/correct format provided
3. Proof read and free of errors (grammar, edited thoroughly, employs correct citations if used)
4. Follows directions given in assignment carefully and completely
5. Shows high-quality engagement with ideas (shows evidence and/or concrete examples)

You will receive the score below based on your assignment's alignment with those qualities:

<b>Check plus</b>	(50 points) meets all 5 categories, receives full points
<b>Check</b>	(40 points) meets 4 out of 5 categories, receives partial points
<b>Check minus</b>	(30 points) meets 3 out of 5 categories, receives partial points
<b>Resubmit</b>	Meets fewer than 3 categories and must be revised for review
<b>Missing</b>	(0 points) no credit given

### **Late Assignment Policy:**

Remember that you are training to be mentors, who are supposed to role model what an “expert” student does to be successful. You must form this habit in this class by meeting all deadlines. Hard copies of papers are due in-class on the date given in the syllabus or amended by the instructor. Late assignments will be accepted only with prior approval. Late assignments (including papers that are e-mailed after class) without prior approval will be marked down 10 points. Students anticipating problems with due dates should contact us in advance to arrange an extension and avoid a penalty.

### **Thoughts and Excused Absences (by instructor determination only):**

You do get 10 points for each class you actively attend. We hope that you know we do understand life is complicated, and yet it is always hard to compare whose absence is more valid than another person's situation. People get ill, kids get sick, and things happen. Medical emergencies can be documented. However, we also feel that “I just want to go to this other

event,” or “I could not get out of my work that evening” are things that are not valid reasons in our minds for your choice not to attend. You were provided information about the central requirement of this class at the time of your interview, and so we expect that this is a first priority for you as you begin to become a mentor.

We hope you know that your attendance also reflects a sense of your priorities and respect for your classmates, faculty, and campus community. Toward this end, we ask that you look at the grading rubric and determine that value of your class time and other choices. More than anything, we really prefer responsible communication from those seeking to become mentors, and please contact us for any emergency situation that arises for you. Think about what you would tell a student when you are a mentor and how you will handle attendance.

**Class Participation:** It’s essential to us that you engage with the class material and interact with your classmates. It’s also important that we hear various points of view and create conversations around challenging issues. We’ll talk as a group about what contributes to a fruitful conversation, but keep in the mind the following:

- Participation does not simply mean saying a lot in class. Preparing for class and thinking about what you want to say is more important than speaking at every opportunity.
- Careful listening is, perhaps, the most important element of strong class participation.
- Be willing to ask questions.