Archer Center Washington Internship

Course Information
PSCI 4V76
Archer Center Washington Internship

Fall 2026
Dr. Jennifer Diascro

Professor Contact Information

Professor: Dr. Jennifer Diascro
Email Address: Jennifer.Diascro@UTDallas.edu
Office Hours: Email for a 30-minute virtual 1:1 coaching session!

Note: Please use only your University of Texas Dallas account to email Archer Center faculty.

Course Description

You will enhance your professional skillset through experiential training in your internship, group discussion sessions, individual reading and reflection, and practical assignments. We will meet regularly to integrate your practical training with other lessons in professional development.

To receive academic credit for this course, you must:

1) Complete a full-time (32-40 hours/week) internship based in the Washington, D.C. area. If you do not have an internship at the start of the semester, you must participate in sessions led by Sally Lawrence to support your internship search. To fulfill the internship hours required for this six-credit internship course, you are expected to secure an internship no later than Friday, September 18. You must meet the requirements of your internship office, satisfy all internship-related requirements of the Archer Program, and conduct yourself according to university rules.
2) Prepare for, attend, and actively participate during all scheduled course sessions.
3) Complete all written assignments, including in-class Thoughts to Action and the Archer Professional Development Plan.

Additionally, you may schedule one-on-one coaching sessions with me for support with more individual issues, opportunities, or concerns that you experience in the workplace. Please email me for an appointment. These sessions are virtual via Teams or Zoom.

Note: Sally Lawrence (slawrence@utsystem.edu) is the Archer Center's Associate Director of Professional Development and Employer Relations. Please communicate proactively with Sally if you have questions about your internship requirements or significant concerns about your internship.

Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the course, you will be able to:

- Reflect critically on your professional values, strengths, and challenges and articulate your insights in varied written and verbal formats.
- Identify common workplace challenges and apply evidence-based practices that promote your professional growth, identity, and skills, including effective management of your time and attention, professional communication and conflict resolution, and networking.
- Pursue goals and respond to challenges in professional settings with a greater sense of agency and self-efficacy.

Calendar of Sessions and Assignments

Your group will meet once during orientation week and every other Wednesday during the semester, with two exceptions for full cohort events. All sessions take place at the Archer Center.

Each of these sessions is mandatory (see Attendance Policy on page 7). Be sure to mark your calendar! Please bring a laptop or other device to every session for access to Canvas and notetaking.

All course materials are freely available online via the links below and through the class Canvas page. Readings and assignments may change at my discretion.

Orientation: The Examined Professional Life	
Groups 1 and 2	Thursday, August 27, 10 to 11:30 AM
Preparation	None.
Assignment	Bring your laptop and a pen/pencil.

Weeks 1 and 2: Limiting Beliefs, Growth Mindset, & Adapting to Your Workplace	
Group 1	Wednesday, September 2, 6:30 to 8:30 PM
Group 2	Wednesday, September 9, 6:30 to 8:30 PM
Preparation	Carol Dweck, "The Power of Believing You Can Improve" (TED Talk, 2014) Ashley Abramson, "How to Overcome Imposter Syndrome" (*Monitor on Psychology*, APA, June 2021) Tchiki Davis, "The Beliefs That Limit Us, and How to Identify Them" (*Psychology Today*, September 2025) Patricia Faison Hewlin, "How to be more authentic at work" (Greater Good Magazine, 2020)
Homework	Complete and submit first phase of Archer Professional Development Plan by September 1, 11:59 PM (Group 1) / September 8, 11:59 PM (Group 2)
In-class Assignment	Individual Reflection, Group Discussion, Thoughts to Action Discuss Phase 1 of Archer Professional Development Plan (PDP)

Weeks 3 and 4: Managing Your Time and Attention	
Group 1	Wednesday, September 16, 6:30 to 8:30 PM

Group 2	Wednesday, September 23, 6:30 to 8:30 PM
Preparation	Skim Greg McKeown, *Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*, Chapters 1-4 (PDF in Canvas). Cal Newport, "There's a good reason you can't concentrate" (*New York Times*, March 3, 2026). Read or listen to audio.
In-class Assignment	Individual Reflection, Group Discussion, Thoughts to Action

Weeks 5 and 6: Building Your Network	
Group 1	Wednesday, September 30, 6:30 to 8:30 PM
Group 2	Wednesday, October 7, 6:30 to 8:30 PM
Preparation	"Networking Tips for Beginners" (Networking for Beginners Blog) "How Do I Build My Network from Scratch?" (New Here Podcast, *Harvard Business Review*, September 20, 2023) Kara M. Newman, "10 Scientific Tips to Make You Better at Conversation" (UC Berkeley Greater Good Science Center article, 2025)
In-class Assignment	Individual Reflection, Group Discussion, Thoughts to Action Complete & Discuss Phase 2 of Archer PDP (mid-semester review)

Week 7: So, you're thinking of graduate school	
Groups 1 & 2	Wednesday, October 14, 6:30 to 8:30 PM
Preparation	Review the panelist profiles and formulate questions you want to ask about graduate school.
In-class Assignment	None

Weeks 8 and 9: Making the Most of Feedback & Other Challenging Conversations	
Group 1	Wednesday, October 21 6:30 to 8:30 PM
Group 2	Wednesday, October 28, 6:30 to 8:30 PM
Preparation	Tara Mohr, "Hooked vs. Unhooked" (blog post)

	"Do You Receive Feedback Well?" (with Sheila Heen, Wellbeing Lab podcast, 2025) What is Intellectual Humility, Why Practice It, and How to Cultivate It? (UC Berkeley Greater Good Science Center article) "How to Have Difficult Conversations – 11 Tips That Can Help" (Calm blog post) Zara Abrams, "Conversations are essential to our well-being. Psychologists are exploring the science of why they're so powerful" (*Monitor on Psychology*, APA, 2023)
In-class Assignment	Individual Reflection, Group Discussion, Thoughts to Action

Week 10: Designing Your Future	
Groups 1 & 2	Wednesday, November 4, 6:30 to 8:30 PM
Preparation	Bill Burnett & Dave Evans, Odyssey Planning in *Designing Your Life* (2016) (PDF in Canvas) You 2.0: What Is Your Life For? (Hidden Brain, June 2025)
In-class Assignment	Individual Reflection, Group Discussion, Thoughts to Action

Week 11: Public Service Careers Panel and Discussion	
Optional	Wednesday, November 11, 6:30 to 8:30 PM
Preparation	Review the panelist profiles and formulate questions you want to ask about careers in public service.

Week 12: Reflecting on Work	
Group 1	Wednesday, November 18, 6:30 to 7:45 PM
Group 2	Wednesday, November 18, 8 to 9:15 PM
Preparation	Complete Archer professional development plan.
Homework	Complete Phase 3 Archer PDP due Tuesday, November 17, by 11:59 PM
In-class assignment	Group Discussions and Reflections

Week 13: Happy Thanksgiving!
Wednesday, November 23: NO CLASS!

Assignments

In-Class Discussions, Reflections, and Thoughts to Action Exercises

A core goal of this class is to think critically, intentionally, and deeply about topics related to work and professional development. One way we will accomplish this is to engage individually and collectively on the topics assigned for each session.

Through individual written reflections, small group discussions, and individual and collaborative written and verbal exercises, you will apply the lessons from the weekly prep work to your internship and other Fellowship experiences.

You must complete the preparation work in advance of each session and bring to class a laptop or other device to complete and submit assignments in Canvas.

Your work product for each of the six sessions (including Orientation) will be worth **10 points (60 points total)** and submitted via Canvas.

Archer Professional Development Plan (PDP)

During the first week of the semester, you will begin your individual Archer Professional Development Plan, a document designed to help you set goals and assess your progress. During our final session, you will complete your plan.

Your work on Phases 1 & 3 will be worth **15 points each** and work on Phase 2 will be worth **10 points (40 points total)** and submitted via Canvas.

Assignment	Points
In-class work	60 points (10 points each)
Professional Development Plan	40 points (15 points for Phases 1 & 3; 10 for Phase 2)

Grading Policy

Weight	Requirement
75%	Completion of full-time internship
25%	Attendance and active engagement in group sessions and completion of all assignments, including in-class individual and group work (total of 60 points) and Professional Development Plan (total of 40 points).

Midterm grades will be posted by October 17. Final grades will be reported to your home UT System institution by December 17 and posted in accordance with their respective grade submission deadlines.

Note: UT System campuses vary in their use of the +/- grading scale. Grades for students enrolled at campuses that do not follow this system will be reported as follows: A (90-100), B (80-89), C (70-79), D (60-69), F (59 or lower).

Attendance

Internship: You are expected to meet the requirements of your internship office and satisfy all internship-related requirements of the Archer Fellowship. Inform your internship supervisor at the beginning of the semester about required Archer Center classes/events that conflict with regular internship working hours. You must obtain permission from your internship supervisor to attend Archer Center events that conflict with regular internship working hours.

Class: Please record the dates of your group sessions in your calendar immediately to avoid conflicts. **You must attend your assigned group session (no switching groups)** and complete work each week.

If you are unable to attend a session, it is your responsibility to inform me as soon as possible, preferably in advance of class.

- Excused Absences. These are limited generally to personal illness, an emergency related to an immediate family member, or a religious holiday.
    - Under these circumstances, you are not required to make up Speed Reflections or Thoughts to Action assignments; however, I encourage you to complete them on your own time so that you get the most out of the course.

- Freebie Excused Absence. Because life happens, you may be excused for ONE session without explaining the reason.
    - Please let me know in advance of class. While I will not mark you absent for this class, you will be required to complete the speed reflection and the thoughts to action assignments by the 11:59 PM deadline to get credit.

- Unexcused Absences. Your internship or other extracurricular events (such as travel and family visits) are not considered excuses to miss class.
    - You will not be allowed to make up unexcused absences, and you will not be eligible for credit on missed assignments.
    - In addition, each unexcused absence will reduce your final course grade by 5 points (e.g. if you earn a 94 but have one unexcused absence, I will record an 89; if you have two unexcused absences, I will record an 84; and so on).

Note: Regardless of the reason for your absence, you **MUST** complete the Archer Professional Development Plan as required in the Calendar of Sessions.

Guidance on the Use of AI

A central objective of this course is self-reflection: spending time in your head with your thoughts about who you are professionally (and personally) and what you want, need, and expect from work. This is hard! But it's necessary if you're to understand your own beliefs and values, goals and expectations. DO NOT let anyone or anyTHING do it for you.

Course Policies

Classroom Citizenship

I hope it goes without saying that we all must treat each other with courtesy and grace. We come from different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, and they will affect how we understand and process our roles as interns, Fellows, and citizens of DC this semester. Being polite and thoughtful in our interactions with each other is absolutely required.

Class Recordings

Unless the AccessAbility Resource Center has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved AccessAbility Resource Center accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Reporting Sexual Misconduct and Sharing Confidential Information

Students considering sharing personal information in email or in person should be aware that all University staff, faculty, teaching assistants/associates, and graduate/research assistants are required by UT Dallas policy to report information about sexual misconduct to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Per university policy, Sexual Misconduct Policy - UTDBP3102, faculty have been informed that they must identify the student to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Students who wish to have confidential discussions of incidents related to sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should contact the following confidential resources, including, but not limited to:

1. the Student Counseling Center (972-883-2575 or the 24/7 Crisis Hotline at 972-UTD-TALK or 972-883-8255),
2. a health care provider in the Student Health Center (972-883-2747),
3. a clergyperson (or other legally recognized religious advisor) of their choice, or
4. an off-campus resource (e.g., a rape crisis center, doctor, psychologist).

Students who are sexually assaulted, harassed, or are victims of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, or stalking, are encouraged to directly report these incidents to the Title IX Coordinator by making a report online or by calling the Title IX Coordinator at 972-883-2306. Students may also contact the UTD Police Department (UTDPD) for emergency assistance; criminal reporting and investigation; information or assistance regarding protective orders or forensic sexual assault exams; or to request a police escort. In case of emergency, call 911. For non-emergency situations, students can reach the UT Dallas Police Department by calling 972-883-2222. For more information about available support and resources, students can visit the Office of Institutional Compliance (Support Services & Resources) webpage.

Pregnancy and Parenting

UT Dallas is committed to providing support and resources for pregnant and parenting students, faculty, and staff in accordance with Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Texas Education Code Section 51.982, and other applicable federal and state laws. Pregnant and parenting students are encouraged to

complete the Pregnant and Parenting Self-Identification Form located on the Office of Institutional Compliance's website. Submitting this form allows for a coordinated University effort to help facilitate support for pregnant and parenting students, such as early registration for parenting students and accommodations for pregnant students. For more information about the services and resources available to pregnant and parenting students, visit the Pregnant & Parenting Resources page and the Student Pregnancy and Parenting Nondiscrimination Policy.

Nondiscrimination

UT Dallas prohibits all forms of discrimination (including harassment) based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. UT Dallas further prohibits all forms of sex-based discrimination (including sex-based harassment). Students who believe they have been discriminated against or harassed in violation of University policy, or who believe that someone else has been discriminated against or harassed, are encouraged to directly report these incidents to the Office of Institution Compliance by making a report online or by calling the Office of Institution Compliance at 972-883-2306. For more information, see the University's Nondiscrimination Policy and Sexual Misconduct Policy. For additional information about available support and resources, see the Office of Institutional Compliance (Support Services & Resources) webpage.

Technical Support

If you experience any issues with your UT Dallas account, contact the UT Dallas Office of Information Technology Help Desk or call 972-883-2911.

Student Conduct and Discipline

The University of Texas System Regents' Rule 50101 and UT Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the Student Complaints Resources within the online UT Dallas Undergraduate Catalog, and the Graduate Catalog.

UT Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the (Student Code of Conduct, UTDSP5003). Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of Community Standards and Conduct, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SSB 4.400, 972-883-6330) and online at their webpage.

A student at the University neither loses their rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating its standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Social Media Use

The Student Code of Conduct includes behaviors conducted via any digital platform. Students may not use any digital platform to seek or provide unauthorized assistance for any assignment done for academic credit. Students may not use any digital platform to impersonate or represent any person other than themselves. Please consult with your instructor regarding authorized assistance.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high-level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. Additional information is provided within their website.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty can occur in relation to any type of work submitted for academic credit or as a requirement for a class. It can include individual work or a group project. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and collaboration/collusion. In order to avoid academic dishonesty, it is important for students to fully understand the expectations of their professors. This is best accomplished through asking clarifying questions if an individual does not completely understand the requirements of an assignment.

Additional information related to academic dishonesty and tips on how to avoid dishonesty may be found on their website.

Military-Affiliated Students

At the University of Texas at Dallas, we are committed to supporting our military and veteran students and their spouses and dependents as they pursue their academic goals. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by those who have served, we strive to create a welcoming and supportive environment. Please contact your instructor if you are on active duty, called to serve, or if any aspect of your current or past military service, or your family situation, makes it challenging to meet the course requirements or affects your academic progress. Your instructor is committed to supporting you and will work with you to address any complications.

The Military and Veteran Center (MVC) offers a range of resources and referrals to campus and community partners, ensuring that our military and veteran students can access the assistance they need. Whether it is academic advising, financial aid, or personal support, the MVC is dedicated to helping our students succeed and thrive in their educational journey.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in the university policy UTDSP5005. In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding disputes over grades, application of degree plan, graduation/degree program requirements, and thesis/and dissertation committee, adviser actions and/or decisions, evaluations, and/or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the

matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originated.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Texas at Dallas is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (2008), you are required to register with the AccessAbility Resource Center (ARC), located in the Administration Building, Suite 2.224. They can be reached by email, calling 972-883-2098, or at their website. To receive academic accommodations for this class, please register and request services by completing the Request for Services form with the proper documentation and meeting with the Director of ARC at the beginning of the semester.

Religious Holy Days

UT Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities, including examinations and travel time, for the observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, of the *Texas Tax Code*. Students are encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment.

Excused students will be allowed to take missed exams or complete assignments within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the school's vice or associate dean, who serve as the President's designees for these rules. The vice or associate deans must take into account the legislative intent of *Texas Education Code* 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the vice or associate dean.

This information is also included in the online UT Dallas Undergraduate Catalog, and the Graduate Catalog.