Eastern Illinois University  
New Course Proposal  
BGS 3001, Prior Learning Portfolio

1. Catalog Description

a. BGS 3001  
b. Prior Learning Portfolio  
c. (3-0-3)  
d. Fall, Spring and Summer  
e. BGS Portfolio  
f. A writing intensive course focusing on the process of analyzing and documenting a prior learning experience in portfolio form. Emphasis is on analysis of prior learning, information access as it pertains to prior learning assessment and further development of writing skills. 
g. Prerequisites: Permission of the instructor. This course is open only to students in the BGS Degree Program, Organizational & Professional Development majors, and Nursing majors. 
h. Summer 2005

2. Course Objectives and Evaluation of Course

a. Student Objectives:

1. Students will develop the ability to delineate and compare one’s learning with the conceptual framework of appropriate college level coursework. 
2. Students will engage in the writing process to develop a coherent, persuasive presentation of prior learning that adheres to the standards of college level writing. 
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to write expository essays and develop a prior learning portfolio that is focused and organized. 
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to identify, collect, describe, classify and evaluate documentation that will verify evidence of college level learning. 
5. Students will demonstrate the ability to apply critical thinking and analysis skills to identify the conceptual learning acquired outside of the formal academic environment. 
6. Students will demonstrate the ability to use technology for on-line learning, including internet research, writing, documentation design and library research.
b. Assessing Achievement:

Students will be expected to successfully complete 4 formal papers: Chronological Record, Career Autobiography, Learning Narrative, and Table of Contents/List of Courses. An accumulation of these papers will fulfill the requirements of the Prior Learning Portfolio as defined by the BGS Program. Coursework will also include several informal writing assignments, in addition to a, Time Line and Experience Chart, Course Objectives Chart, and Documentation Tracking Chart, all of which will enhance the quality of the finalized prior learning portfolio.

c. Technology Delivered:

1. Students will submit documents to the instructor for feedback. The instructor may also suggest additional readings or activities.
2. Integrity of the work will be maintained by the instructor. Student work will be submitted to the instructor either using the WebCT mailbox or as an Assignment, viewable by the instructor only. Students may also receive feedback as participants in peer groups.
3. Instructor-student and student-student interaction will be facilitated via WebCT, web-based discussions, chat sessions and using feedback functions contained within WebCT. Based upon the amount of work and feedback required, seating is limited to 15 students.

d. This is not a 4000 level course.

e. This course is writing intensive. In writing-intensive courses, several writing assignments and writing activities are required. These assignments and activities, which are to be spread over the course of the semester, serve the dual purpose of strengthening writing skills and deepening understanding of course content. At least one writing assignment is to be revised by the student after it has been read and commented on by the instructor. In writing-intensive courses, students’ writing should constitute no less than 35% of the final course grade. The writing assignments that will be completed throughout the semester will satisfy these requirements. At least one, the Learning Narrative, will go through several revisions. All assignments will accumulate into the finalized portfolio.
3. Outline of the Course

a. Course will be divided into several units:

1. Introduction 200 minutes [Objectives 1,5,6]
   a. Definition of Prior Learning
   b. Standards of Assessment of Prior Learning
   c. Review of writing process, research methods, and rhetorical issues related to the prior learning portfolio.

2. Chronological Record 150 minutes [Objectives 1,5,6]
   a. Definition of a Time Line Record
   b. Development of Time Line Record (research, organization, design, editing)
   c. Bloom’s Taxonomy

3. Career Autobiography 300 minutes [Objectives 4,5,6]
   a. Definition of a Career Autobiography
   b. Requirements of Career Autobiography
   c. Development of Career Autobiography
      1. research and analysis
      2. planning and drafting
      3. revision and editing
      4. use of appropriate technology

4. Learning Narrative 900 minutes [Objectives 1,2,3,4,5,6]
   a. Definition of Learning Narrative
   b. Components of Learning Narrative
   c. Analyzing experience versus knowledge
   d. Development of Learning Narrative
      1. research and analysis
      2. planning and drafting
      3. revision and editing
      4. use of appropriate technology

5. Documentation Tracking 100 minutes [Objectives 4,6]
   a. Definition of Document Tracking
   b. Process of Document Tracking
6. Organizational Material  
   **50 minutes [Objective 6]**
   a. Certification Page
   b. Table of Contents
   c. List of Courses

7. Finalization of Portfolio  
   **100 minutes [Objective 6]**
   a. Physical Layout
   b. Final Editing

b. This course will be technology delivered and will be very writing intensive. Students are required to develop and submit several drafts of each writing assignment. The amount of time required to meet all the learning outcomes is comparable to what would be required in a class delivered via a traditional delivery mode.

4. Rationale
   a. Purpose and Need: This course will offer undergraduate students in the BGS Degree Program the opportunity to reflect analytically upon their rich life experiences, and present the result of this reflection in a written format for assessment of prior learning. In the process, students will become more self-conscious about their own writing process and develop new strategies for writing successfully in a variety of rhetorical situations. As a technology delivered course, it will be available to all students who plan to write portfolios. It will serve the adult student population who are at a distance and cannot access on campus courses. It also provides students with greater access to the instructor and support services, in order to help them develop and complete a portfolio in timely manner.
   b. Justification of Course Level: Upper division students have had more opportunities to develop the writing and critical thinking skills necessary to complete a successful portfolio.
   c. Similarity to Existing Courses: None
   d. Impact on Program: This course will be required of any BGS student desiring to submit prior learning portfolios; however, it is not required for graduation.

5. Implementation:
   a. Faculty Members: Course instructors will be approved by the School of Continuing and the BGS Degree Program Director.
   b. Additional Costs: None
   c. Texts: None
6. Community College Transfer: A community college course will not be judged equivalent to this course.

7. Date approved by the department or school: March 31, 2005

8. Date approved by college curriculum committee: March 31, 2005

9. Date approved by CAA: August 25, 2005  CGS: Not applicable
Syllabus
BGS 3001: Learning Portfolio
3 credit hours
Spring 2005
January 10, 2005 – April 29, 2005
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Description: This course is designed to help students analyze, write, assemble and document prior learning to develop a BGS portfolio that can be evaluated by faculty for possible college credit. Emphasis is on analysis of prior learning, information access as it pertains to prior learning assessment and further development of writing skills.

Intended Audience: Undergraduate students enrolled in the BGS Degree Program.

Prerequisites: Admission in the BGS Degree Program and approval by instructor.

Rationale: This course will offer undergraduate students in the BGS Program the opportunity to analyze and reflect upon their rich life learning experiences and present the result of this reflection in a written format for assessment of prior learning. The portfolio is created in a prescribed format that identifies assumptions, expectations, and strategies used by faculty in varying subject disciplines to demonstrate and assess college learning.

Expected Student Outcomes:

1. Students will develop the ability to delineate and compare one’s learning with the conceptual framework of appropriate college level coursework.
2. Students will engage in the writing process to develop a coherent, persuasive presentation of prior learning that adheres to the standards of college level writing.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to write expository essays and develop a prior learning portfolio that is focused and organized.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to identify, collect, describe, classify and evaluate documentation that will verify evidence of college level learning.
5. Students will demonstrate the ability to apply critical thinking and analysis skills to identify the conceptual learning acquired outside of the formal academic environment.
6. Students will demonstrate the ability to use technology for on-line learning, including internet research, writing, documentation design and library research.

Instructional Modalities: Class interaction and discussion will take place online using WebCT, which is an online tool designed for teaching Internet courses. This online course will contain the tools necessary for students and instructors to communicate easily. Students will submit writings through the utilization of the WebCT Discussion Board and E-mail functions. Students will also interact with other classmates to facilitate feedback.
Written Requirements: Students will be expected to successfully complete four formal papers:

- Chronological Record
- Career Autobiography
- Learning Narrative
- Table of Contents/List of Courses

These papers, with the inclusion of Documentation, will result in the accumulation of a finalized portfolio.

Coursework will also include some informal writing assignments:

- PLA Article Report
- Reflective Thinking Exercises
- Time Line and Experience Chart
- Course Objectives Chart
- Documentation Chart of Prior Learning

These assignments will enhance the quality of the finalized portfolio.

Grading Procedure: This is a pass/fail course; there will not be a letter grade assigned. Therefore, each of the 4 formal papers (Chronological Record, Career Autobiography, Learning Narrative and Table of Contents/List of Courses) must receive a score of Satisfactory or above. In addition, 5 out of the 8 informal writing assignments (PLA Article, Reflective Thinking Exercises 1-3, 2 Time Line and Experience Charts, Course Objectives Chart, and Documentation Chart) must receive a score of Satisfactory or above.

Each assignment that is returned to you will clearly identify your score and the items that need to be improved upon. In addition, if you have received a lower score and want to improve it, you will be able to rewrite those assignments. However, you are responsible for the completion of all assignments by their due dates. Failure to turn in assignments in a timely manner prolongs the grading process and in effect, takes away significant remaining time to do the next assignment. Remember, my overall goal with this course is to help you craft a well written prior learning portfolio.

Evaluation Criteria: The writing process involves many elements; the evaluation of your work will be based upon these basics of writing:

1) Focus—a successful writing demonstrates a clear focus that is appropriate to the writing situation. The reader may easily determine what the paper is about and the purpose of the writing. In addition, the writing does not stray from the focus. A successful paper is like an expressway that eliminates unnecessary curves and provides clearly marked signposts. In other words, a clearly focused writing doesn’t take the reader on any side trips without very good reason.

2) Organization—An organized piece of writing has a plan and guides the reader from one aspect of the writing to the next. The first thing a well-organized piece of writing does is let the reader know the focus of the writing
(the “what” and the “so what”) as soon as possible. An organized writing also has a pattern that is consciously crafted for effectiveness. Perhaps the pattern moves the reader from the least to the most important aspect of the writing, or it might be the other way around. A well-organized piece of writing does not assume that the reader knows where you are going and why. Rather, it helps the reader along the way.

3) Development—A successful writing does not assume that the reader already knows what the writer knows. It also does not assume that the reader will believe or understand what you say just because you say it. A fully developed piece of writing explains, defines, gives examples, and/or draws on the writings or experiences of others to support or explain what is being said. Development/support move writing from the realm of “because I said so.”

4) Style—A successful piece of writing uses a style/tone/voice that is appropriate to the writing situation. For example, a note to a friend would use a very different style from that of a letter to the president of the university. And writing to a friend as if she were a university president is as inappropriate as the other way around.

5) Mechanics—Mechanical errors may seriously harm your credibility as a writer. For example, comma splices, misspelled words, etc., make a piece of writing look as if it were composed by a writer who either doesn’t know or doesn’t care about the conventions that “educated” readers share.

Grading Rubric: Based upon the evaluation criteria, each assignment will be assessed at one of the following scores:

Excellent: An Excellent paper exhibits these strengths:

1. Has a controlling sense of purpose.
2. Exhibits a mature level of thought.
3. Is tailored for a given disciplinary audience.
4. Achieves clarity throughout.
5. Has unified organization with an apt introduction, graceful transitions, and a vigorous conclusion.
6. Has a clear focus with abundant support/development.
7. Uses variety in sentence structure, precise word choice, emphasis, figures of speech, etc.
8. Is free from any serious errors in Standard English.

Good: A Good paper exhibits most of these strengths:

1. Has a controlling sense of purpose.
2. Exhibits a mature level of thought.
3. Is tailored for a given disciplinary audience.
4. Achieves clarity throughout.
5. Has unified organization with an apt introduction, clear transitions, and a good conclusion.
6. Has a clear focus which is reasonably developed with effective support.
7. Uses variety in sentence structure and accurate word choice.
8. Has few errors in Standard English and few stylistic weaknesses.

**Satisfactory:** A Satisfactory paper exhibits these characteristics:

1. Displays a sense or purpose, which may not be consistently met.
2. Is logical, but rarely thought provoking.
3. Displays a sense of audience and usually addresses that audience.
4. Is clear throughout.
5. Is organized well enough to be easily readable, with a beginning, middle and end.
6. Has a clear focus which is reasonably developed.
7. Has adequate but undistinguished word choice and sentence structure.
8. Contains almost no serious errors in sentence boundaries, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**Needs Improvement:** A Needs Improvement paper exhibits some but not all of the following weaknesses:

1. Fails to rise above the obvious in content, substitutes repetition for development, or relies too heavily on a secondary source.
2. Lacks an appropriate sense of audience.
3. Has lapses in clarity.
4. Has lapses in organization.
5. Has a single subject but no controlling idea.
6. Lacks variety in sentence structure and/or accuracy in word choice.
7. Has errors in Standard English. Examples include: run-on sentences; comma splices, sentence fragments; agreement errors; confusion of its/it’s, there/their, to/too/two, no/know, your/you’re, etc.; punctuation errors; and excessive misspellings.

**Unacceptable**

Papers which are severely underdeveloped or suffer from numerous errors will receive an Unacceptable grade. Plagiarism will also result in failing grade.

*Additional Note*
Upon completion of this class, students will submit their finalized portfolio to the BGS Office. In order to compensate our faculty evaluators, submissions fee will be due at that time. You may contact your program advisor for submission fee information.
Course Schedule: (subject to change)

1/10 – 1/16: Introduction to course; Defining PLA and CAEL Standards; Article report on PLA.

1/17 – 1/23: Begin Chronological Record; finish Article Report

1/24 – 1/30: Finish Chronological Record; Time Line and Experience Chart; Begin Career Autobiography; Reflective Thinking Exercise I.

1/31 – 2/06: Read Bloom’s Taxonomy; revise Time Line and Experience Chart incorporating Bloom’s Taxonomy; Finish Career Autobiography; Begin to search for courses. Reflective Thinking Exercise II.

2/07 – 2/13: Finish Course Search; Begin Course Objectives Chart. Reflective Thinking Exercise III.

2/14 – 2/20: Begin the Learning Narrative and Documentation Tracking; Finish Course Objectives Chart.


2/28 – 3/06: Complete Draft 1 of Learning Narrative.

3/07 – 3/13: Complete Documentation Tracking Chart; Begin Draft II of Learning Narrative; Review Bloom’s Taxonomy; request documentation for additional portfolios.


4/04 – 4/10: Complete Final Draft of Learning Narrative; Write the organizational material, including Certification Page, Table of Contents and List Of Courses.

4/11 – 4/17: Last check of learning portfolio; submit additional Learning Narratives.

4/18 – 4/24: Submit a finalized completed portfolio via WebCT e-mail; once approved, submit to BGS Office.

4/25 – 4/29: Course Evaluation; Grades will be calculated.