# 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** | |
| **Preparation** | None. |
| **Assignment** | Bring your laptop and a pen/pencil. |

| **Weeks 1 and 2: Limiting Beliefs, Growth Mindset, & Adapting to Your Workplace** | |
|---|---|
| **Group 1** | |
| **Group 2** | |
| **Preparation** | Carol Dweck, "The Power of Believing You Can Improve" (TED Talk, 2014)<br><br>Ashley Abramson, "How to Overcome Imposter Syndrome" (*Monitor on Psychology*, APA, June 2021)<br><br>Tchiki Davis, "The Beliefs That Limit Us, and How to Identify Them" (*Psychology Today*, September 2025)<br><br>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** | |
| **Group 2** | |
| **Preparation** | Skim Greg McKeown, *Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*, Chapters 1-4 (PDF in Canvas).<br><br>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** | |
| **Group 2** | |
| **Preparation** | "Networking Tips for Beginners" (Networking for Beginners Blog)<br><br>"How Do I Build My Network from Scratch?" (New Here Podcast, *Harvard Business Review*, September 20, 2023)<br><br>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<br><br>Complete & Discuss Phase 2 of Archer PDP (mid-semester review) |

| Week 7: So, you're thinking of graduate school | |
|---|---|
| **Groups 1 & 2** | |
| **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** | |
| **Group 2** | |
| **Preparation** | Tara Mohr, "Hooked vs. Unhooked" (blog post)<br><br>"Do You Receive Feedback Well?" (with Sheila Heen, Wellbeing Lab podcast, 2025)<br><br>What is Intellectual Humility, Why Practice It, and How to Cultivate It? (UC Berkeley Greater Good Science Center article)<br><br>"How to Have Difficult Conversations – 11 Tips That Can Help" (Calm blog post)<br><br>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** | |
| **Preparation** | Bill Burnett & Dave Evans, Odyssey Planning in *Designing Your Life* (2016) (PDF in Canvas)<br><br>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*** | |
| **Preparation** | Review the panelist profiles and formulate questions you want to ask about careers in public service. |

| Week 12: Reflecting on Work | |
|---|---|
| **Group 1** | |
| **Group 2** | |
| **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 |

# 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). |