Human Ecology Professional Development Options in HECOL 408
Winter 2020

Beginning in Winter 2019, HE graduate students who have completed their Individual Development Plan (IDP) have the opportunity to make up some of their Professional Development credits by attending seminars in HECOL 408 Intentional Professional Practice. HECOL 408 is the required course all HE undergraduate students must take prior to their practicum placement, and as such the course content covers professional practice in the workplace.

There are two options that are available for HE graduate students:
1) Communities of Practice (6 hours of PD credit)
2) Developing a Professional Portfolio (1.5 – 3 hours of PD credit)

There must be a minimum of 3 graduate students interested in completing option 1 (Communities of Practice). If there are less than 3 students signed up by noon on January 15, 2020, these HECOL 408 seminars will not be opened up to graduate students. For option 2 (Professional Portfolio) there is no such minimum requirement, however, if you wish to attend the introductory seminar you will need to RSVP by noon on January 15, 2020. In order to register for these seminars please contact Raina Stephens (raina.stephens@ualberta.ca). If you have any questions about these PD options please contact the Graduate Coordinator, Rachel McQueen, rachel.mcqueen@ualberta.ca.

HECOL 408 seminars are on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11.00 am to 12.20 pm in HEB 301. Please bring a completed declaration of attendance form for the HECOL 408 instructor to sign after each seminar you attend.

1. Communities of Practice
PD Skills/Competencies: Creativity, Communication, Confidence, Ethical Responsibility, Critical Thinking, Collaboration

For graduate students, the initial Learning Circle (January 16) is an opportunity to determine if a small group of 3-5 graduate students wishes to participate in three subsequent Learning Circles (80 minutes per circle) to fulfill 6 hours of professional development in total. Participation in this initial seminar will count as 1.5 hours of PD credit. For the learning circles to be successful it is necessary that there are at least 3-5 graduate students who make a commitment to one another to attend three more seminars in order to complete the additional 4.5 hours of PD. By making this commitment to your peers you are practicing your skills in ethical responsibility and collaboration. You will need to confirm you have a peer group and indicate which seminars you’d like to attend by noon on January 20, 2020. If six graduate students wish to participate, two small circles of three students would be formed.

1.1 Introductory seminar (1.5 hours PD credit)
January 16 – Introduction to Learning-Circles Practice

In this professional-development opportunity, you will read about and reflect on professional practice issues. To encourage critical discussion about the readings, you will be invited to create a community of practice or “learning circle.” Within this small group of peers, you will share thoughts and experiences related to the readings. Your learning-circle discussions should add dimension and diverse perspectives to the content arising from your collegial dialogue.
The intent and operation of the Learning Circles are rooted in two key concepts:

- **Mindful practice (Carroll, 2009)**
  - “Clearing a space to help the **reflective process** is important. ... Put simply, mindfulness is learning to be fully alert and available in the present moment (Carroll, 2004). Mindfulness is also a purposeful way of being attentive to internal states of feelings and thoughts as well as external states of the environment (May & O’Donovan, 2007). It helps us remain attentive without judgment.” (Carroll, 2009, p. 46)

- **Communities of practice (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015)**
  - Adopting a mindfulness stance (e.g., centering one’s self) is a way to be present for other people (e.g., peers; colleagues).
  - A group embarks on and continues “a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 1). This process is characterized by ongoing, shared effort for enhancing common application of interests and/or knowledge, as a group of peer practitioners.

To prepare for this initial seminar, please read and watch the following background information on both concepts:


(iv) Ted Talk: “Why it’s time to forget the pecking order at work” by Margaret Heffernan (TEDWomen, 15:47 min., May 2015) [https://www.ted.com/talks/margaret_heffernan_why_it_s_time_to_forget_the_pecking_order_a t_work](https://www.ted.com/talks/margaret_heffernan_why_it_s_time_to_forget_the_pecking_order_at_work)

Two optional related resources that you may find useful for this seminar and future work are:


**Resources for Learning Circles:**

- Learning Circles assignment document (Reading[s]; TED Talks; Activity[s]) (HECOL 408 instructor to provide)
- Your life experiences to-date! Your hopes!!
- Your peer circle

**Tracking Change during the Learning Circles:**

- Discussion Sheets (HECOL 408 instructor to provide)
- Process Checker sheets (HECOL 408 instructor to provide)
- HECOL 408 instructor to visit each peer circle (joining the ‘rim’ to listen and contribute)
1.2 Learning circles (3 x 1.5 hours = 4.5 hours of PD credit)

Once you have successfully completed the introduction to learning circles (on January 16), you will discuss with your peer grad-student group which 3 of the following 5 seminars you want to continue on with to receive your additional 4.5 hours of PD credits. Please note, that you and your peer group (3-5 members) must indicate which seminars you wish to participate in by noon on January 20.

January 28 – Learning Circle #2
Attitudes, Supports, & Reflection
This seminar is an opportunity to do some advance reflection about oneself and how one’s past shapes how one learns, as an individual and in relationship with other people and contexts. The concept of “critical friend” is introduced. Together, the peer circle will explore professional development with peers as trusted, mindful listeners for each other and asking “what do you need in this moment?” In addition, peers will consider insights into how one ‘shows up’ (e.g., in one’s life; in professional practice).

February 4 – Learning Circle #3
Self-Understanding, Values, & Motivation for Practice
This seminar is an opportunity to reflect individually and with peers about the following questions in terms of a career: Who am I? How am I showing up? Why am I showing up? As peers, you will consider how one’s values are guiding principles of life and provide the foundation for decisions and actions. Values do not change across work and non-work lives. Together, you will explore how values can be ordered by relative importance and how that ordering can help to set meaningful personal and professional goals.

February 25 – Learning Circle #5
Organization Culture, Community Context, & Civic Professionalism
This seminar is an opportunity to consider how every workplace has a culture, with its own traditions, beliefs, roles, rules, and customs. In dialogue, you will explore benefits of understanding your attitudes, behaviours, and feelings for when you enter a culture different from your own. One point of discussion will be to consider ways in which you do or do not engage in office politics and workplace gossip.

March 10 – Learning Circle #7
Confrontation, Feedback, & Growth
This seminar is an opportunity to consider confrontation or adversity as an inevitable part of work. Navigating workplace conflict constructively is an important professional skill. One cannot handle things on which one is unaware, however, and it is common to be unaware of what triggers impulses to overreact in conflict situations. For example, in professional life, we receive feedback about our work. Most of us hear accurate feedback from a respected source, with openness. Feedback, however, can sometimes make us defensive and prevent us from using it as a learning opportunity. To learn from any kind of feedback, we need to (i) put it in context by considering the source, (ii) reflect on potential truth in the remarks, and (iii) decide how to respond.

March 24 – Learning Circle #9
Professional & Ethical Responsibilities
This seminar is an opportunity to consider how we, as professionals, balance responsibilities/loyalties to many groups of people. As peers, you will explore such questions as: (i) How do you live with dual loyalties/responsibilities (e.g., to self, clients, co-workers, employer, profession, community) and/or prioritize them? Where do you experience conflicts between them and how do you deal with these
conflicts? (ii) How do your loyalties translate to behaviours? (iii) Why is dress a professional/ethical issue? (iv) Can you recall an ethical/moral issue you faced in childhood that affects how you react to/approach ethical issues today?

2. Developing a Professional Portfolio (1.5 – 3 hours of PD credit)

*PD Skills/Competencies: Creativity, Communication, Confidence, Scholarship, Ethical Responsibility, Critical Thinking, Collaboration*

The initial seminar on January 30 is an introduction to developing a professional portfolio. The seminar is descriptive rather than an active-learning opportunity. As a result, participation in this initial seminar will not count as professional-development time. Participation in one “workshop” will count for 1.5 hours. Students are encouraged to participate in both workshop #1 and #2 but can still complete 1.5 hours toward their PD requirement by attending only one.

**January 30 – Introduction to the Portfolio Assignment**
This seminar offers an introduction to the HECOL 408 Portfolio assignment. We will consider components of a professional portfolio (e.g., mission statement; philosophy of practice statement; samples of past work; performance evaluations; reflections/critiques on particular pieces of work). Tips will be offered regarding format; photos of past portfolios will be explored. By the end of this assignment, participants should be able to:

- Describe your personal mission as a reflective human ecologist.
- Articulate your philosophy statement for your practice.
- Articulate your knowledge (e.g., as a generalist; as a specialist) and skills (e.g., practice skills; inner skills).
- Demonstrate how to display and update your mission, philosophy of practice, and abilities, over time.
- Collect and organize an array of evidence, including not only best work but also work that demonstrates growth, over time.
- Represent your accomplishments, over time.
- Represent your professional development.

**February 27 – Portfolio Workshop #1**
This seminar is a workshop for peer discussion about work to-date on each person’s portfolio. In particular, participants will discuss their draft table of contents as a key design feature of a portfolio.

**March 19 – Portfolio Workshop #2**
This seminar is a workshop for peer discussion about work to-date on each person’s portfolio. In particular, participants will discuss draft personal mission statements and philosophy of practice statements.