



**UNIV 401A: Graduate School Preparation Seminar**  
**Southern Illinois University Carbondale**  
**McNair Scholars Program, Fall 2019**  
**McNair Study Room**

**Instructor: Rhetta Seymour**  
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**Office Hours:** Tues. & Wed. 1pm-3pm

**Course Overview and Objectives:**

This course will assist senior McNair Scholars in the identification of graduate school programs in their field of study and the preparation and submission of at least **three graduate school applications**. We will review the credentials that are necessary for acceptance into graduate school, identify the essential components of a graduate school application and establish a clear understanding of how to prepare for and succeed as a graduate student. Scholars will be given guidance on the selection of an appropriate graduate program and the development of a competitive application packet. We will explore the value and process of engaging in research and other professional activities and we will examine the graduate school and faculty experiences. The objectives of this graduate course is to allow students to:

- Identify graduate schools and develop a timeline for applications
- Compile application packets for graduate school
- Write a personal statement
- Develop a CV
- Network with faculty and graduate students in potential graduate schools
- Identify graduate school funding opportunities
- Develop an understanding of the “culture of the academy”
- Understand graduate student and faculty responsibilities

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the semester, students will have the necessary tools to complete at least **three graduate school applications** for admission. In addition to offering a structured application process, we offer a supportive and interactive environment to help maneuver applying and attending graduate school, as well as resources on excelling in graduate school.

**Structure of Seminar:**

This seminar, similar to the traditional graduate school class structure begins with formal structures to complete basic tasks of the application process, and later moving toward the more individualized statement of purpose (SoP) and curriculum vitae (CV). This seminar is also a forum for students to ask questions and share experiences with their peers

**Evaluation:**

The final grade for the semester will be based on your successful completion of all listed assignments, as well as on your participation in class, and your contribution in discussions. As a seminar, active participation of all students is a requirement for passing the class.

## Attendance

Your participation in this class is an essential component to preparing your graduate school applications. Attendance is mandatory for this seminar and it will be strictly enforced.

Wk	Date-Week of:	Assignments Due	Topic	Activity
1	Sep 17-19	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction &amp; Seminar Overview</li> <li>Thinking about graduate school &amp; Narrowing options</li> <li>GRE, McNair Fee Waivers, etc.</li> </ul>	Class-led discussion
2	Sep 24-26	Requirements & contacts spread sheet for 3-5 schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selection process: What are they looking for?</li> <li>Who is a good reference?</li> <li>Creating your personal brand</li> </ul>	Small group work & Presentations on personal branding
3	Oct 1-3	CV draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparing a powerful CV</li> <li>Funding graduate education</li> </ul>	Student-led discussion
4	Oct 8-10	Personal Statement draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal statements</li> <li>Scholarship applications</li> </ul>	Small group work
5	Oct 22-24	List of 3 Potential References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing stress in graduate school</li> <li>Succeeding in graduate school</li> <li>Socialization for the Graduate Student</li> </ul>	Student-led discussion
6	Oct 29-31	No Class: Work on Final Portfolio		
7	Nov 5-7	Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Come prepared to ask &amp; answer grad school interview questions</li> <li>Meet with career development office to set-up Mock interview</li> </ul>	Mock Interviews
8	Nov 22-24	McNair E-Portfolio Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once accepted-how to choose?</li> <li>Surviving the first year of graduate school?</li> </ul>	
9	Nov 26-28	No Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Thanksgiving Break</b></li> <li></li> </ul>	
10	Dec.3-5	<b>Final McNair E-Portfolio due</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<b>Email Portfolio: Turn in THREE complete graduate school applications.</b>

## Reading List

### Week 1

#### 7 Big Differences Between College and Graduate School

<http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/blog/posts/161/7-big-differences-college-graduate-school/>

Good reasons for going to grad school. Retrieved from

<https://www.idealists.org/grad-schools/blog/5-good-reasons-grad-school>

### Week 2

Appleby, D. C., & Appleby, K. M. (2006). [Kisses of death in the graduate school application process.](#) *Teaching of Psychology*, 33(1), 19-24.

### Week 3

How to Pay for Graduate School. Retrieved from

<http://www.youcandealwithit.com/borrowers/graduates/how-to-pay.shtml>

Writing your CV. Retrieved from

<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/cv-samples-and-writing-tips-2060349>

How to write a CV

<https://www.prepscholar.com/gre/blog/how-to-write-a-cv-for-graduate-school/>

### Week 4

Tips for Writing the Graduate School Personal Statement-Don Asher

[https://www.stlawu.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Don%20Asher%27s%20Tips%20for%20Composing%20a%20Personal%20Statement\\_0.pdf](https://www.stlawu.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Don%20Asher%27s%20Tips%20for%20Composing%20a%20Personal%20Statement_0.pdf)

10 Tips for writing a grad school personal statement

<http://college.usatoday.com/2012/10/12/10-tips-for-writing-a-grad-school-personal-statement/>

Writing the Personal Statement-retrieved from:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job\\_search\\_writing/preparing\\_an\\_application/writing\\_the\\_personal\\_statement/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job_search_writing/preparing_an_application/writing_the_personal_statement/index.html)

[Writing the Personal Statement Vidcast .](#)

Sample Essays: Retrieved from

[http://www.statementofpurpose.com/essay\\_samples.html](http://www.statementofpurpose.com/essay_samples.html)

### Week 5

Gardner, S. K., & Holley, K. A. (2011). [“Those invisible barriers are real”: The progression of first-generation students through doctoral education.](#) *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 44(1), 77-92.

Gardner, S. K., & Barnes, B. J. (2007). [Graduate student involvement: Socialization for the professional role.](#) *Journal of College Student Development*, 48(4), 369-387.

### Week 6

Five FAQs about interviewing for graduate school

<http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/psn/2015/01/interviewing-grad-school.aspx>

Rocking the Phone/Skype Interview

<https://theprofessorisin.com/2011/10/31/thephoneorskypeinterview/>

### Additional (Optional) Readings

Tompkins, K. A., Brecht, K., Tucker, B., Neander, L. L., & Swift, J. K. (2016). [Who matters most? The contribution of faculty, student-peers, and outside support in predicting graduate student satisfaction.](#) *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 10(2), 102-108.

Winkle-Wagner, R., & McCoy, D. L. (2016). Entering the (Postgraduate) Field: Underrepresented Students' Acquisition of Cultural and Social Capital in Graduate School Preparation Programs. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 87(2), 178-205.

### Funding Resources

<https://gradschool.cornell.edu/fellowships>

[https://www.fastweb.com/ppc?utm\\_source=yahoo&utm\\_medium=ppc](https://www.fastweb.com/ppc?utm_source=yahoo&utm_medium=ppc)

<http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/FordFellowships/index.htm>

<http://www.nsfgrfp.org/>

<https://scholarships.fatomei.com/>

**Note:** Check graduate school funding resources provided by the national organization for your discipline.

### Assignments

Assignments	Points	Total
Attendance/Participation	5 pts	5
Meetings with Instructor (3 during the semester)	5pts/each	15
Grad School List; School Requirements; List of References	5pts/each	15
Personal Statement Draft	15 pts	15
Curriculum Vitae Draft	15 pts	15
Completed Graduate School Applications (3 each)	5 pts	15
Final Portfolio [with revised Personal Statement & CV]	20 pts	20
	<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>

### Grading Scale: Pass/Fail

**Pass =85 to 100pts.**

**Fail = 84 pts and below**

**All assignments must be typed. Handwritten assignments will not be accepted.** Please use one (1) inch margins and 12 font size. You do not need a cover page, simply make sure your name and title of the paper is on the first page. You must also put your name on everything you turn in. Papers with no name will be returned and no credit for the assignment will be given. **Assignments are due Thursday of that week by 11:59pm on D2L. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

**Late Assignments:**

All assignments must be completed and turned in on or before the date they are due. If you must turn in an assignment late, one point will be deducted for each day it is late. Please note that additional points may be deducted from that total depending on how well you followed directions and the overall quality of the work.

**Meetings with Instructor:**

The McNair Program is not just a series of seminar classes, but a program designed to assist in preparing you for graduate school in a variety of ways. In order to assess your personal needs and requirements, you are required to meet with me at least three (3) times over the course of the semester. These appointments can be scheduled by emailing or calling me. The semester check-in will count toward one of these meetings.

**Accommodations:**

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify the instructor during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for the course. Late notification may cause the requested accommodations to be unavailable. For more information about services available to students with disabilities, contact: Disability Resource Center in B-150, Woody Hall; Phone: 618-453-5738; Email: [DSSsiu@siu.edu](mailto:DSSsiu@siu.edu); website: <http://disabilityservices.siu.edu/>