Overview
BIS 301, Adult Post-Secondary Transition and Transformation is a 3-credit course that offers a comprehensive, research-based, problem-solving educational experience in which adult students learn the multiple factors that affect adult degree completion, assess their situation regarding these factors, and develop skills and plans to overcome the challenges of completing a bachelor’s degree as an adult.

Learning Objectives
- **Career Planning**: Develop a career goal that includes an analysis of their skills and capabilities
- **Life-goals**: Establish personal goals and design a "life-plan".
- Individual factors for degree completion: perform a SWOT analysis of their personal situation examining the roles of family, finances, employment and how that affects their ability to complete their degree
- **Academic skills**: Develop an academic skill and ability evaluation and a plan that utilizes mason resources.
- **Understanding institutional structure and resources**: Understand the organization of the university and design a triage chart
- **Pro-active advising**: Initiate and direct meetings with advisors and faculty
- **Academic planning strategies**: Examine plan of study and course learning requirements and assessments and strategically develop a process to maximize their learning.
- **Developing a sense of community**: Engage other members of the class and Mason community in a dialog about learning and personal development

Course Structure
BIS 301 is formatted to be conducted in a fully online format. The online format will meet weekly and will be recorded so students who are unable to attend the the weekly class meetings will be able to watch the video lectures asynchronously. However it is highly encouraged to attend the weekly class meetings via Zoom since it offers the opportunity for meeting peers and instructors and develops relationships and sense of connection that improve completion rates. The online weekly class meeting format will meet the time and responsibility needs of the adult student, take advantage of available classroom time and create direct connection with the university and student experience.

This course will combine short lecture supported by online content, group problem-solving activities, personal assessments using established standardized professional assessments (e.g. Gallup StrengthsFinder, LASSI, SWOT analysis), group discussion boards, personal reflections, and a personal plan development for each category of challenge. This course will teach and reinforce group problem solving, self-awareness and assessment, use of technology for research and communication, writing, critical thinking, and planning.
Recommended Materials:

Grading
Assignments and assessments will be graded with individual rubrics for each component of the course. Key components: a) career planning, b) life goal planning, c) academic skills, d) institutional structure and resources, and e) community connection and transformation, will be assessed via rubric and aggregate student scores reported in the departmental review of student learning via TK20.

Class Guidelines and Culture
Participation is a very important part of your grade and a crucial contributor to your learning. While contributing to class discussions is central to participation, your grade will also hinge on other important factors, especially how you participate. This includes your ability to fully participate in or facilitate class discussions, involvement in peer
response and feedback, and contributions to discussions.

If you’re unable to submit work by the required deadline, please contact me immediately to see if alternate arrangements can be made.

**Disabilities**
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

**Enrollment**
Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes. After the last day to drop, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the Dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons. Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.

**Assignments**
All assignments must be submitted through Blackboard. One of the goals of this class is for students to produce a portfolio which will showcase their lives, career and educational experiences to future employers. For those students who are not interested in creating a portfolio, please contact your instructor for alternative assignments.

The heart and soul of this course takes place in the classroom and on the Discussion Board. Students are expected to be prepared for class, attend regularly and fully engage in course discussions and activities, as well as written reflections. Each class will depend on students giving their energy and attention to their own learning and the learning of fellow students. The course is designed to allow students of diverse learning modes to thrive while also encouraging students to push the boundaries of their comfort zone by working in different modes. This includes individual reflection activities, small group discussions and assignments. Homework involves primarily reading from the required course book and supplementary readings or videos and written reflections on the Discussion Board which count toward Class Participation. Class Participation is split between in-class participation and written comments on the Discussion Board.

1. A brief life history (can be used for a portfolio) (15 points)

2. Empathy Project: Write a Letter to Yourself either Past, Present or Future. Or for those of you who are uncomfortable addressing yourself, write to a child, family member or friend. The goal is to express empathy for yourself and share lessons learned from past experiences. Who are you now and how do you or how would you like to handle a personal crisis? (15 points)
3. Odyssey Plan from Design Your Life. Chapters 5 & 6 of the Design Your Life book will guide you on how to create an Odyssey Plan. Create 3 versions of your life according to a 5 year plan. Plan A – First life you are already committed to. Plan B – The second life – a back-up plan. The second life is one you’d create if Plan A was suddenly gone. Plan C – your dream plan. The life you’d live if money and image didn’t matter. (30 points)

4. Life, Career and Academic Plan and Presentation. This project will synthesize the activities and learning from throughout the course. Part I – Fill out 4 SWOT worksheets for each component which affect Degree Completion, Environment, Relationships, Work/Time Management, Finances. Part II – Create a plan that will help you bypass obstacles toward degree completion. Prototype to decide where you want to go. Part III – Present your plans and your findings to the class to show you developed a bias toward action. (20 points)

5. Participation (20 points): Zoom meetings, journal entries and on-line discussions, etc.

**Academic Honesty**
GMU has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental principles must be followed at all times.

- All work submitted should be your own.
- When using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations.
- If you are uncertain about what is appropriate for a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct.

Plagiarism means using someone else’s words, opinions, or factual information without giving the person credit. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and will not be tolerated in the academic setting. Any student caught writing a paper for someone else or copying from another source (e.g. a published article) without proper citation will be reported and disciplined under the University’s regulations. For more information, see: http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/

**Grading Expectations**
Much of the grading for this class recognizes that it is difficult to make value judgments on something so individual and personal as one’s goals and aspirations for careers or
their vocational discernment. Therefore, grades for this course will be based upon the
instructors’ judgment regarding the quality of your performance. The grading will be
based on a student’s process by which he or she utilizes the tools taught in this class.
Final grades will be determined based on the following scale:
• 98 - 100 = A+
• 93 - 97 = A
• 90 - 92 = A-
• 87 - 89 = B+
• 83 - 86 = B
• 80 - 82 = B-
• 77 - 79 = C+
• 70 - 76 = C
• 67 - 69 = C-
• 60 - 66 = D
• Below 60 = F

Resources

Writing Center
http://writingcenter.gmu.edu
703-993-1200
Robinson A 114

The Writing Center provides tutors who can help you develop ideas and revise papers at
no charge. It can sometimes accommodate walk-ins, but generally it is best to call for an
appointment. The services of the Writing Center are also available online.

Disability Resource Center
www.gmu.edu/student/drc/
703-993-2474
SUB I, Room 222

The Disability Resource Center assists students with learning or physical conditions
affecting learning. If you have a disability documented by the Disability Resource
Center that requires special conditions for exams or other writing assignments, please
see me the first week of classes.

GMU Libraries
http://library.gmu.edu
The GMU Libraries employ Librarians who serve can help you find information to
support your project. Each Librarian is a subject specialist and can help with research
topics of any area or discipline. The Library’s web site provides electronic access to
journal databases and many other resources.

GMU Career Services
http://careers.gmu.edu/
Career Services offers career education and planning, internship opportunities, resume service, job search assistance, and graduate school application preparation. They have an extensive library of print and online resources, and offer a number of interesting workshops.

**Student Privacy**
http://registrar.gmu.edu/ferpa/

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is a federal law that governs the educational records of eligible students. It grants students continuous access to their educational records upon request, allows students to amend their records if they feel they’re inaccurate, and restricts how and when their educational records can be disclosed.

**Counseling and Psychology Services**
https://caps.gmu.edu/
CAPS provides a wide range of free services to students, faculty, and staff. Services are provided by a staff of professional clinical psychologists, social workers, counselors, learning specialists, and psychiatric providers.

**GMU Diversity Statement**
George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.

An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

The reflection of Mason’s commitment to diversity and inclusion goes beyond policies and procedures to focus on behavior at the individual, group and organizational level. The implementation of this commitment to diversity and inclusion is found in all settings, including individual work units and groups, student organizations and groups, and classroom settings; it is also found with the delivery of services and activities, including, but not limited to, curriculum, teaching, events, advising, research, service, and community outreach.

Acknowledging that the attainment of diversity and inclusion are dynamic and continuous processes, and that the larger societal setting has an evolving socio-cultural understanding of diversity and inclusion, Mason seeks to continuously improve its
environment. To this end, the University promotes continuous monitoring and self assessment regarding diversity. The aim is to incorporate diversity and inclusion within the philosophies and actions of the individual, group and organization, and to make improvements as needed.