

**ELP 6560/7560 College Student Retention Theory – 3 credits**

Syllabus for Spring 2009

(Cross listed as ECS 6642)

Day/Time: Thursday, 7:15 to 9:45

Location: MBH 302

Faculty: Sharon A. Aiken-Wisniewski, PhD  
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Office Hours: Wednesday from 3 to 4:30 or by appointment

**Message from Sharon**

Welcome to College Student Retention Theory! I am excited to spend the Spring 2009 semester with you as we explore the concept of retention within higher education. This course has been designed to engage our group in a conversation on retention that challenges each of us to consider this concept on multiple levels. The success of this course in achieving the student learning outcomes will center on respectful dialogue, critical thinking, and personal reflection. I look forward to a challenging exchange for mutual development of our understanding of retention.

**Course Description**

In this course students develop an understanding of how college students make and implement persistence decisions, and how institutional structures, policies, and practices impact those decisions. Reading and discussing theory and research on college student retention, students consider who makes up the college-going population and the issues these constituents bring to campus, examine retention theory's history, and conduct a critical examination of various theories of retention. Readings and discussions focus on the role of leadership in creating environments that promote retention for the diverse student populations. Meets with 7560. Students enrolled in 7560 will be held to a higher standard and may be assigned additional coursework.

**Required Texts**

- ❑ My Freshmen Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student by Rebekah Nathan
- ❑ Reworking the Student Departure Puzzle Edited by John M. Braxton
- ❑ Student Success in College: Creating Conditions That Matter by George D. Kuh, Jillian Kinzie, John H. Schuh, Elizabeth J. Whitt and Associates
- ❑ Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds by Richard J. Light

**Required Articles**

Other required articles will be provided to the class. A complete Reference list will be provided to the class.

## **Recommended Articles**

TBA from faculty and graduate colleagues

## **Course Objectives (Student Learning Outcomes)**

The ELP Masters Program in Student Affairs Administration guides the student learning outcomes for this course. These include:

1. Analyze the demographics and characteristics of today's college students.
2. Become familiar with research and theories on college student retention.
3. Develop an understanding of how retention issues may vary for specific student populations such as women, students of color, gay/lesbian/bisexual, working class, disabled, first-generation, and adult learners.
4. Increase knowledge of general methods for researching and presenting information regarding the persistence decisions of college students for different audiences, including policy makers, administrators, and researchers.
5. Develop the skills to create a retention plan that addresses persistence for a specific population of students or a particular type of higher education institution.
6. Understand how to be a change agent for social justice as it relates to student retention issues.

## **Assignments**

**(Detailed instructions for all assignments will be passed out beyond the synopsis listed below. Graduate level writing and APA style/5<sup>th</sup> edition is required for all assignments.)**

### **A. Interview an undergraduate to understand retention – 70 points**

The first assignment for this course is to interview an undergraduate to understand why she/he continues to attend her/his current institution of higher education. The class will develop a list of questions for the interview. After the interview, you will develop a two-page paper that explains why this student is being retained at this institution.

### **B. Annotated Bibliography – 70 points**

Pick a topic that centers on retention and develop an annotated bibliography.

- ❑ Minimum of 15 references published since 2000 beyond the readings for this course
- ❑ Books, articles in scholarly journals, conference papers (ASHE, AERA, NASPA, NACADA), thesis and dissertations, academic resources on the web

### **C. Presentation to VP on Retention/Executive Summary – 70 points**

You will be assigned to a group that must submit a report to the VP's on retention strategies for certain students at your institution or how certain agencies in higher education can impact retention.

- ❑ Your group will present their findings to the VP's during an Executive Session
- ❑ You will provide a 1 page Executive Summary with appropriate references during the briefing to the VP's

#### D. Final Paper: Retention – 150 points

The final paper for this course is to cover the following three questions:

- What is retention in higher education?
- How is retention facilitated in higher education?
- How will I impact retention as a Student Affairs Professional?

It will be limited to 6 pages excluding references, double-spaced, and contain at least 15 references.

#### Assignments

ASSIGNMENT	MAXIMUM POINTS	DATE DUE
Participation (140 pts.)	10 points/week/participate	Every week
Interview an undergraduate to understand retention	70 points	Feb. 5
Annotated Bibliography	70 points	March 5
Presentation to VP on Retention/Executive Summary (Group)	70 points	April 23
Final Paper: Retention	150 points	April 16

- No extra credit
- Missing more than two classes is not advised. Participation is critical and lack of attendance may impact your final grade.
- If an assignment is not submitted on Due Date, student must have discussed this with the faculty member at least 48 hours before assignment is due.
- If an assignment is not submitted due to illness, student must present documentation from medical professional.

#### Grading Guidelines

Total points available: 500 points

Grade	Point Range
A (93% or higher)	465 or higher
A-(90 to 92%)	450 to 464
B+ (87 to 89%)	435 to 449
B (83 to 86%)	415 to 434
B- (80 to 82%)	400 to 414
C+ (77 to 79%)	385 to 399
C (73 to 76 %)	365 to 384
C- (70 to 72%)	350 to 364
D+ (67 to 69%)	335 to 349
D (63 to 66%)	315 to 334
D- (60 to 62%)	300 to 314
E (59% or less)	Less than 300

\*\*Tardiness will negatively impact participation grade

### Weekly Topics and Expectations

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>
Jan. 15	Welcome - Introduction What is retention?	
Jan. 22	Retention Theory - Historical	*Nathan: pp. 1-66 *Braxton: pp. 11-47 (The Viability of Academic Intregation) *Swail, Redd & Perna: pp. 43 - 73
Jan. 29	Retention Theory Data on Retention	*Nathan: pp. 67 – 106 *Braxton: pp. 48 –80 (A Psychological Model) *U of U Retention Data - PDF
Feb. 5	Undergraduate Student Experience – Choice and Persistence?	*Nathan: pp. 107 – 168 *Braxton: pp. 170 – 195 (Where Is the Student?) <b>Due: Interview with undergraduate</b>
Feb. 12	Student Populations – Race and Ethnicity	*Braxton: pp. 196-212 (A Cultural Perspective) *Braxton: pp. 213-234 (Power, Identity, and the Dilemma) *Aberego: pp. 77 – 92 (Recent Strategies to Increase Access & Retention) *Chhuon & Hudley: pp. 15 – 30 (Factors Supporting Cambodian American Students’)
Feb. 19	Student Populations – Race and Ethnicity	*Braxton: pp. 127 – 156 (Theoretical Considerations in the Study of Minority Student Retention) *Swail, Redd & Perna: pp. 75- 112 *Grier-Reed, Madyun, & Buckley: pp. 476-485 (Low Black Student Retention on A Predominantly White Campus) *Torres: pp. 2-7 (Mi casa is not exactly like your house: A window onto the experience of Latino students)
Feb. 26	Student Characteristics – Gender, Sexual Orientation	*Abes & Kasch: pp. 619- 636 (Using Queer Theory to Explore Lesbian College Students’ Multiple Dimensions of Identity) *Love, Bock, Jannarone, and Richardson: pp. 193-209 (Exploring the Spiritual Experiences of Lesbian & Gay College Students)

		*Eccles: pp. 199-210 (Where Are All the Women/Science & Engineering?)
Mar. 5	Student Characteristics – Transfer and Adult Learners	*Peter & Carroll: The Road Less Traveled *Dennis, Calvillo, Gonzalez: pp. 535 – 550 (The Role of Psychosocial Variables – Retention of Transfer Students) *Sissel & Kasworm: pp. 17-27 (The politics of neglect: Adult learners in higher education) <b>Due: Annotated Bibliography</b>
Mar. 12	Student Characteristics – First Generation What is the Deep Study?	*Somers, Woodhouse, & Cofer: pp. 418-435 (Pushing the boulder uphill: Persistence of First-Generation College Students.) *Rendon: pp. 177-184 (Transforming the First-Year Experience for Students of Color) Kuh: pp. 7 - 64
Mar. 19	Spring Break	
Mar. 26	The Classroom	*Braxton: pp. 81-94 ( Exploring the Role of College Classroom) *Kuh: pp. 65- 218 *Light: pp. 1 –44 *Cole & Espinoza: pp. 285-299 (Examining the Academic Success of Latino Students in STEM)
April 2	Student Services/Co-curricular	*Light: 45 – 128 *Kuh: pp. 219-262
April 9	Student Services/Co-curricular	*Harding: pp. X - XX Retention and Advising *Light: pp. 129 – 189 *Kuh: 133-156 *Habley & McClanahan/ACT: What works in Student Retention?
April 16	Student Services/Co-curricular	*Kuh: pp. 157-172 & 265-318 *Light: 190 – 230 *Braxton: pp. 257-274 (Reinvigorating Theory & Research) <b>Due: Final Paper</b>
April 23	Presentations on Retention Plans Wrap-up	Swail, Redd & Perna: pp. 113-127 <b>Due: Group Presentation to VP</b>
April 30	Back-up date to finish presentations	

### **ADA Statement**

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. ([www.hr.utah.edu/oeo/ada/guide/faculty/](http://www.hr.utah.edu/oeo/ada/guide/faculty/))

### **Faculty and Student Responsibilities**

All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Student should read the Code carefully and know that are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.

**Plagiarism** will result in failing the assignment.

Please refrain from cell phone use, text messaging, e-mailing or other activities that will disengage you from our dialogue. All participants have a responsibility to contribute to the conversation and activities. It is part of your grade. Your compliance is greatly appreciated.

Note: The syllabus is not a binding legal contract. It may be modified by the instructor when the student is given reasonable notice of the modification.