

**EFOP 2059 – Advising and Supporting Skills for Higher Education**  
**University of Pittsburgh – School of Education**  
**Spring 2025**  
**Mondays, 3:00 PM – 5:40 PM**  
**4318 Wesley W. Posvar Hall**

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**Dr. Sergio A. Gonzalez (él/he/him)**  
Assistant Professor

**Office:** WWPH 5521

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**Office Hours:** By Appointment (best arranged by email)

*\*I will reply to all emails within 48 hours, Monday-Friday, when I am not out of the office. I do not check or respond to emails over the weekend.*

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### **Course Description:**

As higher education professionals, we play critical roles in advancing the holistic development and wellness of ourselves, students, and colleagues (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). In recognition of these critical roles, this course is designed to enhance advising and supporting knowledge, skills, and dispositions of higher education professionals. The course will begin with a focus on interpersonal knowledge, skills, and dispositions to effectively advise and support individuals and groups. We will then discuss and apply knowledge in the areas of academic advising, career development and advising, supervision, mentorship, program development, student organization advising, and crisis intervention. As a part of the course, students will employ a critical approach to develop and implement a webinar series focused on student success for students at a college/university (we will choose this together). A course on advising, helping, and supporting in higher education necessarily deals with several topics that some may find hard to process. If you are finding this difficult, please do not hesitate to contact the instructor.

### **Course Outcomes and Goals:**

As a result of participating in this course, students will be able to demonstrate

1. Knowledge of principles, theories, and approaches for advising and supporting individuals and groups in higher education;
2. Knowledge of and application of interpersonal and referral skills to advise, support, and collaborate with individuals and groups in higher education;
3. Discuss Increased self-awareness of strengths, weaknesses, and personal strategies related to advising and supporting; and
4. Application of social justice principles and theories, advising and supporting skills, and learning goals to design and implement programs in response to student needs.

### **Required Texts:**

- Reid, S. (2024). Humans who teach: A Guide for centering love, justice, and liberation in schools, 1<sup>st</sup> edition. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (not available on PITTcat\*)



- Burke, M. G., Sauerheber, J. D., Hughey, A. W., & Laves, K. (2016). *Helping skills for working with college students: Applying counseling theory to student affairs practice*. Taylor & Francis. (available on PITTcat)
- Dunkel, N. W., Schuh, J. H., & Chrystal-Green, N. E. (2014). *Advising student groups and organizations* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Jossey-Bass.

### **Supplemental Texts:**

- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.).

### **Course Website and Additional Readings:**

The course website is located on Canvas. The course website includes the syllabus, course materials, and course readings outside of the required texts. **You will submit all assignments via Canvas or email (directions are provided for each assignment). Please note that you SHOULD NOT use Canvas to email Dr. Gonzalez; please email him directly using the University of Pittsburgh's email system.**

### **Academic Accommodations:**

If you require special accommodations or classroom modifications, please notify both the instructor and Disability Resources and Services by the end of the first week of the term. The office of Disability Resources and Services is located at 140 William Pitt Union (412-648-7890 [voice or TDD]), and their website is at: [<http://www.drs.pitt.edu>].

### **Academic Integrity:**

All students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic honesty. Any students engaged in cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty would be subject to disciplinary action. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity (<https://www.provost.pitt.edu/faculty/academic-integrity-feedom/academic-integrity-guidelines>). This may include, but is not limited to the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating the University Policy.

### **Equity and Justice Statement:**

In this course you will be challenged to consider and advance equity and justice in higher education. While you will be challenged, I also believe in providing support. If you are having any challenges with the readings or content in the course, please reach out to me so I can provide additional resources. My goal is to create a learning environment where everyone, including myself, is challenged and supported to grow and learn.

### **Basic Needs Security Statement:**

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact The Care and Resource Support Team (412-624-5756 or [PittCares@pitt.edu](mailto:PittCares@pitt.edu)). Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable him to provide any resources that he may possess.

### **Methods of Instruction and Course Expectations:**



The course will employ a variety of approaches to instruction, including small and large group discussion, activities, lecture, and facilitation support sessions/ Given the format employed in this course, student engagement in discussions and learning activities is imperative. Participation is valued when students build upon one another's contributions; provide meaningful connections to the readings; and increases the complexity and fruitfulness of the discussion. Therefore, your professional and active involvement in the process is essential for your successful completion of this course. In addition, I do not view myself with all the knowledge about higher education. Instead, I view myself as a facilitator of learning, and I am here to learn alongside you this semester. I believe you are responsible for your learning and development. If you are not being challenged, please let me know and I am happy to offer additional recommended readings. If you need additional support as you complete the course, please let me know and I am happy to meet with you.

**Attendance:**

This course meets on Thursdays from 3:00 PM – 5:40 PM. You need to be present to engage fully in the course content. However, students can and should miss class in order to observe religious holidays that the university does not formally recognize. For the health and safety of the course, you should not attend class if you need to quarantine or isolate due to COVID-19, the flu, the common cold, etc. If you are unable to attend class, you are asked to engage in the assigned readings for the class, review the class slides, and connect with a peer. If you have questions after engaging with assigned readings and reviewing the class slides, please email Dr. Gonzalez to arrange a time to meet with him. **Please notify Dr. Gonzalez prior to the start of class should you need to be absent.**

If the instructor needs to quarantine or isolate due to COVID-19, the flu, the common cold, etc., the class will be moved to a synchronous or asynchronous format. The instructor will do his best to notify you in advance of any potential changes to the class format.

**My Thoughts on COVID-19 Pandemic and the Course:**

My primary concern as we move through the semester is our well-being and the well-being of our family members, friends, and your community. While I have high expectations that you will remain engaged in the course, you should communicate directly with me if you find yourself in a situation where you need additional support or accommodations. Recognizing the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic, I have made several decisions as an instructor to ensure an engaging yet reasonable course.

Note: I am willing to run a Zoom during class such that those who have COVID-19 and are in quarantine can access the course. However, I implore you to only take this option if absolutely necessary. That is – if you have a cold or some family emergency – please do take a day off to take care as needed. Additionally, most of the class activity will not be captured by my running a Zoom as much/most will be happening in small groups – which of course you can arrange to attend, again only if necessary. Sitting on Zoom is not a healing experience.

**APA Writing Style:**

For this course, the acceptable citation format is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> edition). Students are also asked to check all submitted written works for grammar/spelling and syntax errors. You are encouraged to utilize the Pitt Writing Center (<https://www.writingcenter.pitt.edu/graduate-services>) for assistance with grammar, sentence structure, and organization.



**Late Submissions:**

As a matter of fairness and courtesy to all students. Penalties for late submission of student work may be assessed. Except in cases of acute emergencies, all late work is subject to a 10-percent reduction in grade for each day that it is late. If you find yourself needing more time on an assignment, we can discuss an extension if you contact me prior to the deadline. Please understand that any assignments submitted after the deadline may not receive feedback in a timely manner.

**Course Assignments:**

Course requirements include oral and written assignments that involve individual and group work. Your final grade will be calculated using the following scale (%): A+ 97-100; A 94-96; A- 90-93; B+ 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83; C+ 77-79; C 74-76; C- 70-73; Less than 70 is an F. **Please note I do not round up final grades.**

**Reflexivity and Developing a Helping Philosophy (Learning Objectives: 1-3) (25 points)**

Your “personal philosophy of helping will provide a framework from which to base your professional practice. This personal helping philosophy is a compass that provides navigation. It will serve as a roadmap for judgment, and therefore influences actions” (Burke et al., 2016, p. 172). Throughout the semester, you will be asked to engage in activities and reflections to help you reflect on and enhance your personal philosophy of helping as a higher education professional. This project has five components.

1. **Component 1 (5 points; Due by 3:00 pm on Tuesday, January 21st): You will complete a photo-elicitation project.** You are asked to consider the following question: Who am I as a helping professional? Based on your response, please take a photograph that captures your response. You will upload the photograph to a Canvas discussion board with a 2-3 sentence description. Students who complete the assignment will receive full credit.
2. **Component 2 (5 points; Due by 3:00 pm on Monday, January 27th): You will reflect on your strengths and weaknesses as a helping professional and develop an action plan.** You are asked to first reflect on your strengths and weaknesses as a helping professional. You are then asked to contact someone who knows you as a helping professional (student, supervisor, mentor, colleague) and ask them if they could share with you 1-3 strengths and 1-3 weaknesses you have as a helping professional. Based on your strengths and weaknesses, you will develop and submit a 1-page action plan. Your action plan should include: (a) a list of your strengths as a helping professional, (b) a list of your weaknesses as a helping professional, (c) one-semester goal you have to improve as a helping professional, and (d) a chosen activity outside of course requirements you can engage in to help you meet your goal (e.g., reading a book, listening to a podcast, watching a TedTalk, talking with a mentor or possibility mentor for advice). Your action plan will be evaluated on answering each component of the action plan and the thoughtfulness you put into the action plan. **You will submit your action plan via Canvas.**
3. **Component 3 (5 points; Due by 3:00 pm on Monday, February 10th): You will reflect on your subjectivities and positionality as a helping professional.** Our subjectivities (i.e., our personal histories, worldviews, and professional and education experiences) and our positionalities (the intersection of our race, class, gender, sexuality, ability class, and other social identities) can shape our perspectives and approaches as helping professionals. In this



assignment, you will write a 1-2-page reflection on three ways in which your subjectivities and/or positionality shape your perspectives and approaches as a helping professional and two strategies you can employ in your practice to remain conscious of how your subjectivity and positionality shape your approach as a helping professional. Your reflection will be evaluated on organization, clarity, and thoughtfulness. **You will submit your reflection paper via Canvas.**

4. **Component 4 (5 points; Due by 3:00 pm on Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup>): You will reflect on your action plan progress and your learning in the course thus far.** In this assignment, you are asked to write a 1-2-page, mid-course reflection that answers the following questions: (a) Based on the goal included in your action plan, what progress have you made on meeting your goal? and (b) Based on the course topics covered thus far, what are two lessons learned that can be used to enhance your advising and supporting skills as a higher education professional (please be sure to cite appropriate literature in your reflection). Your reflection will be evaluated on organization, clarity, thoughtfulness, progress on your goal, and integration of literature. **You will submit your reflection paper via Canvas.**
5. **Component 5 (5 points; Due by 3:00 pm on Monday, April 14<sup>th</sup>): You will offer a final reflection on your action plan progress and your learning in the course.** In this assignment, you are asked to write a 1-2-page, final reflection that answers the following questions: (a) Based on the goal included in your action plan, did you meet your goal? If so, what did you do to meet your goal? If not, how will you move forward with meeting your goal after this course? and (b) Based on the course topics covered since the mid-course reflection, what are two lessons learned that can be used to enhance your advising and supporting skills as a higher education professional (please be sure to cite appropriate literature in your reflection). Your reflection will be evaluated on organization, clarity, thoughtfulness, progress on your goal, and integration of literature. **You will submit your reflection paper via Canvas.**

### **Proposal Project (40 points; Due by 3:00 pm on Monday, April 14<sup>th</sup>)**

You will not write a standard research paper for this class. Instead, you will develop a proposal to submit for an academic conference, such as ASHE, NASPA, or ACPA (to name a few). Your research/practice/praxis proposal will be contextualized based on your topic of choice, which we will brainstorm in class together. Your proposal should include the following sections:

1. A problem statement and research questions/introduction, background, and rationale
2. Brief review of literature
3. Theoretical framework/Theoretical framing, Conceptual framing
4. Research design/Methodological approach
5. Research implications/Findings or (preliminary findings) and implications (for practitioners)

Below is an example based on conference proposal submission guidelines by ASHE:

#### Title:

The title should be entered with proper APA capitalization in title case and must not exceed 15 words. Make Sure the First Letter of Each Appropriate Word is Capitalized.

#### Abstract:



Provide an abstract of no more than 50 words briefly describing your proposal. The Program Committee relies on abstracts to assign appropriate Reviewers.

Proposal Text:

Proposals must not exceed:

- 2,000 words for Research Papers/Scholarly Papers

Please submit only the text of the proposal, excluding references. APA in-text citations must be used and are included in the word count.

References are submitted in the next section and do not count toward the proposal text word count.

Any tables, figures, formulas, and graphics will be submitted as an attachment on the next screen.

Note: Research Paper proposals must include preliminary findings or a summary of full findings.

References:

Cite the published and/or unpublished references in your proposal. There is no limit to the number of references provided. Please adhere to the APA Style guidelines but do not use italics, bold, or underline – these enhancements will be lost.

Keywords:

Proposals must include three keywords describing the proposal. These words are used by the Programming Committee to assign reviewers to proposals and help to ensure your proposal is matched with an appropriate reviewer. Please enter the keywords separated by commas.

Research Methodology:

Research papers/Scholarly papers must choose the methodological category that best describes their work.

Submitters will first select from a list of general methodologies and then type in their specific methodologies. This will help the Program Committee match Reviewers to proposals.

**Proposal Project Presentation (25 points; Monday April 21<sup>st</sup> and Monday April 28<sup>th</sup>):**

Each student will be required to present their proposal project to the class towards the end of the semester. We will use April 21<sup>st</sup> and April 28<sup>th</sup> to present (we will double-check if this works for us as a class). You will have 10 minutes to present your work to the class. During presentations, students not presenting will be providing written feedback, which will then be given to the student after their presentation. Your proposal project presentation should be accompanied by a brief summary/overview of the topic (we will discuss more in class) that can be submitted on canvas to share with the class.

Guidelines: We will come up with them together as a group.

**Attendance/Participation (10 points):**



Attendance: Please note that participation comprises 10% of your final grade. While it is not expected that you speak in every class, it is expected that you be an active participant. Key elements of active participation include (but are not limited to):

1. Being present both physically and mentally. Note that excessive absenteeism (for any reason) will result in points being deducted from your participation grade, which *may* result in lowering your overall grade. In addition to being physically present, you need to be mentally present, excessive use of your phone/computer during class not only mentally removes you from the class but also degrades the overall quality of discussion for course participants.
2. Being prepared. Please come to class prepared to discuss the readings and analyze their content. We will rely upon different forms of print and visual media to provide context for our discussion, however; you should make every effort to relate the cases we discuss to the theories and methods presented in the readings.

Participation (learning objectives 1-4): At the end of the semester, you will grade your participation and commitment to the course. **The rubric will be submitted to Dr. Gonzalez via email by 3:00 pm on Monday, April 28th.** The following rubric will be used to evaluate your participation:

- a) **Unsatisfactory (0-4 points)** – Uninvolved in the course, including not being present or not contributing to the overall course, and the student success intervention project.
- b) **Minimally acceptable (5 points)** – Minimally involved, including being present but not attentive and late with deadlines and assignments.
- c) **Below Average (6 points)** - Passive participation including being present, awake, alert, attentive, but not actively involved in the overall course, and the student success intervention project. Make irrelevant contributions that inhibit the progress of the others.
- d) **Average (7-8 points)** - Reactive participation; only participated when instructor or colleagues asked for their help or support, but they do not provide supportive, follow-up contributions that are relevant and of value.
- e) **Above Average (9 points)** –Reactive participation with supportive, follow-up contributions that are relevant and of value, but rely on the leadership and study of others in the course and the student success intervention project.
- f) **Excellent (10 points)** – Proactive participation through leading, originating, informing, and challenging contributions that reflect in-depth thought, and analysis of the topic under consideration. This does not mean dominating discussion or using a lot of words to say little.

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### Course Outline

In preparation for class, complete the readings that are assigned for each week prior to the class session.



<b>Week 1: January 13 – Who are you?</b>
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***Introductions:***

- Bring an artifact and respond to questions sent via announcements
  - Who are you?
  - What do you study and why?
  - What is your intended MA thesis/Dissertation about?
  - What are your career goals?
  - What do you do for fun outside the academy?

***Brain Dumps:***

- Explain the process of grounding ourselves in this time and space every week.

***Overview of Syllabus – Introduction to Advising and Supporting in Higher Education***

We will use the bulk of this class to develop the latter half of the syllabus, focusing on:

- Themes
- Project Assignments
- Dates for Presentations

<b>Week 2: January 20 – Holiday – No Class – Introduction to Interpersonal and Helping Skills and Developing Your Helping Philosophy</b>
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***Readings:***

- Burke and Colleagues
  - Ch. 1
  - Ch. 2
  - Ch. 3
  - Ch. 7
- Fochtman, M. M. (2006). Managing, supervising, advising and mentoring: Each requires a unique hat for the professional. *Campus Activities Programming*, 47-52.
- Croom, N. N., & Kortegast, C. A. (2018). When ignoring difference fails: Using critical professional praxis. *About Campus*, 23(1), 27-31.

***Watching/Discussing:***

***Recommended:***

***Assignments:***

- Reflexivity and Developing a Helping Philosophy: Component 1 (Photo-Elicitation Project)

<b>Week 3: January 27 – Critical Approaches to Advising and Supporting and Program Development to Address Student Needs</b>
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***Readings:***



- Baber, L. D., Zamani-Gallaher, E. M., Stevenson, T. N., & Porter, J. (2019). From access to equity: Community colleges and the social justice imperative. In M. B. Paulsen & L. Perna (Eds.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (pp. 203-240). Springer.
- Harper, S. R. (2010). An anti-deficient achievement framework for research on students of color in STEM. In S. R. Harper & C. B. Newman (Eds.), *Students of color in STEM: Engineering a new research agenda. New Directions for Institutional Research* (pp. 63-74). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Learning Resources Unit, British Columbia Institute of Technology. (2003). *Writing learning outcomes*.
- Macias, L. V. (2013). Choosing success: A paradigm for empowering first-generation college students. *About Campus*, 18(5), 17-21.
- Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69-91.

### ***Watching/Discussing:***

### ***Recommended:***

### ***Assignments:***

- Reflexivity and Developing a Helping Philosophy: Component 2 (Action Plan)

<b>Week 4: February 3 – Interpersonal and Helping Skills: Part II</b>
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### ***Readings:***

- Burke and Colleagues
  - Ch. 4
  - Ch. 5
- Schrage, J. M. (2014). A sea change on the horizon: Transforming our students and campuses through innovative conflict management. *About Campus*, 17-25.

### ***Watching/Discussing:***

### ***Recommended:***

<b>Week 5: February 10 – Crises and Trauma in Higher Education</b>
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### ***Readings:***

- Bassett, J., & Taberski, M. (2020). From active shooter to COVID-19, Understanding your vicarious trauma. *About Campus*, 25(4), 10-14.
- Broton, K., & Goldrick-Rab, S. (2016). The dark side of college (un)affordability: Food and housing insecurity in higher education. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 48(1), 16-25.
- Ludvik, M. B. (2020). Co-creating the container for optimal learning and development: Lessons from trauma-informed mindful compassion practices. *About Campus*, 24(6), 25-31.



- Reynolds, A. L. (2013). College student concerns: Perceptions of student affairs practitioners. *Journal of College Student Development*, 54(1), 98-104.

***Watching/Discussing:***

***Recommended:***

***Assignments:***

- Reflexivity and Developing a Helping Philosophy: Component 3 (Subjectivities and Positionality as a Helping Professional)

<b>Week 6: February 17 – Self and Organizational Care</b>
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***Readings:***

- Burke and Colleagues-Chapter 8
- Squire, D. D., & Nicolazzo, Z. (2019). Love my naps, but stay woke: The case against self-care. *About Campus*, 24(2), 4-11.
- Reid, S. (2024). Humans who teach: A Guide for centering love, justice, and liberation in schools, 1<sup>st</sup> edition. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (not available on PITTcat\*)
  - Ch. 1
  - Ch. 2
  - Ch. 3
  - Ch. 4

***Watching/Discussing:***

***Recommended:***

***Assignments:***

- Reflexivity and Developing a Helping Philosophy: Component 3 (Subjectivities and Positionality as a Helping Professional)

<b>Week 7: February 24 – Supervision in Higher Education</b>
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***Readings:***

- Hirt, J. B., Frank, T. E., & Perillo, P. A. (2016). Staffing and Supervision. In J. Schuh, S. R. Jones, & V. Torres (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (6th edition) (pp. 423-436). Jossey-Bass. Please locate the book (*Student services: A handbook for the profession*) via PittCat to access the chapter (Chapter 25 in the book).
- Roper, L. D. (2011). Supervising across cultures: Navigating diversity and multiculturalism. *New Directions for Student Services*, 136, 69-80.
- Tull, A. (2006). Synergistic supervision, job satisfaction, and intention to turnover of new professionals in student affairs. *Journal of College Student Development*, 47(4), 465-480.



*Watching/Discussing:*

*Recommended:*

<b>Week 8: March 3 – Spring Break – No Class</b>
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*Readings:*

*Recommended:*

*Assignments:*

- Reflexivity and Developing a Helping Philosophy: Component 4 (Mid-Course Reflection and Action Plan Progress)

<b>Week 9: March 10 – Career Advising and Development</b>
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*Readings:*

*Recommended:*

*Assignments:*

- Reflexivity and Developing a Helping Philosophy: Component 4 (Mid-Course Reflection and Action Plan Progress)

<b>*Week 10: March 17 - Academic Advising – Asynchronous Class – NASPA Conference</b>
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*Readings:*

*Recommended:*

- Work on proposal project and submit a working draft\*

<b>Week 11: March 24 – Group Development Theories and Skills</b>
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*Readings:*

*Recommended:*

<b>Week 12: March 31 – Student Organization Advising</b>
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*Readings:*



*Recommended:*

<b>Week 13: April 7 - Mentorship</b>
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*Readings:*

*Recommended:*

<b>Week 14: April 14 – Proposal Project Presentations</b>
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*Readings:*

*Recommended:*

*Assignments:*

- Proposal Project Due
- Reflexivity and Developing a Helping Philosophy: Component 5 (Final Reflection on Action Plan and Course Learning)

<b>Week 15: April 21 – Proposal Project Presentations</b>
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*Readings:*

<b>Week 16: April 28 – Proposal Project Presentations &amp; Final Class</b>
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*Assignments:*

- Submit Participation Rubric/Reflection

**\*This syllabus is a living document, and together, we will make changes as needed**