

The Ohio State University
BUSADM 2601—Career Foundations (THRIVE section)
SPRING 2026

11:10AM – 12:30PM Friday Location SB 300

Instructors: Steve Salopek and Chad Zipfel

READING MATERIALS:

Online assigned readings and articles.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course, you will explore the mindsets, strategies, and professional skills that drive successful careers in business while broadening your understanding of different career pathways. You will engage directly with industry professionals through meaningful, interactive experiences and focus on developing self-awareness, strong communication skills, and career readiness. Grounded in experiential learning, the course aims to equip you with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to pursue internships and career opportunities, build meaningful professional connections, and position yourself for long-term success in the business world.

COURSE PREREQUISITE:

Fisher students with second-semester freshman standing or above.

CLASS FORMAT:

This course meets weekly and is structured into seven modules, each spanning two weeks. In the first six modules, students attend a lecture during the first week and deliver a collaborative group presentation in the following week. Working in teams of four to five, students present to industry experienced faculty and/or a panel of industry professionals (many of them Fisher alumni, who provide real-world perspective, professional exposure, and feedback to strengthen career readiness). The final module simulates an internship summer project, where students select a company, work on a project, receive real company feedback, and submit a finished work product.

MODULES:

Each module ends with a **graded group or individual presentation** to simulate professional environments and build student confidence and articulation.

Module 1: Class Expectations and Culture of Companies (Weeks 1-2)

Objective: Understand nature of business, overview of course, get to know classmates

- **Week 1 Lecture:**
 - Understanding Biz 101
 - Overview of Class and books to read (Comfort Crisis, Psychology of Money)

- Get to know classmates
- Assign students into Teams for semester
- **Week 2 Presentations:** Student teams conduct biz model and culture audits via company websites, Glassdoor, LinkedIn, and personally reaching out. Teams deliver 5-minute pitch on one company's culture profile and biz model (intended to be hard and will "fail").

Module 2: Leveraging OSU Resources and Career Readiness (Weeks 3-4)

Objective: Understand Resources, Build Personal Networking Plan

- **Week 3 Lecture:**
 - OSU Outreach Specialist on all things available at OSU
 - Nancy G from Office of Career Management (LinkedIn, Resume, Interviews, etc)
 - Introduce Networking Plan Activity
- **Week 4 Application:** Students share their personal networking plan and how they will use the resources shared last week over the course of the next year.

Module 3: Personal Branding & Intentional Networking (Weeks 5-6)

Objective: Build authentic, professional personal brands.

- **Week 5 Lecture:**
 - Julie Holbein (CHRO) on the power of personal brand and building an intentional network
- **Week 6 Application:** Students meet with Steve and Chad to do audit of LinkedIn and Resume (building off of teachings from Week 3).

Module 4: Facing Failure and Building Resilience (Weeks 7-8)

Objective: Handle professional conversations with skill and confidence.

- **Week 7 Lecture:**
 - Resilience in the workplace (Comfort Crisis Report Out, 5 min each per book section)
 - Mental and Physical Health Strategies to be a Corporate Athlete
- **Week 8 Role Play:** Students work through Learning to Fail exercise and report back learnings.

Module 5: Personal Finance Decision Making to Propel a Life/Career (Weeks 9-11)

Objective: Develop an understanding of personal finance strategies to excel across a career.

- **Week 9 Lecture:**
 - Intro to stock investing challenge
 - Brian Barrett on real estate development and optimizing personal taxes
- **Week 10 Spring Break**
- **Week 11 Lecture:** How to make good decisions to maximize earnings power across a career (ratings, bonus, promotions, credit cards, bank accounts, monthly budgeting, etc)
- **Week 11 Assignment:** Report out on Psychology of Money

Module 6: Internship Readiness & Industry Immersion (Weeks 12-13)

Objective: Maximize internship value and visibility.

- **Week 12 Lecture:**
 - Former Head of HR at Victoria’s Secret
- **Week 13 Role Play:** Group case challenges as student respond to typical internship problems and barriers. Hosted at Wendy’s Intl HQ in Dublin OH with young professional panelists.

Module 7: Final Project (Week 14–15)

- **Week 14 Industry Simulation:** The Forage
 - A mock internship project to live a “week in the life” - students select a company and role, then receive feedback and submit their finished product (will receive a certificate).
- **Week 15: Career Communication Toolkit**
 - Email and digital communication in the workplace
 - Navigating feedback conversations, performance ratings, moving roles
 - Student 2 minute presentation on reflection paper: “What I now understand about building a successful career”.

GRADING POLICY:

Course grades will be determined as follows:

Attendance (14 sessions x 10)	140
Module presentations/assignments (6 modules x100)	600
Final Projects (Forage Simulation)	260
	1000
	1000

Each module's presentation will be graded based on:

- Clarity of thought and structure
- Communication style and tone
- Relevance to industry standards
- Professionalism
- Audience engagement (for live panels)

The equivalent of the OSU standard grading scale will be used:

A 925-1000	B+ 865-894	C+ 765-794	D+ 665-694	E 0-594
A- 895-924	B 825-864	C 725-764	D 595-664	
	B- 795-824	C- 695-724		