College Student Affairs (CSA) 397A
The Role of the Resident Assistant: Theory and Practice
The Pennsylvania State University—Fall 2012
Schedule Number 907063, Section 001
Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

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Instructor Availability:
Your instructor’s normal office hours are from 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. The best way to contact or meet with your instructor would be through scheduling appointments. You can do so by calling your instructor at his/her office phone and finding specific times to meet that are conducive to both of your schedules.
**Course Description**

This course is an analysis of the various roles of the resident assistant, including interpersonal facilitator, disciplinarian, program developer, and activities facilitator. This course is designed to prepare class participants for service as competent, well-balanced Resident Assistants in Penn State’s multicultural and learning-centered residence hall communities.

**Learning Outcomes**

**Upon successful completion of this course, students will:**

- Understand and be able to articulate the philosophy of residence life and the roles and responsibilities of the Resident Assistant position.
- Gain an increased awareness of diversity and social justice and be able to identify ways that diversity impacts interpersonal relationships and residence hall communities.
- Develop skills to address community standards, respond to crisis situations, and mediate conflict within the residence hall community.
- Be able to recognize elements of healthy, positive residence hall environments by utilizing community development, communication, and programming skills.

**Required Textbook**


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**Fall 2012 Syllabus**

**Tues., August 28**

**Large Group Meeting**

**112 Chambers Building**

**Introductions and Expectations**

**Homework:**

First Impressions Activity—Due Tuesday, September 4 by 11:55 p.m.

“World in Conversation Project”

**Readings for next class:**


**Textbook:** Chapter 5

**Thurs., August 30**

**Icebreakers and Philosophies of Residence Life**

**Homework:**

Reflection Paper #1—Due Thursday, September 6 by 11:55 p.m.

**Readings for next class:**

ANGEL: Resident Assistant Position Description; “Buddy Project” document

**Textbook:** Chapters 2 and 16

**Second & third weeks of September**

The “World in Conversation Project” takes place for CSA 397A students during the second and third weeks (?) of September. Each student must sign up for and attend one group session.
Tues., September 4  Roles of the Resident Assistant and the “Buddy Project”

Homework:
“Buddy Project”
--Meet with your assigned “RA Buddy,” in person, by no later than Wednesday, September 12 to discuss all parts of the “Buddy Project.” Those parts are:
  Part #1—Office tour and one-on-one meeting with SuperGroup Coordinator
  Part #2—Doortags
  Part #3—Newsletter
  Part #4—Bulletin board
  Part #5—Meeting with SuperGroup Coordinator
  Part #6—Duty night
  Part #7—SuperGroup meeting
It is highly recommended that you meet with your assigned “RA Buddy” more than once during the semester to discuss your progress related to this project.
--BP parts #1, 2, and 3 due to SuperGroup Coordinator on Thursday, September 20.
--BP part #4 must be hung up during the week of October 22 and completed by no later than noon on Thursday, October 25.
--BP parts #5, 6, and 7 due to SuperGroup Coordinator on Thursday, November 1.

Readings for next class:
ANGEL: Resident Interactions Program
Textbook: Chapter 9

Thurs., September 6  Developing Individual Relationships with Residents

Homework:
Readings for next class:
ANGEL: Community Development Goals and Action Ideas; What is Community?;
Textbook: Chapter 15

Tues., September 11  Characteristics of and Ways to Build Positive Communities

Homework:
Reflection Paper #2—Due Tuesday, September 18 by 11:55 p.m.
Readings for next class:
ANGEL: Successful Programming Steps; Fun and Beneficial Programming; Monthly Topics and Student Issues
Textbook: Chapter 14

Thurs., September 13  Community Building

Homework:
Community Building Project—Due Tuesday, October 23 or Thursday, October 25
  --Must meet and work with group.
  --Program must be based on one of the dimensions of “Respect and Responsibility,” Residence Life’s educational priorities.
  --One “Residence Life Community Builder Planning Form” must be filled out by each group and turned in to CSA facilitator in class on Tuesday, September 25. Each group MUST get approval from CSA facilitator before doing this program by submitting this “Planning Form” on time.
  --Any proposed publicity (i.e., fliers, e-mail messages, doortags…) must be attached to that same “Community Builder Planning Form,” due in class on September 25, for CSA facilitator’s approval as well.
  --Group’s publicity must be given out (either in class or via e-mail by 5:00 p.m.) on Tuesday, October 16.
  --Each group must submit one “Residence Life Community Builder Evaluation Form” to CSA facilitator by no later than 11:55 p.m. on Friday, October 26.
Readings for next class:
ANGEL: Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity; MTV Fight for Your Rights Brochure
Tues., September 18  

**Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity—Denial**  

**Homework:**  
“Expand Your Horizons” Project—Ideas must be submitted by 11:55 p.m. on Tuesday, October 2. Project itself must be completed and submitted by 11:55 p.m. on Tuesday, November 6.  

**Readings for next class:**  
ANGEL: Collegian Picture; Collegian Letter; Collegian Letter #2; Beaver Hall Article

Thurs., September 20  

**Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity—Defense**  

Reminder—“Buddy Project” parts #1, 2, and 3 are due to SuperGroup Coordinator TODAY.  

**Homework:**  
Prepare for Quiz #1, being held in class on Tuesday, September 25  

**Readings for next class:**  
ANGEL: Warning Signs of Students in Distress; Clinical Depression; Things to Consider When Confronted with Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence; Suicide Assessment

Tues., September 25  

**Students in Distress**  

Quiz #1 in class TODAY  

**Homework:**  

**Readings for next class:**  
ANGEL: Active Listening Skills  

Textbook: Chapter 11

Thurs., September 27  

**Communication Skills—Active Listening, Confidentiality, and Boundaries**  

**Homework:**  

**Readings for next class:**  
ANGEL: What Should I Say?: Tips for Talking to a Friend Who May Be Struggling with an Eating Disorder; Basic Facts about Eating Disorders

Reminders:  
--Have you determined what you want to do for your “Expand Your Horizons” Project yet? Your idea is due by 11:55 p.m. on Tuesday, October 2. The “Expand Your Horizons” Project itself is due by 11:55 p.m. on Tuesday, November 6.  
--Do you know when you are putting up a bulletin board on your RA buddy’s floor? Meeting again with your assigned SuperGroup Coordinator? Doing a duty night with a current RA/your buddy? Attending a SuperGroup meeting? Remember to begin working on “Buddy Project” parts #4, 5, 6, and 7 before it’s too late. Part #4 is due the week of October 22 and by no later than October 25 at noon. Parts #5, 6, and 7 are due on Thursday, November 1.

Tues., October 2  

**Communication Skills—Role Playing**  

**Homework:**  

**Readings for next class:**  
ANGEL: Resident Assistant/Community Assistant Commitment to Ethics; Sexual Harassment; Guess Who Else is Reading Those “Facebook” Entries?: Sexual Harassment Policy and Strategies

Thurs., October 4  

**Leadership and Ethics**  

**Homework:**  
Reflection Paper #3—Due Thursday, October 11 by 11:55 p.m.
**First Performance Evaluation Meetings**

**Homework:**
Continue preparing for Community Building Project presentations

**Thurs., October 11**

**First Performance Evaluation Meetings**

**Homework:**
Readings for next class:
ANGEL: The Skinny Pink Paycheck Syndrome; White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

**Tues., October 16**

**Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity—Minimization**

Reminder—“Buddy Project” part #4 must be hung up next week.

**Thurs., October 18**

**Campus Resources**

**Homework:**
Prepare for Quiz #2, being held in class on Tuesday, October 23

**Tues., October 23**

**Community Building Projects**

Quiz #2 in class TODAY

**Thurs., October 25**

**Community Building Projects**

**Sun., October 28 & Mon., October 29**

“The Anatomy of Hate” showings (each student must attend one of the showings)

**Tues., October 30**

“The Anatomy of Hate”

**Homework:**
Reflection Paper #4—Due Tuesday, November 6 by 11:55 p.m.

**Thurs., November 1**

**Large Group Meeting**

**101 Thomas Building**

**Spirituality**

Reminder—“Buddy Project” parts #5, 6, and 7 are due to your assigned SuperGroup Coordinator TODAY.

**Homework:**
Readings for next class:
ANGEL: Community Standards Codes/Definitions; Assertiveness and Confrontation; OSC for RAs; Office of Student Conduct Brochure

**Textbook:** Chapter 12

**Tues., November 6**

**Policy Enforcement Part #1**

**Thurs., November 8**

**Policy Enforcement Part #2**
Mon., November 19 through Fri., November 23

Tues., November 13
Helping Skills

Thurs., November 15
Helping Skills

Mon., November 19 through Fri., November 23
No classes

Tues., November 27
“Straight Talks”

Large Group Meeting
112 Chambers Building

Homework:
Readings for next class:
ANGEL: Tips for Effective Conflict Resolution; Tips for Long Term Response to Crisis
Textbook: Chapter 13

Thurs., November 29
Responding to Situations—General Protocols, Communication within Residence Life, Conflict Mediation, and Follow-Up

Tues., December 4
Final Performance Evaluation Meetings

Thurs., December 6
Final Performance Evaluation Meetings

Fri., December 7
Spring 2013 positions posted

Tues., December 11
International Students

Large Group Meeting
112 Chambers Building

Thurs., December 13
Class Wrap-Up

Fri., December 14
Classes End

Mon., December 17 through Fri., December 21
Week of Final Exams
Course Requirements

Students must meet the following requirements:

1. Login to the CSA 397A ANGEL group at least 2 times per week to read course materials, check the calendar for upcoming class activities and content, and read course material for upcoming classes.

2. Actively participate in class. This includes (but is not limited to):
   - Being prepared by completing required readings prior to class.
   - Contributing to class discussions by sharing experiences and using information from the readings to support class discussions.
   - Showing willingness to confront and challenge others toward better understanding multiple perspectives.
   - Demonstrating active listening skills.
   - Expressing sensitivity toward persons with differing perspectives and opinions.

3. Complete all assignments by the scheduled due dates and in the formats requested.

Grading Policies

Summary of Graded Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Impressions Activity</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“World in Conversation Project”</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Papers (4 papers, 25 points each)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Buddy Project”</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop Quizzes (2 of them)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Building Project</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Expand Your Horizons” Project</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (2 quizzes, 20 points each)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at “Anatomy of Hate” showing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Skills Activity</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance (24 class sessions, 2 points each)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation (24 class sessions, 2 points each)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/participation in first performance evaluation meeting</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/participation in final performance evaluation meeting</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 660 points

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100%</td>
<td>617-660pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93%</td>
<td>591-616pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
<td>571-590pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86%</td>
<td>551-570pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83%</td>
<td>525-550pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
<td>505-524pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-76%</td>
<td>459-504pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
<td>393-458pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 60%</td>
<td>392pts and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To receive recommendation for a resident assistant position, the student must earn a grade of B- or above. You must also receive a positive recommendation from your course instructor to be considered for an RA position. Even though you may get a B- or above and a positive recommendation from your course instructor, this does not guarantee that you will be selected to be a resident assistant.
**Attendance Policy**
Whenever a student misses a class, he or she will lose participation and attendance points for that particular session. After a student misses two class sessions, each additional absence will result in a deduction in the student's final grade by half of a letter grade (ex: B to a B-). More than two absences may also result in the student not being recommended for an RA position. The student is responsible for any material and assignments missed during his or her absence(s). Any extenuating circumstances must be discussed with the Class Coordinator responsible for the class as early as possible.

**Academic Integrity**
Students are expected to be familiar with and behave in accordance with their professional ethics code and the University Code of Conduct [http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct/pdf/CodeofConduct.PDF](http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct/pdf/CodeofConduct.PDF). Failure to behave according to these codes will likely result in disciplinary action. Lack of familiarity does not absolve students of responsibility for their actions.

All students are expected to act with civility, personal integrity; respect other students’ dignity, rights and property; and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their own efforts. An environment of academic integrity is requisite to respect for self and others and a civil community. Academic integrity includes a commitment to not engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception. Such acts of dishonesty include cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting another persons’ work as one’s own, using Internet sources without citation, fabricating field data or citations, “ghosting” (taking or having another student take an exam), stealing examinations, tampering with the academic work of another student, facilitating other students’ acts of academic dishonesty, etc.

Students charged with a breach of academic integrity will receive due process and, if the charge is found valid, academic sanctions may range, depending on the severity of the offense, from F for the assignment to F for the course. We expect that each of you will write your own papers and provide appropriate citation for any idea, information and wording that is not your own. Representing someone else’s thoughts as your own constitutes plagiarism. When you sign your name to a paper or exam, you are certifying that the work is yours and that your citations and information are accurate, to the best of your knowledge.

It is appropriate to share ideas with colleagues, share citations and information; but written work must be your own. You should not “borrow” citations without checking them yourself. Moreover, just as it is dishonest to claim other people’s work as your own, it is also dishonest to let someone else claim your work as theirs. For further information, see The Office of Student Conduct’s document called “Procedural Guidelines for the University Discipline Process,” found at: [http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct/policies/documents/Procedures.pdf](http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct/policies/documents/Procedures.pdf) and University Faculty Senate Policy 49-20 on Academic Integrity at: [http://senate.psu.edu/policies/47-00.html#49-20](http://senate.psu.edu/policies/47-00.html#49-20).

**Examination Policy**
To be determined. Please consult your Class Facilitator.

**Additional Information**

**Accommodations for Disabled Students**
Students with disabilities who require accommodations should consult with the instructor within the first two weeks of class to address modifications that are needed to complete course requirements. Consistent with University policy, any student requesting an accommodation must provide documentation from the Office for Disability Services.

**Equity and Affirmative Action**
The College of Education’s College Student Affairs Program endorses the University and College policies on equity, tolerance, and affirmative action.