



## From Common App to Cap and Gown: Reflecting on your BC career from the very beginning

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### **Course Description:**

This course will give students the opportunity to reflect on their time at Boston College while also exploring possibilities for reimagining higher education. Students of all disciplines will gain a deeper understanding of their time at BC and how their experiences here will prepare them for a fulfilling life after graduation.

You are nearing your last days as an undergraduate at Boston College. It's time to take a moment (or a semester) and reflect on how you got here. More specifically, let's take some time to investigate the many elements of your life and your life at Boston College that allowed you to arrive at this place in time. Before you move on to your next endeavor, let's spend some time reviewing your relationship with and understanding of Boston College. Our discussions will bring to light the people, stories and decisions you made in order to make the most out of your time here. And now that you have lived it – maybe we can reimagine some of the important moments all BC students go through. Maybe we can even improve them for the next group of freshmen that move into Upper or Newton campus?

I am constantly asked about the world of college admission. Do you wonder why you were accepted? Do you reflect on why you chose BC? Do you wonder why all of your friends at BC ended up here and became your friends? Through honest discussions of your experiences, I hope you come to appreciate the process that got you to college, kept you in college, and will connect you to your college for decades to come.

This course will go step by step in both time and stages of your Boston College experience. We will have discussions about the meaning and struggles of the college admissions process all the way to your hopes, dreams and worries about commencement and graduation. We will talk about the choices you have made while you have been at BC and what you hope those choices will lead to later in your life. In our conversations, guest speakers will join us and share their

expertise on our class topics. Finally, we will look at BC as an organization that is, just as you are, always striving to improve. In doing so, we will consider the ways your four years here have provided insight and how that insight may add to BC's continued path to excel:

**This semester's learning outcomes are:**

1. Increase your capacity to engage in meaningful conversations about your experiences in college, both good and bad, and their role in your development
2. Reflect on the context of your life where critical decisions were made about your future self and find a place where you will be willing to share them.
3. Develop an increased understanding of the higher education environment
4. Examine your values, goals and beliefs through discussion and reflection. Be better prepared and disposed to use your talents and education as responsible ambassadors of the Boston College experience.

**Grading Policy:**

Students are expected to attend class and complete all course requirements as assigned. Students will also be expected to participate in class discussions and exercises. Any student that misses more than 2 class meetings or one assignment will be in jeopardy of receiving a failing grade.

**Assignments**

***Reflection Papers***

Students will be expected to complete 4 reflection papers on discussions throughout the semester. 1 of these will be a re-visit of their college essay submitted years back. **Yes, I do have them.** Other papers will be short essays based on prompts from class discussion or readings.

1. College essay re-visit **20%**
2. Reflection on reading/discussion **20%**
3. Reflection on reading/discussion **20%**
4. Reflection on reading/discussion **20%**

***Final Project***

Additionally, students will work alone or in groups to provide a piece of content for the Admission Office and their programming for prospective students. This could be targeted programming towards a constituency (transfer students, international students, first-generation to college) or something more general. 20%

**Class Policies**

Because the content of this course has so much to do with the participants, there is an expectation that students in the class will be open to sharing the past and present selves with the class. A willingness to discuss our lives in the Boston College community will convince

us of our growth here, and our trust in our support network on campus. It is expected that you will treat your peers with as much respect as you expect from them. I require this course to be a supportive and respectful environment where all of you feel comfortable sharing your views in discussions (written or oral) without fear of being put down or embarrassed. If you fail to respect your classmates, your grade will be affected.

Consistent with BC's commitment to creating a learning environment that is respectful of persons of all backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing their academic status. Students are responsible for reviewing course syllabi as soon as possible and communicating with the instructor promptly regarding any potential conflicts with observed religious holidays. Students are responsible for completing all class requirements for days missed due to conflicts with religious holidays.

Boston College seeks to protect the integrity of what transpires in the classroom among students and professors, any course materials prepared by the professor, and the privacy of students and faculty. With this in mind, you are prohibited from recording (audio or video) any lectures, seminars, or other classroom activities without the express permission of the instructor and peers, including transcriptions created with the help of Gen AI tools. Students may not record, reproduce, screenshot, photograph, or distribute any video, audio, or visual content from our course.

In Massachusetts, it is illegal to videotape with sound another party without their consent. Recording, reproducing, screenshotting, photographing, or distributing course content also may constitute a violation of the educational record protections provided under FERPA.

Students with disabilities who need to record classroom lectures or discussions should contact Disability Services to get support and resources for all of their courses.

We will reflect on your college search Who played a role in the process, whether positively or negatively? In our discussions we consider how you made choices as well as address contemporary headlines about college admissions in order to discuss the ethical choices and dilemmas that come with the college search.

## **University Policies**

### ***Academic Integrity***

Students in Boston College courses must produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to cite references is plagiarism. Academic dishonesty includes but is not necessarily limited to plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on exams or assignments, or submitting the same material or substantially similar material to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking the permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or

interfering with another student's work. Please see the [Boston College policy on academic integrity](#) for more information.

***Accessibility***

Your success in this class is important to me. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or that form barriers to your inclusion, I encourage you to let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies that can enable you to succeed in the course. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met; please contact the Disability Services Office (617-552-3470). If you are seeking accommodations for a documented learning disability, please contact Kathleen Duggan, Director of the Connors Family Learning Center (617-552-8093 or [dugganka@bc.edu](mailto:dugganka@bc.edu))

***Additional University Policies***

For University policies related to grading, academic grievances, and other concerns, please see [Boston College Policies & Procedures](#).

### Schedule (subject to change)

Date	Topic	Assignments
Jan 16	Introductions	
Jan 23	<b>High school and the College Search</b> will discuss and reflect on your high school experience and, now, four years later how, if at all, you see it prepared you for your college experience. We will consider arguments about the reimagining of high school and what that might mean for college admission.	Selected reading Writing Assignment #1
Jan 30 and Feb 6	<b>Admissions Committee.</b> Today we will go behind the scenes to look at admissions from the other side of the desk. We will use our BC knowledge to analyze sample applications and discuss how to make decisions that will benefit Boston College and	Mock Application Exercise
Feb 13	<b>The finished Product.</b> Let's talk about how Boston College builds a class. Let's talk about how the tens of thousands of applicants become the next cohort of BC students. What are the outside factors that college's use in enrollment?	Selected reading
Feb. 20	<b>Newton, CoRo and the Mods</b> – Let's talk about housing. It's always dramatic and results in the highest highs and lowest lows. Today we will reflect on the Roommate process, supervision, safety, divisions of class years, and the off-campus experience. Our debate today will ask, is there a better residential system and if so, what is it?	Selected reading
Feb. 27	<b>Student Affairs:</b> The meaning and importance of clubs and organizations at BC, the absence of Greek life, student leadership and engagement, student conduct and community expectations. What truly should be the role of BC in a student's social engagement? What skills and characteristics did you develop that are owed to the way BC students "officially" and "unofficially" engage with each other?	Selected reading
March 13	<b>The core.</b> Every student's relationship with the core is different. Selling point of BC or not? Was it better than expected? Did it have the BC desired effect on you or	Writing assignment 2

	could it have done even more? Can we reimagine the core (again)? Is it accomplishing the goal?	
March 20	<b>Final Project Brainstorm</b>	
March 27	<b>St Mary's.</b> The Jesuit influence on each student's experience: How do students see the effect in academics and culture? Has this evolved as students mature at BC? Does it fade over time? What did you expect from the Jesuit nature of BC? How do you expect this to be a part of your life after BC?	Writing assignment 3
April 3	<b>BC/administrator panel:</b> Let's hear about the meaning behind the policies and resources available on campus from some of the people BC trusts to manage them.	Selected reading
April 10	<b>Career and Alumni resources:</b> How has BC set students up for the future? Sure, there are philosophical ways, but what are the tangible ways? Is there an alumni network you can access? Is there a reputation that will help you? How will BC remain with you after Commencement?	Writing assignment 4
April 24	<b>Final Projects discussion</b>	
May 1	<b>Dinner and Conclusions</b>	