

# Freshman to Senior Year Student Advising Syllabus



## What is Academic Advising?

Academic Advising in the Department of Geography and Geoinformation Science at George Mason University helps students to plan educational goals and work to achieve these objectives. These Advisors are dedicated to creating an atmosphere in which students can discover their potential, set and reach individual goals, explore and plan appropriate academic study, and prepare for success after graduation. The purpose of this syllabus is to show how to use the advising process at each step along the way.

### Department of Geography and Geoinformation Science Advising and Contact Information:

- ❖ To schedule advising appointments: Please contact
- ❖ Advisor contact information:  
**Dr. Sven Fuhrmann**, Office: Exploratory Hall 2204, Email: [sfuhrman@gmu.edu](mailto:sfuhrman@gmu.edu) (preferred), Phone: 703-993-2289.  
  
**Dr. Jonathan Kozar**, Office: Exploratory Hall 2412, Email: [jkozar@gmu.edu](mailto:jkozar@gmu.edu) Phone:703-993-2309
- ❖ GGS Website: <http://cos.gmu.edu/ggs>

## Advising Benefits:

By participating in academic advising at Mason you will:

- Reflect on goals and motivations in order to take ownership of educational choices.
- Engage in a process of self-reflection, self-discovery, and self-awareness.
- Learn how to be a self-advocate and how to locate and utilize available resources such as the Learning Services, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Office of Disability Services (ODS), and Writing Center.
- Improve your decision-making and problem solving skills by asking questions.
- Be empowered to take responsibility for your choices and learn from those choices, actions, and outcomes.
- Develop the ability to connect learning across the curriculum and to integrate learning and experience.
- Develop a deeper sense of social responsibility and ethics by thinking about your relationship to the world and the community, both during and following college.
- Be able to identify and communicate the transferable skills gained through your educational experiences.
- Develop the skills and commitment needed to seek out opportunities for lifelong learning.

## Advisor and Advisee Roles and Responsibilities:

### Advisors:

- Provide an encouraging and supportive environment for students to share their goals, concerns, and interests.
- Actively listen to questions and concerns and assist in development of decision-making skills, self-evaluation skills, and educational plans.
- Understand and effectively communicate George Mason University degree requirements.
- Assist students in making informed course decisions utilizing PatriotWeb and Degree Audit.
- Refer students to appropriate campus resources, organizations, and faculty/staff members as needed to facilitate academic performance and enhance your college experience.
- Maintain confidentiality of student records as outlined in the University Catalog.
- Create a safe, positive environment to freely explore ideas and interests regarding personal, academic, and career goals.
- Uphold the values, policies, and procedures of their schools, departments, and George Mason University.

### Students:

- At least once per semester, schedule regular and timely appointments with their advisors.
- Ask questions about the role institutional policies and procedures, general education requirements, academic programs, and student services are apart of the academic experience.
- Explore campus services, such as Learning Services, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Office of Disability Services (ODS), Assistive Technology Initiative (ATI), Writing Center, Math Tutoring Center,
- Explore extracurricular activities in order to facilitate your academic achievements.
- Regularly review their academic progress utilizing GMU advising tools (Degree Audit) and assume responsibility for meeting academic requirements.
- Craft educational plans based on assessment of abilities, aspirations, interests, and values. Be thoughtful of your educational plan. Set short-term and long-term goals for achievements.
- Read both print and electronic university communication and respond when required.
- Assume responsibility for all decisions and actions that may impact academic and career options.
- Be aware of your rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

## The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)

This is a federal law that gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. These rights include:

- Inspect and review their educational records;
- Request the amendment of inaccurate or misleading records;
- Consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in their educational record;
- File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by an educational institution to comply with this law

See more information at the Office of the Registrar's website: <http://registrar.gmu.edu/privacy/index.html>

### **Cancellation of Appointments:**

Situations arise that may create a need to reschedule or cancel an appointment. Please cancel your appointment by sending an email to your advisor at least 24 hours before the scheduled time.

### **Late Appointment Policy:**

If you are more than 15 minutes late for an advising appointment, you will need to reschedule.

### **Preparing for your Advising Appointment:**

- ✓ Be on time so the time during the advising appointment can be utilized efficiently!
- ✓ Be prepared to discuss and explore course options, address academic problems or concerns, and make decisions about the upcoming semester.
- ✓ Make a list of potential courses for the next semester you are interested in taking.
- ✓ Explore your Degree Evaluation in Patriot Web.
- ✓ Be prepared to take notes.

### **Communication Protocol:**

E-mail communication via a student's college-issued e-mail account is the mandatory method of communication at George Mason University. Due to privacy regulations, advisors will communicate solely through your college-issued account. While some inquiries may be resolved through e-mail correspondence, most situations benefit from scheduling a face-to-face appointment for further discussion.

### **E-mail:**

Advisors are available to answer some questions via e-mail. E-mails to advisors are professional communications, so please include: first name, last name, and G-number. An advisor will return your message within three business days. Advisors cannot advise over the phone due to FERPA regulations.

### Freshman:

- Understand student and advisor roles and responsibilities (see above);
- Understand your overall graduation requirements (including general education and major requirements);
- Learn to use print and electronic academic resources such as the undergraduate catalog, and Patriot Web;
- Discuss your on-going academic performance with your instructors and advisors;
- Explore academic and non-academic support resources such as Learning Services, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Office of Disability Services (ODS), Writing Center, Math Tutoring Center;
- Check out participation options at the University Life website;
- Explore opportunities for Study Abroad;
- Recognize how academic and personal choices and actions can impact your future, including GMU's Student Code of Conduct guidelines.

### Sophomore:

- Develop/refine your plan of study with regard to degree program continuance, general education, and other graduation requirements using available tools;
- Review your academic performance and determine whether you are on track for achieving your major and career goals;
- As needed, engage in methods for improving your academic performance, such as meeting with your instructors, and attend Learning Center Workshops;
- Get involved on campus through participating in a student organization, volunteering in the community, and/or attending performances, lectures, or other campus events;
- Visit and explore career planning resources and activities available at GMU's Career Center.

### Junior/Senior:

- Regularly review your Degree Audit on PatriotWeb and meet with your advisor to refine your plan of study;
- Prepare for future goals by selecting and participating in appropriate outside of class experiences, including internships, research, volunteer work, and leadership positions and involvement in student organizations;
- Relate academic coursework and experiences to your post-graduation plans visiting Career Services, seeking an internship, and work with faculty and advisors to explore employment and/or graduate school options;
- If appropriate, complete applications for academic programs such as graduate studies;
- Apply for graduation in a timely manner via PatriotWeb and plan in advance for CVPA Convocation and GMU's Commencement.