

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

**Conquering College, Lab 4 : Create Your Dream Binder**  
**by Jeff Anderson**

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**Develop your purpose and find your reasons to work hard**

I will do everything I can to help inspire you to continue your learning journey beyond this class. My hope is to help you get excited about our course content, perhaps to the point where you want to learn more about this content because you see that it might propel your future academic and career pursuits. You might decide to build and strengthen your expertise in this course content so that you can use your skills to solve technical problems and create the type of world you want to live in. To do so, you definitely need to learn much more about this content than we can study together during this 12-week quarter.

One of the most important tasks I ask you to do this quarter is to create, develop, and maintain a concrete plan for your work in this class and beyond. To begin this plan, we are going to make and refine a detailed academic plan for the next 3 - 5 years of your education. This plan will be customized to your own interests and flexible enough to change as your future unfolds. I assume most of you are in this class to fulfill a pre-requisite for transfer to another institution. Even if this is not the case, I assume most of you have at least a vague idea of some future credential, degree, or professional goal you are seeking to complete.

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**1. Draft your five-year plan**

Let's begin by thinking about the different horizons of focus that you work on as a learner in college.

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A. Please read more about the horizons of focus model for organizing your goals.

- (1.A.i) Download a copy of the [Horizons of Focus Model \(.pdf\)](#)
  - (1.A.ii) Read the blog post : [How to use the horizons of focus model](#)
  - (1.A.iii) Watch the YouTube video : [My dream binder and the horizons of focus model](#)
  - (1.A.iv) Fill out questions 1 - 13 on pages 1 - 5 of the [How to Use the Horizons of Focus Model Worksheet \(.docx\)](#)
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B. Choose a favorite school and degree that you'd like to complete after you finish at Foothill College.

- (1.B.i) Make a list of all schools you applied to and choose ONE that makes you smile.

In your work on this problem, you are going to do hours of research on your proposed major at one school. I encourage you to choose a school that that you have a good chance of being accepted to and that you genuinely want to attend. If you're not sure where you want to go or what you want to major in, then choose a school and major that you are interested in learning more about. In this case, the work we do in this problem may help you gather more information so that you can make your decision in the future.

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- (1.B.ii) Choose a specific major and degree track at your given school.

For example, I have interest in learning more about earning a C.S. in Electrical Engineering at San Jose State University. The major I choose to research is “Electrical Engineering” and my desired degree track is “BS” or Bachelors of Science.

- (1.B.iii) Navigate to the support page for your desired degree at your target institution.

For example, I have interest in learning more about earning a M.S. in Electrical Engineering at San Jose State University. The major I choose to research is “Electrical Engineering” and my desired degree track is “MS” or Masters of Science.

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C. Create a hard and soft copy data base of all graduation-related documents you find.

- (1.C.i) Find, save, and print list(s) of all classes required for your major.

At most institutions and for most majors, you can find detailed lists of all requirements you need to complete for graduation. Please download soft copies of all of this information and store in an appropriate directory on your computer. Also, print out all of this information. **You will include these printed documents in your Lab 3 Report.**

- (1.C.ii) Determine the complete list of BOTH required and elective classes you need to complete.

For most majors at most institutions, you can find a list of classes that you need to complete. Some of these are required and some are elective. Figure out, now, which classes you must take. Also, determine the complete list of classes from which you will choose your electives.

- (1.C.iii) Find, save, and print a suggested 4-year plan for your desired major.

Most schools provide a detailed “suggested” plan for graduation to guide you through academic planning. Locate this plan and print a copy for yourself.

- (1.C.iv) Locate and save the course syllabi for each course in your declared major.

Most institutions provide electronic copies of course syllabi for all major courses. You can likely find these syllabi online. For each and every class listed in parts (1.C.ii) and (1.C.iii), find the corresponding course syllabus and save these documents on your computer in an appropriate location.

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D. Make a draft copy of your 5-year plan including all graduation specific milestone.

- (1.D.i) Create a 5-year plan including the specific terms you will complete all required courses

Using parts (1.C.ii) and (1.C.iii), create your academic plan to complete all of these courses at your transfer institution. I provide for you some template documents for this plan. One is a [50 year plan template organized into quarters \(4 terms per year\)](#). The

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other is a [50 year plan organized into semester \(3 terms per year\)](#). You are welcome to create your own resources. I have some requirements however. Your plan must be flexible, easy-to-edit, visually appealing, easy-to-print, and as accurate as you can make it, given the information you currently have.

- (1.D.ii) Generate a list of specific questions you want answers to

As you create your five year plan, you will likely have questions. For example, part of the process of creating your five year plan is to choose elective courses. That process is nontrivial and may require you to gather more information. Or, you might consider extending your education into a 5th year to spread out your work load and decrease your stress levels as you work to graduate and plan for the next stage of your career. Or, you may want to write a senior thesis or apply to graduate school. Each of these goals requires extra research and suggest a series of questions. Capture these questions.

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E. Figure out how you can use MATLAB to enhance your work your future classes

- (1.E.i) Search for the key words from this course in the course syllabi for all classes you plan to take

For example, if you're in Engr 11, search for the word "MATLAB" in the syllabi of courses at your next institution. If you're in Math 2B, search for the words "Linear Algebra, matrices, vectors, matrix multiplication, linear systems, least squares, eigenvalues, or vector spaces." If you're in Math 48A, search for the words "calculus, derivatives, functions, mathematical modeling, applied mathematics, or differential equations." A subset of courses that are required for your desired degree may specifically require ideas that you learn in this course. Some course may suggest that this work might be useful as you complete assignments. Do your best to identify which courses specifically reference the course content we study this quarter in the course syllabus, the course title, or the course description.

- (1.E.ii) Think creatively about how you might use our course content in your future courses

One of the really exciting things about this course is that you can learn to use it to solve problems in your life. To do this, you will have to get in the habit of thinking about how you want to use this content. Look back over your 5-year plan and see if you can identify potential courses or opportunities where you can use our course content to enhance your experience. Remember that part of this process will be to plan in extra time to research and learn on the go.

- (1.E.iii) Create a list of skills you want to develop or learn more about in our course.

In addition to externally imposed requirements, you may have a genuine curiosity to learn specific skills in related to this course content. Do your best to start composing a list of these skills. For example, suppose I was in Engr 11: Introduction to MATLAB. Here are my list of skills: I (Jeff) am very interested in learning more about MATLAB's image processing toolbox, the deep learning software within MATLAB, as well as the Arduino interface built in to MATLAB. I track these subjects as possible future projects. I encourage you to start researching your interests and tracking skills you want to build related to our course content.

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**What you should include in your learning portfolio to show you've completed this activity:**

- Your work on the questions 1 - 13 on pages 1 - 5 of the [How to Use the Horizons of Focus Model Worksheet \(.docx\)](#)
- A five-year plan detailing your best educated guesses about the classes and projects you'd like to finish between now and December 2025.

I ask you to make this plan visually appealing and easy to understand. I also ask you to make this plan easy-to-edit and flexible. Be aware now that all our plans for the future are subject to change. I expect that plan you submit to reflect this reality. Please design your work so that you can re-arrange, edit, and easily manipulate all aspects of your work.

Your list of classes and schedule should be organized based on the temporal landmarks used at your target institution. In other words, if you plan to attend a school that runs on the quarter system, please schedule your classes based on the quarters when you plan to complete this work. A similar idea holds for schools that use semesters. Please create the list of scheduled classes you submit based off the research you've done on the requirements for your desired degree at your target institution.

- The organized set of resources from your target institution that you used to support your plan.

As you research your degree requirements at your target institution, you will compile a list of degree-specific literature. I expect you to use these resources to create the academic plan you submit to me. Please save electronic copies of this work. Also, please print the most relevant documents and attach to your plan so that any interested reader can immediately understand how you created your plan.

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**What are the next steps?**

The goal of this work is to get you thinking deeply about the next stages of your life. For possible next steps, I encourage you to do any of the Community Challenge activities including:

- Read any or all of the following books:
  - Grit by Angela Duckworth
  - Getting Things Done by David Allen
  - The Bullet Journal Method by Ryder Carroll
  - The Power of Full Engagement by Jim Loehr
  - So Good They Can't Ignore You by Cal Newport
  - Designing Your Life by Burnett and Evans
  - Decisive by Chip & Dan Heath
  - Drive by Daniel Pink
  - Willpower by Roy Baumeister
  - Deep Work by Cal Newport
  - Ultralearning by Scott Young
- Write your own vision, value, and purpose statement.
- Create your own dream binder.