

BRIDGES COURSE CATALOGUE

The overall goal of the BRIDGES Program is to promote self-determination enabling students to live independently, obtain competitive employment, and self-direct the supports and services they need to achieve their life goals.

The Program consists of thirty-six courses. Twenty-eight courses are required BRIDGES course content. Eight courses are elective/audit course requirements. Students complete the thirty-six courses over the course of three years for a total of six semesters. Six courses are given each semester. Upon completion, students are awarded the Certificate of Higher Education at SUNY Orange's Annual Graduation Ceremony.

YEAR 1

Fall Semester I (6 Courses)

1. **Foundation Skills I**
2. **Vocational Exploration I**
3. **Social Skills Lab I**
4. **Health & Wellness I - Nutrition**
5. **Stress Management**
6. **Audit Elective I**

Foundation Skills I

This course is designed to provide a strong foundation in basic mathematical, reading and writing skills enabling students to apply them in practical situations to enhance employment success and independent living. Systematic skill building over the course of four semesters is used to shape and strengthen academic performance. The pace is slower to allow students adequate time to account for learning differences and develop sound comprehension of complex concepts. In the first semester, mathematical concepts such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers are reintroduced and reinforced. Reading skills are assessed and lessons begin to improve fluency.

Vocational Exploration I

In the first year, the vocational component of the Program begins with a comprehensive vocational/interest assessment. Students consider their strengths and weaknesses and discuss their interests and the areas of employment that align with their personal skills and life goals. Students are introduced to the concept researching their field of choice, identifying employment opportunities suitable to them and develop a plan to pursue their interests in that area.

Social Skills Lab I

Students develop communication and conversation skills in teacher-supported small groups and dyads. Students also practice reading cues and understanding the nuance of social situations. Topics include non-verbal communication (body language), conversational skills in different social settings, and listening. Safety, assertiveness, and conflict resolution are also covered.

Health and Wellness I – Nutrition

The focus of this course is maintaining a healthy diet with particular emphasis on preparing meals for one. The class begins with introduction of the USDA food pyramid guidelines and how to incorporate the guidelines into their daily food choice. Students also learn how to read food labels and evaluate nutritional value. Students are assigned shopping and budgeting for meals of sound nutritional value. Shopping also includes a guided examination of food advertising and effect it has on diet choice. Basic kitchen skills are covered such as reading a recipe, understanding cooking terms, measurement, basic food preparation and storage as well as serving and clean up. Instruction continues with hands-on experience in academic kitchens preparing planned meals where safety is emphasized. The semester concludes with students developing several weekly menus.

Stress Management

This course is designed to enable students to identify common stressors in their personal lives and as employees. Students learn the signs, symptoms and behaviors associated with stress and the resulting maladaptive behaviors that can lead to barriers in vocational productivity and achieving one's life goals overall. Stress management is introduced including exercise, relaxation, supportive relationships, enjoyable activities, and healthy methods of self-expression. At the end of the semester, students develop a personal stress management plan.

Audit Elective I

Students choose from the SUNY Orange roster of classes one of particular interest to them and attend the class as an auditing participant. Students are encouraged to choose classes fall within their chosen area of vocational focus or personal areas interests for enrichment.

Spring Semester I (6 courses)

- 1. Foundation Skills II**
- 2. Vocational Exploration II**
- 3. Social Skills Lab II**
- 4. Health and Wellness II – PE**
- 5. Coping Strategies**
- 6. Audit Elective II**

Foundation Skills II

Building on the core concepts introduced in the first semester, students reinforce their skills and begin to apply them in simple exercises. The pace continues to be slower to allow students adequate time to account for learning differences and develop sound comprehension of complex concepts. Simple mathematical word problems are introduced and students complete exercises in writing for purpose – such as letter writing and instructions. Emphasizing reading fluency continues and students take up comprehension through various different formats including short stories and novels.

Vocational Exploration II

Students continue the comprehensive vocational/interest assessment begun in the first semester with the goal of obtaining sufficient information to make a career programming decision. Students continue to assess their strengths and weaknesses, discuss their interests, and identify career clusters that align with their skills and life goals. Students complete research about their field of choice including the current job market and identify employment opportunities suitable to them and develop a plan to pursue their interests in that area. They present their choices and vocational goals in a formal letter to parents and in a presentation to their peers at the end of the semester.

Social Skills Lab II

Using the communication and conversation skills developed in the first semester, students continue to refine them while learning about relationship development in different contexts. The subjects of dating and employee/employer relationships are covered. Role-playing is incorporated to offer practical experience in applying the concepts covered. Finally, the proper use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Kik, MySpace, Askfm, instant messaging and texting are covered.

Health and Wellness II – PE

In this course, students are introduced to the concepts of physical wellness and the benefits of movement science. The digestive, circulatory, respiratory, musculoskeletal and nervous systems are reviewed. Various form of exercise is introduced with an emphasis on gross motor development. With instructor guidance, the class will choose a sport to participate in as a cohort and commence

physical instruction to acquire skills to perform the sport. Finally, students will develop a personal plan for exercise compatible with their lifestyle.

Coping Strategies

This course builds on the concepts covered in Stress Management with the goal of improving coping ability through practice. Students review and rehearse what they have already learned and then move on to explore obstacles to productivity, as they are a major trigger for stress. Students learn the executive functioning skills that lead to better performance, learn how to break complex tasks into simple steps and practice problem solving. Through constant reinforcement, students generalize sound practices until they become everyday behavior. Students also create and manage a personal planner, understand how to prepare for classes and meetings, and develop time management skills. The semester concludes with students giving a presentation to their peers on the “portfolio” of techniques they have developed and intend to use in the future.

Audit Elective II

Students choose from the SUNY Orange roster of classes one of particular interest to them and attend the class as an auditing participant. Students are encouraged to choose classes within their chosen area of vocational focus or personal areas interests for enrichment.

YEAR 2

FALL SEMESTER II (6 Courses)

- 1. Foundation Skills III**
- 2. Introduction to Employment I**
- 3. Budgets/Banking/Financial Planning I**
- 4. Communication in the Workplace**
- 5. Cohort Elective I**
- 6. Audit Elective III**

Foundation Skills III

Students continue to build a strong foundation in the skills essential for employment success and independent living. In this semester, students review fractions, mixed numbers and decimals. Areas and volumes of geometric figures are introduced. Reading comprehension becomes an emphasis through modeling and practice. Students examine the difference between fiction and non-fiction. Writing skills are introduced through journaling entries pertaining to literature assignments. Students conclude the semester with a short essay about an independently chosen reading assignment.

Introduction to Employment I

This course seeks to prepare individuals for paid employment through general labor market and specific labor market preparation. Students investigate whether the purpose of work is as simple as earning income or to partake in meaningful, productive activity that offers one the chance at inclusion, involvement in the community, learning and a path to maturity. Students learn about a variety of business environments, why companies are in business, how to be engaged as an employee and how to find value and meaning in what they do. Finally, students participate in a supportive job shadowing experience to observe first-hand a working environment and evaluate the concepts they have learned in classroom instruction.

Budgets/Banking/Financial Planning I

This course is intended to learn about the financial obligations involved in independent living and to develop the skills necessary to a self-directed plan of services. Students are introduced to budgeting principles – understanding needs versus wants -- prioritizing expenses, and developing a monthly budget plan. Concepts such as checking and saving accounts, investments, interest, loans, personal budgeting, salaries, paycheck withdrawals, and earnings statements are taught using different instructional modes. Costs of living including rent, utilities, insurance, and transportation expenses are reviewed. Restaurant skills including determining appropriate tips, ordering within a budget, ordering “take out” food, and splitting a bill are introduced.

Communication in the Workplace

In this course, students review workplace etiquette and common pitfalls that often arise. Concepts such as how to make small talk with fellow employees, answering questions when you do not know the answer, discussing breaks and lunch hours, responding to correction or criticism, and how to approach a supervisor are introduced. Scenarios are broken down into understandable chunks and role-playing is used so students have ample opportunity to generalize appropriate responses and improve their job-related communications.

Cohort Elective I

This class is a guided opportunity for cooperative learning. Students decide as a cohort what to study after meeting with faculty to discuss available options. Course offerings vary by cohort interest, but have included Art, Photography, Newspaper, Social Action, Sports, Science Fiction, Movies, Golf, Swimming, Yoga, and others.

Audit Elective III

Students choose from the SUNY Orange roster of classes one of particular interest to them and attend the class as an auditing participant. Students are encouraged to choose classes within their chosen area of vocational focus or personal areas interests for enrichment.

SPRING SEMESTER II (6 Courses)

- 1. Foundation Skills IV**
- 2. Introduction to Employment II**
- 3. Budgets/Banking/Financial Planning II**
- 4. Self-Advocacy**
- 5. Cohort Elective II**
- 6. Audit Elective IV**

Foundation Skills IV

Students conclude the four course foundation series by progressing to elementary algebra topics including addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of signed numbers. Basic algebra operations such as on polynomials, exponents, factoring and graphing are practiced. Students continue to improve reading fluency and comprehension skills by reading different forms of literature and demonstrate the ability to inference, visualize, and discuss key literary elements in their writing. Finally, students learn to write a short college research paper using MLA citation format. They also learn to make frequent use of the SUNY Orange library system. Students will be required to write three research papers of varying length as practice, along with appropriate citation and resources.

Introduction to Employment II

While they continue their job shadowing experience, students cover an overview of the job search process. Students will learn the steps necessary to obtain a job and where to look for jobs using a variety of media. Students will create a personal fact sheet including all of the information necessary to fill out an application (hard copy and online) along with a resume. Students will also prepare a reference sheet. The course final will include a mock interview process.

Budgets/Banking/Financial Planning II

In this course, students have the opportunity to apply the concepts they learned in the Budgets/Banking/Financial Planning I to their own lives and to progressively assume a greater degree of independence and responsibility for their money management. Using a fabricated monthly budget, students plan expenses on a weekly basis and review the results with their instructor. They receive guidance in prioritizing expenses and the important of on-time bill payment and good record keeping. Students will be able to interpret a variety of bills such as utility bills and credit card statements. They will be able to carry out all steps required to successfully pay a variety of bills including online bill paying. They also learn how credit ratings are determined as well as the steps required to earn and maintain a good credit rating.

Self-Advocacy

In this course, students are taught the importance of understanding their needs and effectively communicating them to others. Common scenarios that give rise to the

need to advocate for one's self in the areas of education, housing, health care, mental health, employment, and access to supports and services are presented. Students learn how to speak publicly about each topic using role playing and video playback for practice.

Cohort Elective II

This class is a guided opportunity for cooperative learning. Students decide as a cohort what to study after meeting with faculty to discuss available options. Course offerings vary by cohort interest, but have included Art, Photography, Newspaper, Social Action, Sports, Science Fiction, Movies, Golf, Swimming, Yoga, and others.

Audit Elective IV

Students choose from the SUNY Orange roster of classes one of particular interest to them and attend the class as an auditing participant. Students are encouraged to choose classes within their chosen area of vocational focus or personal areas interests for enrichment.

YEAR 3

FALL SEMESTER III (6 Courses)

- 1. Tools & Strategies for Life I**
- 2. Career Seminar I**
- 3. Vocational Placement I**
- 4. Community Mobility I**
- 5. Community Project/Civics**
- 6. Audit Elective V**

Tools & Strategies for Life I

This course focuses on students' mastery of independent living. Students develop the skills needed to locate, maintain and successfully resident in independent housing after graduation. Students learn the concept of renting, types of housing, locations, basic terms (lease, sublet, utilities, studio, efficiency, security deposit, and reference), how to calculate start up costs, access community services, roommate considerations, and budgeting. Basic housekeeping such as routine house cleaning, pest control, storage, trash disposal, and minor household repairs are also reviewed.

Career Seminar I

This course is designed to prepare students to actively and purposefully seek employment. In addition, classwork regarding the job-hunting process is reviewed. Topics covered include updating the personal fact sheet, finalizing resumes and references, practice interviews and preparing for commonly asked questions, understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act and issues of self-advocacy. Once students obtain employment, they will be expected to perform certain tasks independently, and the class covers topics such as prioritizing daily tasks while at work, understanding your paycheck, understanding sexual harassment and other

behavioral standards in the workplace and dealing with issues of transportation. A variety of instructional techniques are used, with a special emphasis on role-play and student focused practice and interaction.

Vocational Placement I

Students work two or three days a week at internships of their choice, based on selections they made during the exploratory phase in the first year. Students are supported by a job coach and receive classroom instruction to hone their abilities.

Community Mobility I

The goal of this course is to increase student awareness of safe travel through planning, build confidence in traveling through experience and identify and recognize areas they need to learn through self assessment and instructor feedback. Students learn pedestrian safety and about mass transit including how to plan travel routes using public transportation with special emphasis in their home community. Students also learn how to arrange for taxi service and how to give directions to their home. On periodic travel outings, students demonstrate how to travel safely, what steps to take if separated from the group and who to contact if there is a problem.

Community Project/Civics

This course provides students with an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of individuals living in an American community and to see themselves as change agents through involvement in short and long term civic issues. Current events at the national and local level will be discussed and students will initiate a community project that demonstrates their ability to impact their environment.

Audit Elective V

Students choose from the SUNY Orange roster of classes one of particular interest to them and attend the class as an auditing participant. Students are encouraged to choose classes within their chosen area of vocational focus or personal areas interests for enrichment.

SPRING SEMESTER III (6 Courses)

- 1. Tools & Strategies for Life II**
- 2. Career Seminar II**
- 3. Vocational Placement II**
- 4. Community Mobility II**
- 5. Computers & Technology**
- 6. Audit Elective VI**

Tools & Strategies for Life II

In the second semester of this course emphasizing independent living, the focus remains developing skills that promote a self-directed, independent lifestyle. Students learn the basics of medical insurance, how to schedule doctor appointment, basic first aid, how to open childproof containers, track immunizations, and how and where to get emergency healthcare. Students also review what repairs a landlord should perform, how to change light bulbs and batteries, measure a window, reset a circuit breaker, what to do and whom to call if they smell a gas leak, different methods for putting out fires, etc. Students are taught the difference between prescription and over the counter drugs, dosages, refills and side effects. Medication management is covered, when appropriate. The concept of health insurance including common terms such as co-pays and deductibles are reviewed.

Career Seminar II

Students continue learning the concepts introduced in Career Seminar I to prepare students to actively and purposefully seek employment. Topics covered include how to follow up an interview with a letter, dressing for success, how to weigh one job offer over another, recognizing discrimination and how to seek help for it, reporting for work on time, and how to properly call in sick. A variety of instructional techniques are used, with a special emphasis on role-play and student focused practice and interaction.

Vocational Placement II

Students work three to four days a week at internships of their choice, based on selections they made during the exploratory phase in the first year. Students are supported by a job coach and receive classroom instruction to hone their abilities.

Community Mobility II

This course goes beyond travel training in one's community to include long distance travel with the goal of students being able to plan a vacation. Packing, money, planning sightseeing, and adapting to a change in one's daily routines are reviewed. Different means of transportation such as airlines, trains, and buses are discussed and students research and plan a trip using different schedules. When appropriate, students will prepare for the New York State Learner's Permit Test and review basic automobile maintenance and the costs of owning an automobile.

Computers & Technology

Students learn various forms of file management and are presented hands on experience with various computer applications including word processing, creating and manipulating presentations and concept mapping. Students learn use of the Internet for research, communicating and obtaining information for personal interest. Maintaining an online image satisfactory to potential employers is emphasized.

Audit Elective VI

Students choose from the SUNY Orange roster of classes one of particular interest to them and attend the class as an auditing participant. Students are encouraged to choose classes within their chosen area of vocational focus or personal areas interests for enrichment.