

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE: CAREER BOOST

COURSE INFORMATION

Program	Empowering Community Engagement: Soft Skills Micro-Courses for Students and Staff
University	University of Mostar
Department	Psychology
Course name	Career Boost
Course code	ECE2.3
Credits/hours	1 ECTS / 25 hours
Language of instruction	English / Croatian
Course dates	Academic year 2026/27
Course schedule	TBD
Mode of instruction	On –Campus/In-person
Target audience	Students, faculty, staff
Course coordinator	pending
Course instructor	Ivona Čarapina Zovko
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SHORT DESCRIPTION



Career Boost is a practice-based employability micro-course grounded in community engagement principles and challenge-based learning methodology. The course focuses on real employability challenges experienced by individuals and communities, such as youth unemployment, labour market exclusion, and return-to-work transitions after career interruptions. Participants engage with authentic, community-relevant challenges, exploring unemployment as a social, psychological, and structural issue embedded in specific local and societal contexts. Through facilitated group work, challenge-based tasks, simulations, and reflective activities, participants co-create practical solutions, strengthen transferable employability skills, and develop psychological and social resources essential for active labour market participation and meaningful community engagement.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Analyse unemployment and employability challenges within specific community and labour market contexts.
 2. Apply challenge-based problem-solving approaches to real-life employability situations.
 3. Identify personal, social, and structural barriers to labour market participation.
 4. Design context-sensitive, community-informed strategies for labour market (re)integration.
 5. Strengthen career self-efficacy, adaptability, and resilience through experiential and collaborative learning.
 6. Demonstrate employability competences relevant to diverse target groups and community needs.
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COURSE CONTENTS

1. Unemployment as a community, social, economic, and psychological challenge
 2. Community-specific labour market barriers and opportunities
 3. Youth unemployment and school-to-work transition challenges
 4. Labour market reintegration of mothers and caregivers
 5. Employability skills and transferable competences for community engagement
 6. Career gaps, identity reconstruction, and confidence rebuilding
 7. Social capital, networks, and community support mechanisms
 8. Psychological resources: motivation, resilience, adaptability, and coping
 9. Practical problem-solving through real, community-based employability challenges
 10. Psychological resources: motivation, resilience, and coping strategies
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11. Practical problem-solving in career reintegration cases

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

The course is delivered through live, instructor-led workshops using challenge-based learning (CBL) and community engagement approaches. Learning activities are structured around realistic employability challenges derived from community and labour market contexts. The instructor actively facilitates the learning process by guiding participants through the stages of understanding the challenge, analysing resources and constraints, and developing feasible, context-sensitive solutions.

Teaching and learning methods include:

- Short theoretical inputs (mini-lectures)
- Facilitated group discussions
- Challenge- and scenario-based problem-solving tasks
- Case studies based on real community employability issues
- Role-playing and simulations (job interviews, employer perspectives, career counselling)
- Guided reflection and peer feedback
- Action planning exercises supported by instructor feedback
- Active participation and collaborative learning are central to the course design.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assessment type	Assessment criteria	Overall weight
Participation and engagement	Active and meaningful participation in live, challenge-based workshops; contribution to group discussions and collaborative activities; engagement with community-based challenges; responsiveness to instructor and peer feedback	30 %
Group problem-solving task	Quality and depth of problem analysis; application of challenge-based problem-solving steps; integration of community and labour-market perspectives; feasibility and relevance of proposed solutions	40 %
Individual action plan	Coherence and practicality of the plan; reflection on learning and challenges addressed; alignment with identified personal, social, and community needs; applicability to labour-market (re)integration	30 %



Assessment is competence-based and practice-oriented.

Active participation is required due to the experiential nature of the course.

Use of AI tools is allowed for preparation, but final outputs must reflect participants' own reasoning and learning

STUDENT WORKLOAD (in hours)

Contact hours	Outside classroom	Overall
10	15	25

Activity type	Description	Mode	Estimated time (hours)
Live workshop 1	Understanding unemployment as a community challenge	On-site	2
Live workshop 2	Labour market reintegration: mothers returning to work	On-site	2
Live workshop 3	Youth unemployment and school-to-work transition	On-site	2
Live workshop 4	Psychological and social resources for employability	On-site	2
Live workshop 5	Practical solutions and community-informed action plans	On-site	2
Independent work	Preparation, reflection, and task completion	Individual	15

READING LIST / RELEVANT REFERENCES

- Čarapina Zovko, I., & Maslić Seršić, D. (2018) Access to Social Capital in First Job Search among Graduates from Different Socioeconomic Backgrounds. *Revija za socijalnu politiku*, 25(2), 171–190. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/clanak/301185>
- Eurofound. (2021). *Long-term unemployed youth: Characteristics and policy responses*. <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/publications/all/long-term-unemployed-youth-characteristics-and-policy-responses>
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- Yorke, M. (2006). *Employability in Higher Education: What it is – What it is not*. Higher Education Academy. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225083582_Employability_in_Higher_Education_What_It_Is_What_It_Is_Not

