Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi

Professional Skills
ESCI 3202 001
Spring Semester 2012

Class schedule: MW 3:30-4:45pm CI-107

Instructor: Frank Kelly
Office: HRI 207
E-mail: frank.kelly@tamucc.edu

Office Hrs: Monday & Wednesday 2:00 – 3:00 pm (appointment preferred)

Course Description:
Presentation and discussion of selected topics related to the professional skills of practicing scientists including scientific writing, literature searches, literature reviews, paper presentation, professional practices and job requirements. The course also covers types and anatomy of scientific literature, and unique aspects of scientific communications. Students make and evaluate scientific presentations among their peers.

Student Learning Outcomes:
The course will allow students to explore career options in the biological sciences and appropriate professional skills. Training will be provided in the professional skills of scientists to assist students in realizing their career goals. An emphasis will be placed on reading, understanding, critiquing, presenting and writing scientific literature. Upon completion of this course, the student will have:

1) Prepared a professional resume and cover letter.
2) Explored career opportunities and characteristics through the Career Center.
3) Used library and electronic databases to search scientific literature.
4) Performed literature analysis, visual aid development, and organization of audiovisual presentations.
5) Critiqued scientific presentations.
6) Presented an oral research paper using PowerPoint.

**Evaluation:**

Your final grade will be based on the percentage you earn out of the total possible points. A 10-point grading scale will be used:

A = 90 - 100%
B = 80 - 89.9%
C = 70 - 79.9%
D = 60 - 69.9%
F = ≤ 59.9%

**Components of Course Grade:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resume and cover letter preparation</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography and Literature search</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title + Abstract</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class activity</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total = 1200

**Attendance Policy:**

ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED. Students are required to attend all the classes during the semester, including the visits to the Bell Library and to the Career Center. Only 2 unexcused absences are permitted before LETTER-GRADE deductions. Thereafter, there will be a penalty of 1 LETTER GRADE per EACH additional absence. In addition, 3 points are deducted for each unexcused absence. Note that you will lose points for any absence if in-class assignment was done that day. I will check attendance in each class and a portion of your grade is based on attendance (100 points).

Students are responsible for the material covered and assignments made in every lecture regardless of whether you attend it. Points missed because of an unexcused absence (including tardiness and leaving early) cannot be recovered. An excused absence allows us to make alternative arrangements for completing assignments. Most importantly even if after submitting and approving (by instructor) the reason of not attending class won’t able you to earn 3 points that you miss on that day.

The documentation required for an absence to be excused must be:

- From an appropriate source (e.g., doctor, dentist, funeral director) who states the nature of the event that caused (or will cause) your absence.
- In writing, on official stationery, and signed (I do not return excuses to you). Telephone calls, FAXes, and e-mails are not acceptable.
- Presented prior to the absence for a scheduled event (e.g., university-sponsored activity, recognized religious holiday, military service).
- Presented no more than one week after the date of an unexpected absence.
- In case a student cannot attend class because he/she officially representing TAMU-CC (e.g., meetings or sports events), the documentation required for an absence to be
excused must be from the Office of Dr. Eliot Chenaux, Vice President for Student Affairs. Refer to your student handbook on obtaining an excused absence from his office.

**Unacceptable Excuses:**
Only unavoidable absences are excused, so you should schedule routine personal events (e.g., vacations, weddings, reunions, non-emergency medical or dental visits, parent-teacher conferences, household or auto repairs) to avoid conflicts with your classes. Employment conflicts are not acceptable excuses for absences, tardiness, or leaving class early. (Once enrolled in a class, it is the student’s responsibility to arrange his or her work schedule so that no regularly scheduled class, laboratory, or examination time is missed.) Texas waives jury duty for students, so jury duty is not an acceptable excuse.

**Deadlines:**
Written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date announced. Late assignment penalty for tardy work = 10% assignment grade deduction per class day late. However, after the 3rd day, late assignments will not be accepted and the student will receive 0 points for that assignment. You may always turn in assignments early. If you know that you will have an excused absence when an assignment is due, you must turn in that assignment before its due date.

**Policy on Academic Dishonesty:**
Academic dishonesty, in all its forms, including plagiarism, is not tolerated. All written assignments must be IN YOUR OWN WORDS. Students found responsible for violating this rule WILL be prosecuted to the fullest extent of University Regulations (see the current TAMU-CC catalog). The following procedures will be enforced:
- You must be prepared to present a photo ID at all examinations.
- Different test forms may be prepared for a single examination. Follow instructions.
- If you leave an examination room for any reason you must hand in your test and you will not be allowed to resume the examination. Attend to personal matters (e.g., restroom visits) before the examination.
- Be on time! Anyone arriving after someone has completed an examination and left the room will not be allowed to take that examination.
- Academic integrity is expected. The student is not to give or receive help during testing. Remember that cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable behaviors. All students are expected to conform to college level standards of ethics, academic integrity, grammar and spelling. Review the appropriate pages of the TAMU-CC catalog.

**Policy on Disruptive Behavior:**
As adult university students, you are expected to act with courtesy and common sense. Disruptive, disrespectful, or abusive language/behavior towards anyone in class (student, staff, and faculty) will not be tolerated and could result in permanent removal from class. This includes talking in class, insubordination, and electronic disturbances (cell phones, pagers, etc). Therefore, all electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops, pagers etc.) must be turned off at the beginning of class and during exams. Children are not allowed in class.
**General Disclaimer:**

The Instructor reserves the right to modify the schedules in this syllabus if and when necessary. Such changes will be announced during regularly scheduled lecture periods, but no attempt will be made to contact students who were absent when an announcement was made. Nevertheless, all students are responsible for abiding by all announced changes, and it is a student’s responsibility to obtain this information. Changes will be announced in a timely manner, but be aware that some modifications may be implemented without prior warning.

**Dropping a Class:**

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 1 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Classroom/professional behavior**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

I DON’T WANT ANY STUDENT USING LAPTOP AND CELL PHONE DURING CLASS SESSION. YOU HAVE TO STEP OUT OF THE CLASS TO TEXT OR RECEIVE YOUR CALL IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.

**Grade Appeals:**

As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.
**Disabilities Accommodations:**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Driftwood 101. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Tentative Class Schedule:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11-Jan</td>
<td>Introduction and course briefing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18-Jan</td>
<td>Resume &amp; Cover Letter Preparation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25-Jan</td>
<td>Visit to career center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1-Feb</td>
<td>Visit to bell library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8-Feb</td>
<td>Science Overview</td>
<td>1. Topic for paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Resume Cover Letter</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15-Feb</td>
<td>Scientific writing/Bibliography (Title, Abstract)</td>
<td>Assign Oral Presentation Times</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>22-Feb</td>
<td>Scientific writing/Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1-Feb</td>
<td>Scientific Writing (Intd, objective)</td>
<td>Title-Abstract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>7-Mar</td>
<td>Effective Figures, Tables &amp; Graphs, Effective Poster Presentations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>21-Mar</td>
<td>Plagiarism, Effective Oral Presentations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>28-Mar</td>
<td>Professional interviewing skill</td>
<td>Literature review, Bibliography</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4-Apr</td>
<td>Scientific Writing/Publishing scientific manuscript</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11-Apr</td>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>18-Apr</td>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td>Research paper write up</td>
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</tbody>
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