**Course Description**

UCCP 1101, First Year Seminar I is a discovery of the skills necessary for your success as a university student in science and as a future science professional. Acquisition of these skills is integrated into an exploration of the concepts encountered in one or more of the following classes: BIOL 1406, CHEM 1311, and in ENGL 1301 composition course. Seminar is a one credit hour discussion course where you learn to communicate verbally, work collaboratively on complex science topics, and relate them to your role as a developing scientist.

To achieve success in science you will need 3 basic things:
- Expert science knowledge and critical thinking ability.
- Superb communication skills, specific to science discourse.
- The ability to get along with others and work as a team.

You must have not only a strong command of science concepts and the ability to solve complex problems, but you must also be able to communicate both in writing and orally about complex science issues if you wish to be highly successful. Because science is a collaborative effort, you must be able to get along and work with others if you wish to be employable or go on to post graduate programs. The first year program provides students with the framework to achieve these critical goals by combining the science gateway courses of biology and chemistry with the first year writing course and seminar discussion course in an integrated first year experience.

**Seminar Course Objectives**

The primary objectives of First Year Seminar are for students to:
- Explore the interconnections among the Triad/Tetrad courses;
- Develop critical thinking skills and significant learning;
- Clarify personal values, goals, and strengths;
- And develop the ability to learn through study, discussion, writing, cooperation, and collaboration

**Seminar Learning Outcomes**

- Students will apply interdisciplinary knowledge to address and analyze real-world issues
- Students will interpret and evaluate various research materials and/or perspectives
Science Learning Community Specific Learning Outcomes:

- Take personal responsibility and become a self directed college learner.
- Effectively read and comprehend scientific articles, reports, and books.
- Evaluate the scientific accuracy of claims made in literature relating to science.
- Apply scientific principles to make decisions.
- Understand the scientific method.
- Understand the assumptions and limitations of science.
- Collaborate effectively as both an effective leader and follower.
- Communicate on controversial topics related to science.
- Relate science to other ways of knowing.
- Understand the nature of scientific research.
- Apply concepts of biology and chemistry to new situations.
- Understand the role and purpose of different forms of science literature.
- Effectively use library research tools to research on science topics.
- Communicate about science topics verbally, in writing, and via multimedia presentation.
- Understand and apply the conventions of science discourse.
- Get along with others.
- Develop awareness of one's present and future role in the science community.
- Understand the role of science in greater sociopolitical world context.
- Understand the role of mathematics in science.
- Be able to use mathematics such as graphs and basic statistics to support scientific hypotheses.
- Develop interpersonal communication skills.
- Use online learning technology effectively.
- Be successful.

Course Materials

Seminar is a discussion course focused on the readings and information gained in your large lecture courses. You will work with the books from your other tetrad/triad courses. Additional readings will also be supplied to you as handouts, online postings, or from your textbooks for discussion in seminar. As in your lecture classes it is vitally important that you keep up with readings that are assigned in all courses. If you do not keep up with readings it will affect your ability to participate in seminar discussions and will lower your participation grade.

You will also need the following for seminar and other learning community courses:

- Strengthsquest Computer Code- We will be using the Strengthsquest Inventory and online book to help you develop your academic, leadership, and professional skills. I will give you a code which grants you access to the Strengthsfinder inventory and book. Do not lose the code.
- Regular computer access (available on campus). Ability to save your computer generated work and transfer it between school and home and among university computers (ie-USB Flash Drive).
- Islander email account and the ability to use it. This is the only email address I will use to communicate missing assignments or other critical information.
- Freestanding seminars not connected to composition will not be required to purchase the composition texts, but they are very highly recommended.
- Positive attitude and desire to make your life extraordinary is highly recommended!

Important Dates

Wednesday, August 31  
Last day to register/add a class
Monday, September 5  
Labor Day Holiday
**Friday, November 4**  
**Last day to drop a class**
November 24-25  
Thanksgiving Holiday
Thursday, December 1  
Celebration Day
Tuesday, December 6  
Last day of classes
Online Schedule

A list of class plans will be available at http://critical.tamucc.edu/wiki/BrandiKutil/Fall2010ClassPlans. You are responsible for checking to see what is required to be prepared for the next class and for things you may have missed. This is a dynamic course. Check the class plans frequently as they may change.

Evaluation

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION – 30%

- Attendance: 20%  
  Active participation is absolutely vital to this class. To learn the “language” of science you must be present and prepared for class. Your knowledge and opinion is valued and appreciated at every class meeting. Attendance is taken randomly 11 times per semester at the beginning, middle, or end of class.
  o I will record 11 participation grades throughout the semester worth 10 points each.
  o I will be computing your attendance grade on a 100 point scale (10x11=110). One participation grade will be dropped should you not show up or do poorly they will not count against you. On the other hand, students can earn up to 110 points out of 100. These extra points may help raise your seminar grade.
  o Attendance grades may come from completing online assignments, in class writings or handouts, homework to prepare you for in class activities, sign in sheets, etc.
  o It is up to the student to pay close attention at all times to know when and how attendance is counted since any exercise may become proof of attendance.
  o Always keep up with required readings in all tetrad classes.
  o You cannot be successful in college unless you develop the habit of never missing any class, so if your punctuality or your attendance becomes a serious problem I will speak with you individually.

- Participation: 10%  
  This course is designed to be effective when students actively engage and contribute to the success of the class, therefore a participation score of 0 to 100 will be given based on your contribution to the class. An A is not difficult to attain if you come to class, bring in any requested material, are prepared for discussion, and actively engage in a positive way. However, simply showing up will not earn you full points. Your participation in discussions, group work, etc. will determine your participation grade. Obviously if you have an attendance problem, you can expect this score to be correspondingly low, but factors such as excessive off topic talking, sleeping, inappropriate internet use (Facebook, email, games, chat) and other inappropriate behaviors will lower your participation grade. Being a good citizen of the university and learning community is required!

REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENTS – 40%

- Group Video 10% - Work with your research group to construct a video showing life as a university science student.
- Academic Portfolio 15% - Submit a formal portfolio (in Word) using pictures and words to demonstrate that you are making the choices or changes necessary to be successful academically.
- End of Semester Reflection 15% - Analyze your progress this term and prepare an action plan for next semester.

INTEGRATED RESEARCH EXPERIENCE – 30%

Scientific Poster Presentation: First year seminar I is a true academic seminar class, where in conjunction with your composition class (if you have one) you will work as a research team with classmates to become subject matter experts on a current topic of science, in an area of mutual interest. Through collaborative library research, a writing sequence designed for science students, and regular discussions in seminar, you will ultimately produce and present a scientific poster presentation to tetrad faculty, students, and other invited guests. For composition linked classes this presentation will be a culmination of the semester long writing sequence in composition and will cover the information presented in your final composition paper. If you are not linked to a composition course you will plan, research, and present a topic through seminar and a collaborative webpage. This is a shared tetrad interdisciplinary assignment combining your writing, discussion, presentation, biology, chemistry, and other interdisciplinary skills.

- The following elements will comprise your total presentation grade:
  o Collaboration assessment
  o Group website
  o Final in class presentation
  o Final presentation at Celebration Day
  o Peer evaluations at Celebration Day
By the end of the first year, students will have the skills and confidence needed to present complex information clearly at any academic conference. You will present your topic at Celebration Day. Your final presentation grade for this project will be included in your final grade for all tetrad classes (see each instructor syllabus for details).

TENTATIVE Assignment Due Dates (these are subject to change throughout the semester!)

- Wednesday, August 24 - First Day of classes
- Friday, September 9 - Research Team Contract
- Friday, September 3 - Group Video - Present them in class the following week.
- Friday, October 8 - Annotated Bibliography
- Friday, October 28 - Online Academic Portfolio
- Friday, November 14 - Draft of Poster in PowerPoint Format
- Mon-Wed, Nov 21, 22, 23 – Final Poster. Your group will sign up for a presentation time on one of these days.
- Thanksgiving Nov 24 - Happy Thanksgiving! (Note, the university is closed for only TWO DAYS at Thanksgiving! You are expected to be in class Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of this week!!)
- Tuesday, November 30 or Dec 1 - Celebration Day Poster Presentation
- Friday, December 2 - End of Semester Reflection

I require few outside assignments, so note that if you fail to turn in any assignment you drop one to two full letter grades.

Late Work: Some assignments will be accepted late, but points will be deducted unless you email me in advance of the due date. There will be no make-ups for missed daily grades.

If you do not have composition or chemistry, or if you drop other tetrad classes during the semester, you must still complete all assignments, or contact me via email and in person for alternate assignments.

Expectations
In this class we are learning how to be successful both in college and in life as science professionals. For this reason my philosophy is to treat you as the professional that you are aspiring to be. Let this thought guide you any time that you are not sure how you should conduct yourself in seminar:

"How would I be expected to conduct myself if I were already working as a professional scientist and if my paycheck depended on professional behavior."

- To further guide you here are a few suggestions:
  - Your participation is appreciated and expected, but make sure that you have the floor before speaking!
  - Only one person should speak at any given time.
  - Silence all electronic devices during a meeting.
  - You do not need your laptop in my class. If it prevents you from actively participating in class then don’t even open it. If you can use it maturely to add to the discussion, then please do so.
  - Limit the use of electronic devices to emergencies only.
  - Absolutely do not check e-mail, text messages, MySpace, play games, surf the web, or receive non-emergency communications of any kind via any electronic device.
  - You must have a valid e-mail address registered online with SAIL. This is the way I and the rest of the university will contact you!
  - The preferred method of contacting me is via email. If you ask me something in class, be prepared to follow up the discussion with a reminder email.
  - When you e-mail me make sure you fill out the subject line with a description that identifies who you are and what the subject of the e-mail is. This is to ensure that I do not inadvertently delete your e-mail as spam or a virus.
  - Your writing in e-mail should be very concise and to the point, but should also be professional.
  - E-mail is not the same as instant messaging or text messaging and should have appropriate grammar, punctuation, and capitalization throughout.
Academic Honesty
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possessions of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism.

Notice to Students with Disabilities
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.

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. **November 4th** is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Grade Appeal Process
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](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.

I am thrilled that you chose Texas A&M University- Corpus Christi and the Science Learning Communities. Welcome and have a great semester! Go Islanders!