Instructor Name: Dr. Brandi Kutil  
Email Address: brandi.kutil@tamucc.edu  
Office: FC 125  
Website: http://critical.tamucc.edu/wiki/BrandiKutil/Home  
Office Phone: 825-3456 (Please email me if you need to reach me for any reason!)

Office Hours: Mon/Wed 3-3:30, Tues 1:30-2:20, Thurs 10-10:50, Fri 12:30-1:30 in FC 125, Tues/Thurs 11:50-12:30 in BH 128 or email for an appointment at your convenience.

Course Information:
- UCCP 1102.892  22X  MW 12:00-12:50  CS 115
- UCCP 1102.885  15X  MW 1:00-1:50  CS 115
- UCCP 1102.893  23X  MW 2:00-2:50  BH 128
- UCCP 1102.895  25X  TR 11:00-11:50  BH 128
- UCCP 1102.891  21X  TR 12:30-1:20  BH 128

All students should have Biology with Dr. David Grise and Chemistry with Dr. Jim Silliman (except section 885). Some students may already have credit for composition, but if you are currently taking ENGL 1302, you should have either Ms. Frances Johnson or Ms. Kellie Jarvis.

Course Description

First Year Seminar II is a continued discovery of the skills necessary for your success as a university student in science and technology and as a future professional. Acquisition of these skills is integrated into an exploration of the concepts encountered in your large lecture courses, BIOL 1407, CHEM 1312, and in the ENGL 1302 composition course. Seminar is a one credit hour discussion course where you develop proficiency to communicate verbally and work collaboratively on complex science topics and relate them to your role as a developing scientist.

To achieve success as a science professional 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.

As a second semester university science student, you are expected to have already mastered the basic skills needed to be successful in science at a university level. In this semester you will be challenged to go further in your career as a scientist. You are expected to build your professional resume, become a greater part of the local science community, and further develop your understanding of science by conducting a science investigation in a group of 4-6 individuals. This investigation will be the focus of combined work in seminar and composition (if you are taking composition) that will culminate in an oral multimedia presentation to be presented in class and at the First Year Student Research Conference, if you are chosen. By designing and conducting a science investigation and communicating your experience to your colleagues, you are learning how science knowledge is created and communicated.
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. 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:

- Regular computer access (available on campus) including the use of Microsoft Word to submit documents.
- Islander email account and BlackBoard access, and the ability to use both.
- Positive attitude and desire to make your life extraordinary is highly recommended!
Important Dates:
Wednesday, January 30    Last day to register or add a class
March 11-15            Spring Break
Friday, April 12      Last day to drop a class
Thursday, May 2       First-Year Research Conference
Tuesday, May 7        Last day of classes

Online Schedule A calendar including deadlines for all major projects and updated class plans will be available at http://critical.tamucc.edu/wiki/BrandiKutil/SeminarSpring2013. 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.

Course Evaluation

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION – 30%

- **Attendance:** 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.
  - I will record 11 participation grades throughout the semester worth 10 points each.
  - 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 it 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.
  - Attendance grades may come from completing online assignments, in class writings, homework to prepare you for in class activities, sign in sheets, etc.
  - 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.
  - Always keep up with required readings in all tetrad classes.
  - 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:** 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 – 30%

This semester you will complete two major assignments specifically for Seminar. These reflective analyses are designed to help you clarify and take steps toward achieving your academic and career objectives.

- **Due Friday, February 22-- 3 ½ Year plan** 15%
- **Due Friday, April 26-- CV and Cover letter** 15%
INTEGRATED RESEARCH EXPERIENCE – 40%

All students enrolled in the Science Learning Communities this spring will complete a collaborative research project. Facilitated primarily through Seminar II, a true academic seminar class, successful completion requires the synthesis of knowledge from all of your courses. As this is a Science Learning Community project, all students enrolled in the Learning Community sections of Biology and/or Chemistry must complete the project, whether or not enrolled in Seminar.

Your challenge this semester is to design and conduct an observational research project utilizing Chi-Squared. You may opt to use the Chi-Square test that most of you learned in Biology 1406 or you may use other statistical tests that you may be familiar with, such as T-test, ANOVA, linear regression, or others.

You will work as a research team with 4-6 classmates to design and conduct a science investigation- from idea formulation to publication/presentation. Together, you must decide on a research question related to biology or ecology to drive your experiment. Your task is to choose something interesting either on campus or nearby, develop a research question and safely investigate your question as a scientific team. This is not a lab assignment so you must choose something that is non-hazardous and strictly observational. Your research question must be tested through observation only. **No experiments involving humans (even as the observed subjects) or physically interacting with or influencing your research subjects in any way!** After determining a suitable research question, you will formulate a hypothesis and design an experiment to gather sufficient data to test your hypothesis. In your investigation, you must use statistics to test a hypothesis.

Throughout the semester, you will complete various assignments in Seminar (see below) to help guide you through the development of your research project. **At the end of the semester, you will present your research for a grade which will be included in each of your learning community courses.**

TENTATIVE Due Dates for Integrated Research Experience Assignments (these are subject to change!)

- Tuesday, February 5 -- Research Team Contract
- February 18-21 – Research Plan PowerPoint due during class
- Monday, March 4 -- Annotated Bibliography
- Tuesday, March 26 – Results of Pilot study due on BlackBoard
- Friday, March 29 – Application for the Research Conference (optional)
- Tuesday, April 2 – Research Proposal
- Mon-Tues, April 29-30 – Final Presentations

Late Work:

Some major 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 tetrads 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 you have the floor before speaking!
- Only one person should speak at any given time.
- Silence all electronic devices during any 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.

**Dropping a Class**

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me and your professor 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. **April 12** is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Notice to Students with Disabilities and Veterans**

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 CCH 116. 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.

**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.

**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://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/Rules_Procedures/index.html](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/Rules_Procedures/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.