PROFESSIONAL SKILLS
FALL 2015

COURSE: ESCI 5203
TIME: T 5:30 - 6:45
SECTION: 001
LOCATION: EN 101

Dr. Kevin Nelson
Office: SL101
Office Hours: TT 9:00 -10 or by appointment
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Course Description
Presentation and discussion of selected topics relating to the professional skills of practicing environmental scientists including literature searches, reviews, scientific presentations, professional and career opportunities, professional ethics, project management, teamwork, non-technical communication, research/business ethics, and regulatory issues

Course Outcomes: Demonstrate skills necessary for early-career scientists.

Course Organization
Lecture and individual/group projects

Required Texts:
None

Tentative Schedule:
1/27 - Class mechanics and introduction. Science overview; research topics and paper critiques. Bibliographies
2/3 - Visit to Bell Library. Discuss Scientific Writing-APA, preparing bibliography, critique 1
2/10 - Visit to the Writing Center. Discussion and work on Topic Paper Summary
2/17 - Career Services Presentation – Jacinto Medina, Career Counselor
2/24 - Writing Center: Resume and Cover letter presentation. Discuss critique 1
3/3 - Professional interviewing skills, mock interviews. Time management
3/10 - Discussion of Topic Paper Summary, Discuss Critique 1, Assign Critique 2, Discuss Title and Abstract
3/24 - Plagiarism and professional misconduct (The writing center)
3/31 - Guest Speaker
4/7 - Discuss Scientific writing/publishing a Scientific manuscript (Possible Writing Center Activity
4/14 - Professional Ethics
4/21 - Oral presentations
4/28 - Oral presentations/Final Review
- Final Exam

Graded assignments
As a percentage of your total grade:
Assignments 50%
Presentations 25%
Final Exam 25%
Academic Integrity/Plagiarism
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 possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a score of zero (0) on the assignment.

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. Friday, Apr. 10 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.

Grade Appeals
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules website at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html, and the College of Science and Engineering Grade Appeals webpage (http://sci.tamucc.edu/students/GradeAppeal.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the chair or director of the appropriate department or school, the Office of the College of Science and Engineering Dean, or the Office of the Provost.

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 Corpus Christi Hall 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 at (361) 825-5816.

**Statement of Continuity**
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.