SKILLS FOR COMPUTING PROFESSIONALS, COSC 3400

Department of Engineering and Computing Sciences
Spring 2016

A. COURSE INFORMATION
  Course number/section: COSC 3400.001, COSC 3400.201
  Class meeting time: MW, 2:00-3:15, 3:30-4:20
  Class location: CI 228, CS 111

B. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
  Instructor: Professor Carol Binkerd
  Office location: CI 320
  Office hours: MW, 12:00-1:00; TR, 11:50-1:20 (changes announced via email or class)
  Telephone: 361-825-2397
  e-mail: carol.binkerd@tamucc.edu
  Appointments: Please email. Periodically during the semester, especially during high peak times, I will post sign-up sheets outside my office. You may simply write your name in the most convenient time slot.

C. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Course Description
This course focuses on the professional skills that computer scientists will need to be successful in their careers and lives. There are two key areas of study; communication skills needed by computer scientists and their ethical responsibilities. Communication skills will include writing and giving oral presentations about computer science topics and life skills. Ethical issues will be explored from a computer science perspective.

Extended Course Description
This course replaces the previously required technical writing class. In addition, it includes topics (such as ethics from a computer science perspective) that were not covered in any of the other courses. Also included is a brief introduction to skills needed in the capstone course, such as writing professional emails and memos, elevator speeches, presentations, and so on.

The course focuses upon the skills that students will need to successfully obtain internships/full-time employment as well as maintaining employment and successfully advancing in their chosen fields.

This is a class for computing professionals. As such, professional decorum will be required at all times.

D. PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES

Prerequisites: Engl 1302.
Corequisites: None
E. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S), READINGS AND SUPPLIES

Required Textbook(s)
Author: Strunk
Title: Elements of Style
ISBN: 9780205632640

Author: Quinn
Title: Ethics for Information Age, 6th edition
ISBN: 9780133741629

Optional Textbook(s) or Other References (if do not know Word, Power Point, Excel):
Author: Shelly/Vermant
Discovering Computers & Microsoft Office 2010
ISBN: 978-0-538-47393-4

Supplies
Several paper folders with pockets and brats in center
Money on Sand Dollar ID card
Flash drives, CD/DVD
Professional attire
Others will be emailed to your islander email account

F. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

Assessment is a process used by instructors to help improve learning. Assessment is essential for effective learning because it provides feedback to both students and instructors. A critical step in this process is making clear the course’s student learning outcomes that describe what students are expected to learn to be successful in the course. The student learning outcomes for this course are listed below. By collecting data and sharing it with students on how well they are accomplishing these learning outcomes students can more efficiently and effectively focus their learning efforts. This information can also help instructors identify challenging areas for students and adjust their teaching approach to facilitate learning.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:
1. Be familiar with a professional code of ethics (such as ACM or IEEE) and apply to computing-related ethical situations.
2. Demonstrate effective oral communication skills with a range of audience.
3. Demonstrate effective written communication skills with a range of audiences.
4. Can recognize and describe social issues related to computing.
5. Analyze the local impact of computing on individuals, organizations and society.
6. Analyze the global impact of computing on individuals, organizations and society.

G. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND ACTIVITIES
This is not a lecture-based course. Attendance is mandatory as participation is critical. Most activities cannot be recreated outside the classroom.

- Questions from students regarding clarification about assignments/tasks
- Small group activities
- Discussion
- Occasional short lectures
- Student presentations/elevator speeches
- Individual meetings

H. MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

If needed, due to extenuating circumstances, these requirements and grading may be modified.

All presentations require the following: before the class begins, student must submit color hard copy of slides in appropriately labeled folder, be in the classroom before the class begins in line to upload presentation. (Preferably all presentations will be uploaded before the class begins.) Most presentations will require professional attire.

****************Sample of personal grade sheet for this class. Please refer to page at the end of this file.

 **************** Sample of activities related to outcomes

1. Be familiar with a professional code of ethics (such as ACM or IEEE) and apply to computing-related ethical situations.

Students will summarize an ethical scenario from the textbook. Then, the student will analyze the scenario from their own ethics, and then according to the code of ethics for ACM and IEEE.

2. Demonstrate effective oral communication skills with a range of audience.

Students will give a variety of presentations, varying from elevator speeches to a formal, professional presentation.

3. Demonstrate effective written communication skills with a range of audiences.

Students will write a papers about computer-related social issues or the local/global impact of computing on individuals, organizations and society.

4. Can recognize and describe social issues related to computing.
5. Analyze the local impact of computing on individuals, organizations and society.
6. Analyze the global impact of computing on individuals, organizations and society.

Students will give a presentation(s) about computer-related social issues or the local/global impact of computing on individuals, organizations and society.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>% of FINAL GRADE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lab Reports</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other activities</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

7. **COURSE CONTENT/SCHEDULE** – Please see attachment at the end of this document.  
Note: Changes in this course schedule may be necessary and will be announced to the class by the Instructor. The assignments and exams shown are directly related to the Student Learning Outcomes described in Section F.

8. **COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance/Tardiness**
Many of the assignments will involve class and group participation. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. **For each class that a student is late or does not attend, the final semester average will be docked 2 points.**

The student is required to attend class. If the student cannot attend that day, it is the student’s responsibility to contact another class member to obtain handouts and information about the content that was covered. Additionally, it is the student’s responsibility to learn the material that was covered. Do not contact the professor.

**Absence Documentation.** If you have documentation that you feel provides a valid reason for class absences, you must submit your documentation to the Office for Student Success and Engagement. This office will then notify all your professors. Depending upon the class grading policies, you may or may not be permitted to complete work missed due to these absences.

**Alcohol/Tobacco/Smoking of any kind.**  
Not permitted.

**Late Work and Make-up Exams**  
**Late assignments are not accepted. Please submit before the due date.**

**Extra Credit**

**Availability:** Only students who consistently display professional behavior are eligible.
Cell Phone Use
Not permitted without permission. Students will receive one group warning.

Laptop Use
Not permitted without permission.

Food in Class
No food or drinks allowed.

Missed Exam
N/A

Participation
Mandatory.

Others

Assignments: If not submitted correctly, if you do not follow the directions, your submission will not be reviewed. In other words, you will receive 0% credit.

Attendance and Student Conduct:
Absences. The student is required to attend class. If the student cannot attend class that day, it is the student’s responsibility to contact another class member to obtain hand-outs and information about the content that was covered. Additionally, it is the student’s responsibility to learn the material that was covered. Do not contact the professor.

Many of the assignments will involve class and group participation. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. For each class that a student is late or does not attend, the final semester average will be docked 2 points.

Contact. All contact will be via the student’s Islander email account. Please check often.

Professional Behavior, Good Manners and Work Skills
Students are expected to have good manners, show respect for themselves and others, and not engage in any behaviors that are disruptive or disrespectful to others. Insubordination and unprofessional conduct including sexual harassment, use of inappropriate language &/or gestures, creating a hostile environment, and so on will not be tolerated. Students who cannot conduct themselves properly will fail the course, and may be referred for counseling, requested to leave the classroom, and other. If you have any questions about what constitutes inappropriate behavior, language and so on, it is your responsibility to make and attend an appointment during the professor’s office hours.

Students are required to be on time to class. Violation of this policy will result in the student not
receiving hand-outs, not receiving credit for that day’s activities, and possibly in having the student requested to leave the class/lab, and other**. The clock/computer in the classroom/lab (or my watch) will be used to determine the correct time.

A student will be considered to be on time if the student has already obtained a copy of that day’s hand-outs, is seated and ready to begin class with required materials on the desk/computer, has submitted assignments due (and so on) before the time class begins. Walking into the classroom at the minute that the class begins, is not being on time.

Students may not use headphones, laptops, cell phones (and so on) during class. Students must silence all cell phones (and so on) before entering the classroom/lab and keep them silenced during class/lab. Violation of this policy may result in the article being confiscated and it will be returned to the student on the day of the final exam.

Students are not to speak while the professor or a recognized student is speaking. Violation of this policy may result in the student being requested to leave the class/lab for the day or a longer period of time, and other. If a student wants to be recognized to ask a pertinent question, he/she should raise his/her hand and wait until the professor calls upon him/her.

Students are not to use class time to discuss personal issues. If a student has a personal issue, he/she should make an appointment with the professor to discuss this during office hours.

Each occurrence of unprofessional, inappropriate behaviors will lead to the student’s final average being deducted points 2 points. Examples of disruptive behaviors are entering the classroom/lab late, speaking when the professor or another student is speaking, allowing the cell to emit noise during class, leaving the class, re-entering the class, forcing the instructor/TA to remove food/drinks, and so on. Therefore, it is possible for a student to fail the course, even if he/she has a passing average on graded materials. So, if you are late one day, speak while the professor is speaking three times in one class period on the second day, and on the third day, have your cell phone ring, you will have accrued 5 infractions. 10 points will be subtracted from your semester average.

If a developmental plan has been developed, and you do not comply to those conditions, you will fail the course no matter what your semester average may be.

Profanity (aka vulgarity, swearing, cussing) is never appropriate and creates a hostile work environment. You will fail this course if you use profanity.

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 unacceptably behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums including
Any of the activities described in this section violate the rules stipulated in the above paragraph. In most cases the individual will be instructed to leave the classroom. The individual will be required to schedule a meeting with the professor during office hours, sign a professional development plan before the student is allowed to return to the classroom. Failure to meet the developmental plan goals, will result in an immediate failing grade.

If the individual refuses to leave, the University police will be contacted to escort the individual from the classroom. The individual will automatically fail the course, not matter what the individual’s grade.

Cheating. Students are expected to produce original work. Plagiarism and cheating are not acceptable. Violation of this policy may result in all students involved receiving a 0% on the assignment and/or failing the course. And so on.

General but Important Stuff

Students should expect to spend a minimum of 2-3 hours outside class for every hour in class. So, for this class, outside study time should be a minimum of 12 hours per week.

_________ Students are expected to begin assignments immediately. Do not procrastinate.

_________ Students are expected to be prepared for class. This includes being on time, having required materials ready, having reading and written assignments completed before class begins. The professor will not assign specific chapters or pages to read from the textbook. Students are expected to read the related chapters (or pages) that correspond to the topics on the tentative agenda before the topics are covered in class.

_________ Students are expected to discuss dropping the class with the professor during office hours. The student is often not clear about his/her current standing in the class. One bad grade is not fatal. Also, the student often feels that he/she is the only one who is confused when the majority of students feel the same way.

_________ In addition to learning the course content, the student is expected to learn professional behavior that will be appropriate in the workplace. Once employed, you will be expected to arrive on time for work, have projects and presentations prepared by the required completion date. In this field, you will often be required to work with teams. Also, if you repeatedly engage in unprofessional behavior, you will be fired. So, a part of your education is developing strong workplace skills.

_________ If you feel your assignment was not graded correctly, you must email your concern within 24 hours of receiving the graded assignment. Then, you must set and attend a meeting within one week of receiving the assignment.

Resources

Students are assumed to be proficient in the following: note-taking, time-management, study skills, test-taking skills, impulse control, anger management, interpersonal communication. If a student needs assistance in developing or enhancing these skills, he/she should make an appointment with the counseling center immediately since these skills take time to learn.

Also, if the student has language difficulties, poor comprehension skills and/or special
needs, the student should contact the Student Disabilities Office.

Another resource the student should use for math, writing and so on is the academic success center.

**Computer Accounts:**

Misuse (illegal or unethical) of any computer account will result in the student receiving an F in this class.

The student will receive many directions and information via email. The student is responsible for checking email on a regular basis. (If you do not know how to use email, learn ASAP.) The professor may (or may not) add alternative email addresses to the mailing list. But, the professor will not know if other servers are down and the student will still be held responsible for the email that has been sent on Islander.

**XIV: Papers and Presentations.**

Must use APA or MLA format for bibliography/works cited. Must use Chicago style footnotes. Use Word 2010 default options for all else.

For formal, professional presentation(s) must be professionally dressed or 0% credit. Must be on time to class and load presentation before the presentations begin or 0% credit.

Papers/presentations/assignments must follow guidelines supplied or 0% credit. These guidelines will be emailed to you.

9. **COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

   - **Academic Integrity (University)**
     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 failing grade.

   - **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.

   - **Statement of Civility**
     Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational
experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

- **Deadline for Dropping a Course with a Grade of W (University)**
The grade of W will be assigned to any student officially dropping a course. Please consult with the instructor before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, visit the Office of the University Registrar for the Course Drop Form that must submitted. No student is eligible to receive a W without completing the official drop process by this deadline. Please consult the Academic Calendar ([http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/calendar/](http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/calendar/)) for the last day to drop a course.

- **Grade Appeals (College of Science and Engineering)**
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](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html), and the College of Science and Engineering Grade Appeals webpage at [http://sci.tamucc.edu/students/GradeAppeal.html](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.

- **Disability Services**
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 (361) 825-5816 or visit Disability Services in Corpus Christi Hall 116. Accommodation may necessitate some grading modifications. For example, many assignments require that students hand-write responses; but, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure and so on are not graded. However, since the computer automatically corrects much/most of this, students requesting the use of the computer, will be graded on those aspects.
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.

http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu/

- **Statement of Academic 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.

  On the first day of class, please supply an additional email contact. I will allow you to simply add an additional email address to the group mailing list that I have designed for this class.

10. **OTHER INFORMATION**
- **Academic Advising**
  The College of Science & Engineering requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. Meetings are by appointment only; advisors do not take walk-ins. Please call or stop by the Advising Center to check availability and schedule an appointment. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Center for Instruction 350 or can be reached at (361) 825-3928.

**GENERAL DISCLAIMER**
I reserve the right to modify the information, schedule, assignments, deadlines, grading and course policies in this syllabus if and when necessary. I will announce such changes in a timely manner during regularly scheduled lecture periods or via group emails.