PROFESSIONAL SKILLS ESCI 3202
Department of Physical and Environmental Science
Fall 2015

A. COURSE INFORMATION
   Course number/section: ESCI 3202  SECTION: 002
   Class meeting time:
   Class location:
   Course Website: Blackboard

B. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
   Instructor: Dr. Maureen Trnka
   Office location:
   Office hours: By appointment
   Telephone: N/A
   e-mail: mtrnka@islander.tamucc.edu
   Appointments: Email preferred

C. COURSE DESCRIPTION
   Presentation and discussion of selected topics relating to the professional skills of practicing environmental scientists including literature searches, reviews, paper presentation, professional and career opportunities, and professional ethics.

Learning Objectives
The course will allow students to explore career options in the environmental 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 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 journal articles.
6) Created a presentation for the class.
7) Designing and writing scientific publications.
D. **PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES**

This class will require extensive writing and research. This means access to a computer or tablet that you can compose on.

E. **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S), READINGS AND SUPPLIES**

*Required Textbook(s)*
None required. Materials will be made available in-class.

*Optional Textbook(s) or Other References*
N/A

*Supplies*
Access to a computer and the internet.

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.

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. By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1) Prepare a professional resume and cover letter.
2) Explore career opportunities through the Career Center.
3) Use library and electronic databases to search scientific literature.
4) Perform literature analysis, visual aid development, and organization of audiovisual presentations.
5) Critique scientific journal articles.
6) Create a presentation for the class.
7) Design and write scientific publications.
G. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

This course requires in-class active participation. Attendance is required.

H. MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

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>Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Resume</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Bibliography and Literature Search</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Title - Abstract</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Oral Presentation</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Attendance</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Final Examination</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>1000</td>
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I. COURSE CONTENT/SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE (BY DAY OR WEEK)</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction, Syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Resume Preparation</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Science Overview</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Visit to Career Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Visit to Bell Library</td>
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</table>
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.

J. COURSE POLICIES

Attendance/Tardiness

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 an in-class assignment was done that
day. I will check attendance in each class period and a portion of your grade is based on
attendance (50 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. 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 the 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. Oversleeping is never an acceptable excuse. 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.

Late Work and Make-up Exams
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.

Cell Phone Use
Cell phones must be on silent during class and no texting is allowed.

Laptop Use
Laptops are allowed only for class use.

K. 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.

  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/](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.

L. **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, and course policies in this syllabus if and when necessary. I will announce such changes in a timely manner during regularly scheduled lecture periods.