All students should have Chemistry 1411 with Dr. Jim Owens AND Biology 1406 with Dr. Fabio Moretzsohn or Dr. Judy Metcalf. *If you have someone else, please see me immediately!*

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.

**Course Description** - First-Year Seminar is a two-semester course sequence required of all full-time first-year students. As the central component of a learning community, Seminar helps students achieve success, academically and socially, as they make the transition to the university. Seminar provides students with opportunities for meaningful interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters as well as timely, constructive feedback about their learning. Students are immersed in an active learning environment with a purposefully integrated and contextualized curriculum, fostering the development of transferable skills and engaging them in the academic community. In UCCP 1101, students are introduced to college level work and responsibilities, and provided with appropriate support and resources to navigate their first semester.

**Course Objectives** - The objectives of First-Year Seminar I are to advance the six intellectual and practical skills defined by the Texas Core Curriculum:
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Communication Skills
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills
- Teamwork
- Social Responsibility
- Personal Responsibility

**Student Learning Outcomes**
- Reflect and integrate learning from learning community courses, including development of critical thinking skills, social and/or personal responsibility.
- Interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters through daily activities and discussions.
- Demonstrate competence of knowledge related to the learning community discipline(s) in a public forum.
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 may 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.

Important Dates

- Wednesday, August 31: Last day to register/add a class
- Friday, November 11: Last day to drop a class
- November 22-25: Reading Days/Thanksgiving Holiday
- Tuesday, December 6: Last day of classes
- December 8-14: Final Exams

Online Schedule
A list of class plans will be available at http://tamucc.edu/wiki/BrandiKutil/SeminarFall2016. 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 – 35%

- **Attendance:** 25%  
  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 points will be earned during most class meetings and may be based on completion of online assignments, in class writings or presentations, homework to prepare you for in class activities, sign in sheets, etc.
  - 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. However, simply showing up will not earn you full points. Your participation in discussions, team 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!

An “A” is not difficult to earn if you come to class, bring in any requested material, are prepared for presentations/discussion, and actively engage in a positive way.

REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENTS – 35%

- **Academic Portfolio** 20% - 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.
- **Achievement Portfolio** 15% - Analyze your progress this term and prepare an action plan to reach your academic and career goals.

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 coordinate with your semester long writing sequence in composition. If you are not linked to a composition course you will plan, research, and present through seminar and your team website. 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:**
  - Collaboration assessment
  - Draft presentation sessions
  - Final ‘grading’ presentation
  - Presentation at First-Year Symposium

By the end of the first year, students will have the skills and confidence needed to present complex information clearly at any academic conference, as well as the First-Year Symposium. **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!)

- **Friday, Aug 26** - Syllabus Quiz due on BlackBoard
- **Tuesday, Aug 30** - Introductory assignment due on BlackBoard
- **Friday, Sept 9** - Research Team Contract due on Blackboard
- **Friday, Sept 30** - Academic Portfolio due on Blackboard
- **Week of Oct 10** - Summarized Bibliography
- **Week of Oct 31** - Draft of Poster in PowerPoint Format due on Blackboard.
- **Monday-Tuesday, Nov 14-15** – Final Poster Presentation Grading
  - **Tues-Wed, Nov 29-30** – First-Year Symposium
  - **Thursday, Dec 1** – Final Achievement Portfolio (Final Exam) due on BlackBoard

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

**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 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.
- Absolutely do not check e-mail, text messages, social media, 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, please ALWAYS 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 Advising:** The College of Science and Engineering requires that students meet with an academic advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major or career emphasis. The academic advisor will set up a degree plan, assign the student a faculty mentor. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Center for Instruction, Room 350, (361) 825-5777.

**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 CCH 116.

**Notice to Student Veterans**
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.

**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 11th** 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.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that his or her final grade reflects academic evaluation which is arbitrary, prejudiced, or inappropriate in view of the standards and procedures outlined in this class syllabus may appeal the grade given for the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the student believes the matter is not satisfactorily resolved at the student-faculty level, an appeal of the final grade in the class may be submitted, in writing, to the Chair of the Department of Undergraduate Studies. For complete details, please visit: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/Rules_Procedures](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/Rules_Procedures).

**Welcome to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi!**