PROFESSIONAL SKILLS: BIOL/BIMS 2200  
Department of Life Sciences  
Fall 2017

A. COURSE INFORMATION

Course number/section: BIOL/BIMS 2200  
Class meeting time: W: 7:00 pm - 8:40 pm  
Class location: OCNR 222  
Course Websites: bb9.tamucc.ed

B. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Xavier F. Gonzales, PhD, MSPH  
Office location: Engineering 310C  
Office hours: MW 11:00am-1:30pm  
Telephone: 361-825-3824  
e-mail: Xavier.Gonzales@tamucc.edu

Email me at any time but my responses will be limited after 5pm weekdays and all weekend.  
Appointments: email me to set up appointments

C. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Course Description
Presentation and discussion of selected topics relating to the professional skills of practicing scientists including literature searches, reviews, paper presentation, professional opportunities and job requirements. Biology and Biomedical Science majors only; satisfies computer literacy requirements.

Extended Course Description
A major goal of this course is to provide you with basic skills sets that are necessary to be a successful practicing biological scientists. The course covers application of scientific literature research skills, interaction with fellow scientists, and development of career tools for graduate and professional school.

D. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S), READINGS AND SUPPLIES

- Students are responsible to read all handouts provided on Blackboard.

E. 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. Develop scientific social skills through effective communication.
2. Design and write professional scientific career documents (curriculum vitae, personal statement) to be used in employment searches or application to graduate and/or professional schools.
3. Distinguish between primary reports and reviews of scientific literature.
4. Design a hypothesis and abstract of a biological problem, based on extension of a problem from primary scientific literature.
5. Produce a poster of the analysis of the biological problem.

F. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

Learner-Centered Teaching: Collaborative work, control of content selection, personal reflection, learning skill demonstration.

G. MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>% of FINAL GRADE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis, Title &amp; Abstract</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poster Presentation w/Bibliography</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resume</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Statement</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Grading scale: A>90%  B=80-89.9%  C=70-79.9%  D=60-69%  F<60%

H. COURSE CONTENT/SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
<th>HW Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08/30</td>
<td>Introduction (Syllabus and Assessment)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>09/06</td>
<td>Cover Letter &amp; Resume; Personal Statements</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/13</td>
<td>Interviewing &amp; Networking; Experimental Design</td>
<td>Resume</td>
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Theme II: Effective Communication in Science (Journals)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09/20</td>
<td>Discussion Topic Selection &amp; Hypothesis Development; Journal Selection</td>
<td>Personal Statements</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/27</td>
<td>Elements of a Good Paper (Story Outline Development)</td>
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<td>10/04</td>
<td>Primary Journal Dissection: Introduction; Materials and Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/11</td>
<td>Primary Journal Dissection: Results (Story Time: figures &amp; tables); Discussion; Bibliography (Citations; supportive information)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/18</td>
<td>Review of Titles and Abstracts from Decapitated Papers</td>
<td>Titles &amp; Abstracts</td>
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<td><strong>Theme IV: Effective Communication in Science (Public Speaking)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/25</td>
<td>Poster Presentation: Preparation, development, &amp; delivery</td>
<td>Bibliography</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/01</td>
<td>Poster Presentations</td>
<td>Posters</td>
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<td>11/08</td>
<td>Poster Presentations</td>
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<td>11/15</td>
<td>Poster Presentations</td>
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<td>11/22</td>
<td>Reading Day: Review journal for ethics discussion</td>
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<td>11/29</td>
<td>Ethics in Science</td>
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<td>12/06</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/13</td>
<td>Final Discussion: 7:15pm – 9:45pm</td>
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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.

I. **COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance/Tardiness**

Attendance: Students are expected to attend every scheduled class meeting. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain any material missed during an absence from his/her classmates. Power Points are not placed in the library, and only Power Points from certain sections will be placed on Blackboard, or on a website.

Tardiness: Students may enter when late but be respectful of your peers and do not
disrupt the class as you enter.

**Late Work**
No late work will be accepted. You must refer to Blackboard to identify when items will be due. It is your responsibility to get it turned in through the appropriate outlet on the designated day. I will not remind you.

**Extra Credit**
Missed extra credit opportunities—Instructor is not obligated to give make-up assignments for extra credit opportunities, whether excused or unexcused.

**Cell Phone Use**
Lecture: Students may NOT utilize their cell phone; therefore keep them on silent and put away.

**Laptop Use**
Lecture: Students may utilize their laptops as long as it does not disrupt others in class.

**Food in Class**
Lecture: Students may eat food as long as it does not disrupt others in class. It is the student’s responsibility to clean up after themselves. If you fail to do so, you will no longer be allowed to have food in class.

**Missed Exam**
No exams in this course.

**Participation**
Lecture: Students are required to participate in all group activities. Peer evaluations will be given with each activity to determine your final assessment.

### J. 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)**
  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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.* 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. Please consult the Academic Calendar ([http://www.tamu.edu/academics/calendar/](http://www.tamu.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.tamu.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamu.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html), and the College of Science and Engineering Grade Appeals webpage at [http://sci.tamu.edu/students/GradeAppeal.html](http://sci.tamu.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.

K. **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.