Course Syllabus
Science and Engineering First Year Learning Community Seminar II, Spring 2019

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Islander Impact: Exploring Wellness
(Learning Community Theme)

In the learning community this semester you will be challenged to make an impact through real, relevant, open-ended research. You will continue to analyze your personal success strategies via the 8 dimensions of wellness. There will be special emphasis on occupational wellness.

Courses:
FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR II-83074 - UCCP 1102 – 880- With COMM M/W 10-10:50 OCNR 258
FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR II-83075 - UCCP 1102 – 881- With COMM 1302 M/W 11:00-11:50 OCNR 258
FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR II-80047 - UCCP 1102 – 892- FS T/R 10:00-10:50 OCNR 258
FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR II-81707 - UCCP 1102 – 893- FS T/R 11:00-11:50 OCNR 258

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. The goal of UCCP 1102 is for students to participate in academic discourse and take ownership of their education in preparation for their future coursework and careers.

Course Objectives
The First-Year Seminar objective is to advance the six intellectual and practical skills defined by the Texas Core Curriculum:

- Critical Thinking Skills
- Teamwork
- Communication Skills
- Social Responsibility
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills
- 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.

The First-Year Learning Communities Program (FYLCP) provides students with the framework to achieve these objectives by combining the foundational science courses of biology and chemistry with the first-year writing course (if enrolled), foundations of communication course (if enrolled), and seminar discussion course in an integrated first-year science experience. The following learning outcomes apply to science learning communities.

Science Learning Community Specific Learning Outcomes

- Integrate interdisciplinary knowledge with real world applications.
- Effectively read, comprehend, and evaluate information related to science.
- Collaborate effectively by understanding, identifying, and participating in team processes.
- Communicate effectively in diverse contexts.
- Demonstrate personal and professional growth.
This course uses both Blackboard and two face-to-face class meetings per week. Be sure to check Blackboard daily for assignments, discussions, and other important announcements.

Course Materials
Seminar is a discussion course focused on the readings and information gained in your large lecture course/s. You will work with the books from your other learning community 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 and activities 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. Daily computer access is required.

Course Evaluation
- **Attendance:** 20%- Active participation is absolutely vital to this class and **attendance is mandatory.** Your knowledge and opinion is valued and appreciated at every class meeting. While this syllabus gives an outline of the course, most of the detailed information needed to understand and complete the assignments will be conveyed through in-class discussions. If you are not present and engaged in these discussions, you will be lost. Much of your grade in this course is derived from your work with team members. Failure to attend class will negatively affect your whole team as well as your own grade. Be advised students can and do fail seminar, usually because they have an attendance problem and don’t know what is going on in class. They miss assignments and have low attendance and participation grades. To graduate from this university, you must pass 2 semesters of seminar. Passing two semesters of first-year seminar may be counted in place of the two-hour Professional Skills course for BIMS or BIOL majors. See catalog to determine if you qualify.
  - Attendance is taken many times during the semester via a sign-in sheet or any time work is turned in with your name on it, either hard copy or online.
    - Please initial the sign-in sheet if used or make sure your first name, last name, and class section number are on all work turned in to me. It must be legible.
    - I will choose 10 attendance days worth 100 points each.
    - **It is up to the student to pay close attention at all times to know when and how attendance is counted since any exercise may become an attendance grade.** In other words, if you are late to class, miss a sign-in sheet, leave class early, or fail to put your name legibly on your work you will be counted absent.
    - I will drop the 2 lowest attendance grades. This means you may miss two classes and still have a 100 for attendance.
    - These two free absences are to cover minor illnesses, car trouble, funeral attendance and other issues you are likely to encounter during the semester, therefore do not contact me or bring “excuses”. The only excuses for missed classes are official university sponsored events in which you are a required participant (Ex. You are playing tennis in a university match). Let me know in advance in person and via follow-up email if you miss class for official university sponsored activities, such as if you are an athlete.
    - If you will be out for an extended period of time due to a very serious illness or other major issue, contact the Office of Student Engagement and Success. Only they can verify your problem and request accommodation from your professors, who may or may not give you additional accommodations. See student handbook and university catalog FMI about absences in college. In general avoid ever being absent in college classes.
- **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. An A is not difficult to attain if you come to class, bring in any requested material, are prepared for discussion, and actively engage in a positive way. **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 (social media, texting, email, games, chat) and other inappropriate behaviors will lower your participation grade. Being a good citizen of the university and learning community is **required.**

Seminar Reflective Assignments- 30%- Two reflective assignments will be done this semester worth 15% each. These individual assignments will be presented via a MS Word document uploaded to the assignment link in Blackboard.
  - Letter of Application and Curriculum Vita to a Summer Experience- Occupational Wellness is a major focus of this semester. To be successful in career building, you must begin working or volunteering in your field of study. In this assignment you must choose a summer activity in your field, research the application requirements, and submit a 1-page or greater letter of application
along with a 1-2 page curriculum vita. You may submit equivalent written documents of 3 pages or more if the program you are applying for requires different materials (No fill in the blank forms). 15%

- **Final Wellness Reflection-** Prove you have been successful in advancing your chosen career through a persuasive reflection on all eight dimensions of wellness. In fall you were challenged to be successful via the eight dimensions of wellness (if you were not enrolled in science learning communities, explore this via research to come up to speed and see you instructor FMI) The eight dimensions of wellness are intellectual, physical, social, occupational, spiritual, emotional, financial, and environmental. This semester you are challenged to keep track of your success in all dimensions, constantly monitor your progress using a journal, fitness, tracker, mood tracker, or other means. Prove your success in all areas through a persuasive reflection. Tangible evidence such as pictures, graphs, and data may be helpful to prove your thesis but not mandatory. There should be a heading for each of the 8 dimensions. - 15%

**Learning Community Integrated Research Experience**

All students enrolled in the spring science learning communities will complete a collaborative integrative research experience. This project has been designed by your learning community professors to increase your science abilities. Science is rigorous so please understand this project is challenging and requires higher order critical thinking. In this assignment your learning community professors challenge you to do much more than just remember facts or understand how to do problems. You will apply knowledge, analyze data, evaluate information, create new science knowledge, and persuasively share it in hopes of making an “Islander Impact”. The learning community assignment is facilitated primarily through seminar. Successful completion requires the synthesis of knowledge and skills from all of your courses.

You will work as a research team with 3-5 classmates to design and conduct a science investigation, from idea formulation to publication/presentation. Together, you must decide on a research question related to biology or ecology to drive your experiment. Your task is to choose something interesting either on campus or nearby, develop a research question, and safely investigate your question as a scientific team. This is not a lab assignment so you must choose something that is non-hazardous. Answering your research question is through observation only; you may not physically interact with or influence your research subjects in any way! After determining a suitable research question, you will formulate a hypothesis and design an experiment to gather sufficient data to test your hypothesis. In your investigation, you must use statistics to test a hypothesis. Your work should be real and relevant and have the potential to make an impact.

The assignment consists of the following graded components turned in to Blackboard:

- **Writing process**
  - Team Contract (2%)
  - Summarized Bibliography (4%)
  - Research Proposal Outline with pilot study and preliminary data (5%)
  - Application to Research Conference (2%)
  - Final Research Proposal (10%)
  - Draft Presentations (2%)

- **Final Presentations (15%)**
  - Classroom
  - First Year Research Conference (if selected by conference committee)
  - Includes self and peer evaluations

*This integrated assignment combines skills learned in all of your learning community courses and will count for a grade in each learning community course. See each course syllabus for the point value in each course.

**Important Dates**

- **Monday Jan 14-** First Day of Classes- Begin monitoring your wellness in all eight dimensions throughout the semester to use in final reflective portfolio.
- **Friday, Jan 25-** Blackboard Profile Created or updated by 11pm
- **Friday, Feb 1-** Research Team Contract due on Blackboard by 11pm
- **Monday/Tuesday Feb 20/21-** Bring a printed CV to class for a workshop (proposed date subject to change).
- **Sunday, Feb 24 Annotated Bibliography Due by 11pm. Present in Dr. Mc’s office next class time.**
• Friday Mar 1- Reflective Assignment 1- CV and Letter of Application
• Sunday, Mar 3- Research proposal outline with pilot study and preliminary data due by 11pm. Present during next class time.
• Mar 11-15- Spring Break! Have fun. Be safe!
• Friday, Mar 22- Application to Research Conference Organizers Due by Noon (all teams should apply) and a copy due on Blackboard by 11pm (required for a grade).
• Sunday, Mar 24- Final Research Proposal due by 11pm. Present next class.
• Sunday, April 7- Draft Presentations Due by 11pm. Present next class.
• Wednesday & Thursday, April 17/18 – Final Presentation. Your research team will sign up for a presentation time on one of these days. Upload a copy of your final PowerPoint at the time of presentation to BB.
• Thursday, April 25- First Year Research Conference- If your proposal is accepted you will present it again on this day. If your proposal is not accepted you will attend the conference as an audience member. M/W classes do not meet Wed April 24, but attend conference on Thursday instead.
• Friday, April 26- Final Reflective Assignment- End of Semester Reflection due by 11pm. Bonus points for turning this in before 4/21. Must write bonus points on the title page under your name.
• Tuesday, April 30- End of year Celebration at University Beach! Roast hot dogs, make s’mores and chill! You earned it! Save the date more details to follow

I require few assignments, so note that if you fail to turn in any assignment you drop one to two full letter grades!

Expectations

Conduct yourself as a professional college student and aspiring science professional at all times.
  o My class is a safe place for all. Avoid derogatory comments toward any individual or group.
  o Have an open mind.
  o Your participation is appreciated and expected, but make sure that you have the floor before speaking! Only one person should speak at a time during discussions.
  o Acknowledge the previous speaker before offering a comment or rebuttal.
  o Silence all electronic devices during a meeting.
  o Use portable devices maturely to add to the discussion, but do not allow them to distract you.
  o Absolutely do not check e-mail, text messages, play games, surf the web off-topic, or send or receive non-emergency communications of any kind via any electronic device or social media application unless it is part of the class discussion.

Electronic Communication Policy

The best way to contact me is email. I am available electronically Monday through Friday 8-5 pm when I am not in class or other meetings. I strive to respond as soon as possible during business hours. I may respond at other times, but please don’t expect me to always be available immediately. Please tell me what class you are in for a faster response. I am available to chat via Blackboard or for phone calls during office hours, but students physically in my office take precedence. I do not accept friend requests on Facebook or other social networking sites while you are taking classes from me but feel free to friend me later. 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, even if you are using a handheld device.

Starfish
Starfish is a software communication program used to connect you to your “Success Network” of instructors, advisors, and other academic support programs on campus. If you receive an email from starfish@tamucc.edu, this means I have raised a Starfish “communication” item useful for connecting you to campus resources and course progress guidance. Starfish “communication” items include:

• Flags: Early Alerts regarding Course Effort/Progress
- Kudos: Commendation for Course Effort/Progress
- Referrals: Recommended utilization of services: tutoring, mentoring, coaching, advising, etc.
- To-dos: Assigned tasks, such as “Meet with me”

Acting on these messages in a timely manner is vital to your success as a student at TAMUCC.

**Academic Honesty**
Islanders 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, forgery, fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism. Students are expected to read and follow the University Code of Conduct. They are expected to conduct themselves according to the Islander Pledge. It is the student’s responsibility to uphold these standards by reporting any dishonest behavior in themselves or others. While collaboration and teamwork are often encouraged, a student must know when an assignment requires individual effort or is collaborative. If any doubt exists, ask the instructor. As an Islander Alumnus I must uphold the reputation of this institution.

**Students with Disabilities and Veterans:**
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 contact the Disability Services Office at (361) 825-5816 or visit CCH 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.

**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 and assign the student a faculty mentor. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Center for Instruction, Room 350, (361) 825-5777.

**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. See official university calendar for 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 Director of University Core Curriculum Programs. For complete details, please visit: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures. For further assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the First-Year Seminar Coordinator.

I am thrilled that you chose Texas A&M University- Corpus Christi and Science & Engineering Learning Communities. Go Islanders!