CONTEMPORARY SCIENTIFIC READINGS: BIMS 4111
Department of Life Sciences
Fall 2019

A. COURSE INFORMATION
Course number/section: BIMS 411.001
Class meeting time: W: 4:20 pm – 5:10 pm
Class location: CS 103
Course Websites: bb9.tamucc.edu

B. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
Instructor: Xavier F. Gonzales, PhD, MSPH
Office location: Tidal Hall 235
Office hours: T: 10:00 am-12:30pm & R: 3:30pm-6:00pm
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
Students read one non-fiction book per month addressing some aspect of medicine, science or history (four books per semester), then meet once per month to discuss, analyze and defend their perceptions about the book.

Extended Course Description
Both graduate school and professional schools require that students take exams that consist of analytical reasoning. This course will provide students with opportunities to read and critique literature relatable to the health professions. Further, review of non-fiction books that cover health related topics provide students with a unique perspective on dealing with challenges to be faced as a health professional.

D. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S), READINGS AND SUPPLIES
Students required to purchase books that will be covered.
Book 1: So Human an Animal by Rene Dubos
Book 2: Deadly Choices by Paul A. Offit
Book 3: War Against the Weak by Edwin Black

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. Critically assess non-fiction literature associated to health topics
2. Develop reading skills that will assist in professional school assessment exams
3. Develop communication skills that reflect upon health-related topics

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>Participation (online &amp; face)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance (face)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary (Individual)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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</tbody>
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Grading scale: A>90%  B=80-89.9%  C=70-79.9%  D=60-69%  F<60%

Nature of Assignments:
To be successful in this course you will be required to be proactive about reading the assigned book. We do not meet in class every week.

Team Learning: We will use a team learning approach in this class. Groups will be established at the start of the course. Research examining team learning assignments show that the group score is HIGHER than individual scores and that students understand concepts much better as a result of discussing questions in groups. Sometimes each group member will submit answers individually and sometimes groups will submit group consensus answers to questions. We will use the team learning approach on in-class assignments.

TEAMS: Groups of Five. Each TEAM will consist of five roles:

Manager: Manages the group by helping to ensure that the group stays on task, is focused, and that there is room for everyone in the conversation. Sets GOALS for the team during each assignment. Evaluates each goal to determine if they are being met in a timely fashion. Reports accomplishments and challenges to the instructor through
Blackboard. (Reports goals: 5 goals/online submission)

Recorder: Keeps a record of each members role that they play in the group during the assignment. The recorder also records critical points from the small group’s discussion along with findings or answers.

Spokesperson or Presenter: Presents the group’s ideas to the rest of the class. The Spokesperson should rely on the recorder’s notes to guide their report.

Reflector or Strategy Analyst: Observes team dynamics and guides the consensus-building process (helps group members come to a common conclusion). Encourages group members to continue to think through their approaches and ideas. Lays out the plan for developing presentations.

Questioner: Pushes back when the team comes to consensus too quickly, without considering a number of options or points of view. The questioner makes sure that the group hears varied points of view, and that the group is not avoiding potentially rich areas of disagreement. Checks over work in problem solving contexts before the group members finalize their answers.

Each TEAM member will be required to be in each of these roles throughout the semester.

Class Participation: Attendance and class participation are mandatory. Participation will be evaluated on the following four criteria

- Asking questions regarding the literature
- Answering questions regarding the literature
- Making comments regarding the literature

Attendance: We do not meet in class every week. Therefore, it is imperative that you do not miss on the days that we will be meeting to discuss the books that have been assigned. Course consist of meetings held each month. See schedule to determine in-class meeting dates.

Summary of Books: At the end of the semester, individual students will be responsible for turning in a 1 page summary (single spaced; 12 font; Times New Roman, 1in margins) that summarizes each of the books that were read throughout the semester and contains a personal reflection. **Summaries will be submitted through Turnitin (Blackboard).**
### H. COURSE CONTENT/SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08/28</td>
<td>Course Introduction and Assignment of Book 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/04</td>
<td>Read Book 1: (through pg 62) Team Manager Comment on Blackboard Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/11</td>
<td>Read Book 1: (through pg 116) Team Manager Comment on Blackboard Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/18</td>
<td>Read Book 1: (through chp 180) Team Manager Comment on Blackboard Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/25</td>
<td>In-Class Discussion on completed Book 1 &amp; Assignment of Book 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/02</td>
<td>Read Book 2 (through pg. 56): Team Manager Comment on Blackboard Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/09</td>
<td>Read Book 2: (through pg. 126) Team Manager Comment on Blackboard Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/16</td>
<td>Read Book 2: (through pg. 170) Team Manager Comment on Blackboard Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/23</td>
<td>In-Class Discussion on completed Book 2 &amp; Assignment of Book 3</td>
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<td>10/30</td>
<td>Read Book 3: (through pg. 86) Team Manager Comment on Blackboard Discussion</td>
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<td>11/06</td>
<td>Read Book 3: (through pg. 165) Team Manager Comment on Blackboard Discussion</td>
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<td>11/13</td>
<td>Read Book 3: (through pg. 246) Team Manager Comment on Blackboard Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/20</td>
<td>Read Book 3: (through pg. 318) Team Manager Comment on Blackboard Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/27</td>
<td>Read Book 3: (through pg. 384) Team Manager Comment on Blackboard Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/04</td>
<td>In-Class Discussion on completed Book 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finals Week</td>
<td>Final: In-Class Reflections on all Books read throughout Semester</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.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, and the College of Science and Engineering Grade Appeals webpage at 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.

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.