COURSE SYLLABUS
First Year Learning Community Seminar, Fall 2019
Biology & Chemistry Learning Communities
Life-long Learning Via the Eight Dimensions of Wellness

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Courses:

FIRST-YEAR LEARNING COMMUNITY SEMINAR I - 12739- UCCP 1101- 816
Meets: 9:00 – 9:50 M/W CS 112 COMM Linked with A. Garza

FIRST-YEAR LEARNING COMMUNITY SEMINAR I - 12738- UCCP 1101- 815
Meets: 10:00 – 10:50 M/W CS 112 COMM Linked with A. Garza

FIRST-YEAR LEARNING COMMUNITY SEMINAR I - 12740- UCCP 1101- 817
Meets: 1:00 – 1:50 M/W CS 112 COMM Linked with A. Garza

FIRST-YEAR LEARNING COMMUNITY SEMINAR I - 12741- UCCP 1101 - 818
Meets: 9:00 – 9:50 T/R CS 112 FS

FIRST-YEAR LEARNING COMMUNITY SEMINAR I - 12742- UCCP 1101 - 819
Meets: 10:00 – 10:50 T/R CS 112 FS

FIRST-YEAR LEARNING COMMUNITY SEMINAR I - 12743- UCCP 1101 - 820
Meets: 11:00 – 11:50 T/R CS 112 FS

Course Description

Learn what it means to be a student and member of the Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi community in the two-semester sequence of First-Year Seminar (FYS). FYS explores different facets of college knowledge for academic and social success. As the integrative engine of a learning community, FYS engages students in a collaborative learning experience. By attending learning community courses with students, FYS faculty facilitate meaningful connections between linked courses. FYS students gain confidence in their individual skills and develop abilities for use in the academic community and beyond. UCCP 1102 emphasizes student success after the first-year.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Synthesize connections between learning community courses by engaging in integrative experiences and assignments.
- Evaluate learning processes in learning community courses through self-reflection.
- Demonstrate academic development from learning community participation by completing integrative assignments and presenting in a public forum.
- Locate and utilize campus resources connected to learning community courses and university life.

Course Goals and Objectives

- Integrative Learning
- Learning to Learn
- Academic Development
- Higher Education Navigation

Science Learning Community Specific Learning Outcomes

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

You are not required to buy a textbook for seminar. Learning Community 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 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 (not just smart phone) is required.

Theme- Life-long Learning Via the Eight Dimensions of Wellness
Learning Community Seminar is designed to help you succeed as a student and beyond the university in your science career throughout life. We will be exploring “Life-long Learning Via the Eight Dimensions of Wellness” theme this semester through personal exploration and discussion. You will get out of it what you put in. Luckily, we all want to live a long, healthy successful life, so I expect this will be a lively and thoughtful discussion.

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. Be advised that a few students 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 professional skills for BIMS or BIOL majors. See catalog to determine if you qualify. If you are PSA (you know if you are) student this class is particularly vital to you whether you stay here or decide to move on.

  - 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. 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 situation and request accommodation from your professors, who may or may not give you additional accommodations. See student handbook and university catalog FMI about absences. College is very different from high school.

- **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 poor behavior can also affect your participation score.

- **Reflective Assignments:** 40%- Two reflective portfolio assignments will comprise 40% of your course grade. Consider these assignments to be like your “exams” and the Integrated Experience discussed below to be like your final exam. The reflective assignments are designed to further develop your metacognitive abilities and self-awareness for life-long learning. Metacognition basically means thinking about your own thinking. The more you reflect on your own experiences and make positive steps to improve, the better you will do. The assignments are as follows. More information will be given in class. **Immediately begin**
collecting digital evidence of how you are applying the eight dimensions of wellness to be a better scholar and science professional.

- Midterm Reflection- Wellness Challenge Mid-Semester Portfolio- This semester, I challenge you to be the best university student and aspiring scientist you can be. In this assignment you will use writing to prove, with tangible evidence and a persuasive reflection, that you are making real improvements toward your goal of science success. You will choose three or more of the eight dimensions of wellness that you would like to improve on this semester. We will learn more about the eight dimensions of wellness success paradigm in class, but for now they are intellectual, physical, social, occupational, spiritual, emotional, financial, and environmental. For this assignment you are required to explore the intellectual wellness dimension and two or more of the other dimensions of your choice. You will collect tangible proof of how you have improved in each wellness dimension and reflect on how this has made you more successful as a science major and life-long learner. - 20%

- End of Semester Reflection- Wellness Challenge End of Semester Portfolio- This is a final report on your wellness. In this assignment you will use writing to prove with tangible evidence and a persuasive reflection that you made real improvements toward your goal of success as a life-long science learner. In this portfolio you are required to emphasize the occupational wellness dimension as well as others you are working on. You must not only reflect on your journey and improvements so far but describe concrete plans for further success next semester and throughout life. - 20%

- Learning Community Integrated Experience*- Scientific Presentation- 30%

First year seminar I is a true academic seminar class, where in conjunction with your learning community composition or communication class (if you have one) you will work as a team with classmates to become subject matter experts on a current topic of science, in an area of mutual interest related to the eight dimensions of wellness theme. Through collaborative library inquiry, a writing sequence designed for science students, and regular discussions in seminar, you will learn to find science literature, synthesize it, and ultimately produce and present a scientific poster presentation to other freshmen at the first-year symposium. This is a shared tetrad interdisciplinary assignment that will sharpen your inquiry, writing, communication, discussion, presentation, biology, chemistry, and other interdisciplinary skills in a personally valuable context.

The assignment consists of the following graded components:

- Writing Process:
  - Team contract/Teamwork (2%)
  - Summarized Bibliography (4%)
  - Draft presentations (4%)

- Final Presentations (20%)*
  - In class and at First-Year Symposium

*Final presentation grade for the assignment will be included as a significant part of your final grade for all Learning Community classes (see each instructor syllabus for details). By the end of the first year, students will have the skills and confidence needed to seek out, understand, synthesize and communicate complex information clearly in a professional setting. You will present your topic at First-Year Symposium.

Important Dates

- Friday, Sept 6- Syllabus Quiz due. Read the syllabus and answer a few questions. Blackboard Profile Created by 11pm, Come up with at least one possible class name (PG-13, not derogatory toward anyone).
- Friday, Sept 13- Team Contract due on Blackboard by 11pm.
- Wed or Thur Sept 18 or 19- Team Reflective Assignment presentation in class. Interactively “teach” classmates about one of the 8 dimensions of wellness and how it can make you a better university science student.
- Friday, Oct 11- Individual Midterm Reflective Assignment - Wellness Challenge Portfolio due on Blackboard by 11pm.
- Monday, Oct 14 or Tuesday Oct 15- Team Annotated Bibliography due 1 hour before class. You will meet to review it in my office. Time TBA.
- Friday, Nov 8- Last day to drop a class. Visit me if you are thinking about dropping a class.
- Monday, Nov 11/Tuesday Nov 12- Completed draft of Poster in PowerPoint Format due to blackboard one hour before class. Present these drafts in class for peer critique.
- Tue-Wed, Nov 19/20 – Final Team Poster Presentation. Your team will sign up for a presentation time on one of these days.
- Thursday, Nov 22- Thanksgiving- Complete Final Presentations prior to holiday!
- Thur-Fri, Nov 21 & 22- First-Year Symposium Poster Presentation to learning community.
- Tuesday, Nov 26- Final Wellness Portfolio due before 11pm. Turn this in early any time before midnight on Nov 22 and receive 5 bonus points. Must type “Bonus Points” under your name on the title page to get credit.
- Mon/Tue 12/2, 12/3- End of semester wrap party! We will have a crazy holiday sweater contest, white elephant gift exchange, holiday food, etc. Bring your festive attire, food drinks and a fun inexpensive wrapped holiday gift. Prize for best sweater. House cup teamwork awards will be presented.

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

If you drop other learning community classes during the semester, you must still complete all assignments, or contact me via email and in person for alternate assignments.

If you find yourself struggling this semester, please don't be embarrassed and disappear. See me in office hours, call me, or email me. I can help you brainstorm a success strategy and put you in touch with the right resources.

Expectations

Conduct yourself as a professional college student and aspiring science professional at all times.
- My class is a safe place for all. Avoid derogatory comments toward any individual or group.
- Have an open mind.
- 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.
- Acknowledge the previous speaker before offering a comment or rebuttal.
- Silence all electronic devices during a meeting.
- Use portable devices maturely to add to the discussion, but do not allow them to distract you.
- 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. Emails should have a greeting such as “Dear Dr. X,” and of course your own signature so the recipient knows whom it is from.

**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 possessions 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.

**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 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. You must drop a class prior to the “last day to drop date” to receive an automatic grade of “W” this term. See official university calendar for the official drop date.

**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 First-Year Learning Communities Coordinator. For complete details, please visit: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/index.html](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/index.html).

**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 at (361) 825-5816.

**I-CARE**
TAMU-CC is committed to the safety and wellbeing of our campus community. If you need support or have a concern about the behavior or safety of a fellow student, you may share your concerns with I-CARE by submitting an online referral to [icare.tamucc.edu](icare.tamucc.edu). Your report will help us to provide outreach, support, and early intervention.

**Student Mental Health & Well-Being Statement**
As a student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily life. If you or someone you know is experiencing emotional distress or mental health issues, please visit the Counseling Center located in the Driftwood Building or call (361)825-2703. Counselors are available by phone 24/7. Services are free and confidential. For
more information and to access on-line and mobile friendly self-help resources including TAO and At Risk for College Students, visit the Counseling Center website at https://counseling.tamucc.edu.

TAMUCC faculty are fully committed to supporting students and upholding an environment free of sexual violence and gender based discrimination. If a student chooses to confide in faculty or staff regarding issues of sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking, it should be understood that faculty and staff may be obligated to report this information to University Police or the Title IX office. Students can seek confidential assistance from the Counseling Center and/or the Health Center.

I am thrilled that you chose Texas A&M University- Corpus Christi and Science & Engineering Learning Communities. Work hard and you will succeed as thousands before you have. Go Islanders!