Overview

Biology and chemistry learning community seminar is unlike any other. Everyone in the learning community is an aspiring scientist striving for maximum success. Everything we do is specifically designed to increase your academic and professional skills as a scientist so you will be a successful candidate for professional school, graduate school, and other career paths. Science careers are extremely rewarding and therefore challenging and competitive. You cannot expect to achieve success by simply coming to class. If you are serious about exploring how to succeed in your personal and professional goals, you are going to love this learning community!

The learning community theme is

KNOW SCIENCE

I KNOW is a university-wide quality enhancement plan urging students to improve their ability to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information using digital technologies. I KNOW SCIENCE combines the I Know digital literacy initiative with realistic, relevant, open-ended science field-based inquiry.

Wellness Eight Dimensions- You will continue to analyze your personal success strategies via the 8 dimensions of wellness. There will be special emphasis on occupational wellness this semester as you explore how to succeed as a scientist in your specific field of interest.

Courses:
FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR II-22325 - UCCP 1102 – 896- FS M/W 10-10:50 BH 128
FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR II-22326 - UCCP 1102 – 897- FS M/W 11-11:50 BH 128
FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR II-20044 - UCCP 1102 – 892- FS T/R 10-10:50 BH 128
FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR II-21332 - UCCP 1102 – 893- FS T/R 11-11:50 BH 128

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**

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. 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 hardship 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. 100% 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 on your own to come up to speed and see your 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 will be helpful to prove your thesis but not mandatory. There should be a heading for each of the eight dimensions. - 15%

Learning Community Integrated Science Experience (ISE)
All students will complete an integrated science experience. This project has been designed by your learning community professors to increase your marketable skills as a scientist. 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. You will ask questions, find information, apply knowledge, analyze data, evaluate information, make connections, and persuasively share your outcome in hopes of making an “Islander Impact”. The learning community-wide integrated assignment is facilitated primarily through seminar, but all learning community professors can be a resource. Successful completion requires the synthesis of knowledge and skills from all of your courses.

You will work as a team with 3-5 classmates to design and conduct a simulated science field investigation from idea formulation to final presentation. Together, you must decide on a question related to biology or ecology to drive your inquiry. Your task is to choose something interesting either on campus or nearby, develop a question, and safely investigate the topic as a team. Projects may not involve human subjects. You must choose something that is non-hazardous and involves safe unobtrusive observation only. Most projects will involve invertebrates or plants because these are most easily observed and involve few ethical or safety concerns. We are working to gain Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval to observe a few select vertebrate species. If IACUC approval can be obtained you may be allowed to observe approved vertebrates such as birds, reptiles, or mammals. Answering your question is through unobtrusive observation only; you may not interact with or influence your subjects in any way. There should be no manipulations or procedures that will affect the behavior or physiological state of an animal, such as baiting, calling, habitat manipulation, or closer approach to the animals by humans than they would normally experience. After determining a suitable question, you will formulate a hypothesis and design an investigation to gather sufficient data to test your hypothesis. In your investigation, you must use statistics to test a hypothesis. Your work should be realistic 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%)
  - Proposal Outline with pilot study and preliminary data (5%)
  - Application to Conference (2%)
  - Final Proposal (10%)
  - Draft Presentations (2%)

- **Final Presentations (15%)**
  - Classroom
  - First Year 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.

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.
- 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.

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.

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. Friday, April 10 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 First-Year Learning Communities Coordinator. For complete details, please visit: 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. 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 are experiencing emotional distress or mental health issues, please visit the Counseling Center located in the Driftwood Building during walk-in hours or call (361)825-2703. Counselors are available by phone 24/7 to assist students who are in crisis. Services are free and confidential. For access to self-help resources and anonymous mental health screenings, visit the Counseling Center website at https://counseling.tamucc.edu. In an emergency, call 911 or University Police at (361)825-4444.

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. Go Islanders!
Important Dates

- Tuesday Jan 21- First Day of Classes- Begin monitoring your wellness in all eight dimensions throughout the semester to use in final reflective portfolio.
- Friday, Jan 31- Blackboard Profile created or updated by 11pm
- Friday, Feb 7- Team Contract due on Blackboard by 11pm
- Monday/Tuesday Feb 24/25- Annotated Bibliography Due by class time. Present in Dr. Mc’s office during assigned time.
- Monday/Tuesday Feb 26/27- Bring a printed CV to class for a workshop.
- Friday February 28- Reflective Assignment 1- CV and Letter of Application to summer career-building experience Due by 11pm
- Mar 9-13- Spring Break! Have fun. Be safe!
- Wed/Thurs Mar 18/19- Integrated Science Experience proposal outline with pilot study and preliminary data due by class time. Present during class time.
- Friday, Mar 27- Application to First-Year Conference Organizers Due by Noon (all teams must write an application whether applying to conference or not. Copy due on Blackboard by noon (required for a grade).
- Monday/Tuesday Mar 30/31- Final Integrated Science Experience Proposal due by 11pm. Present next class.
- Monday/ Tuesday April 13/14- Draft Presentations due by class time. Present next class.
- Monday/Tuesday April 20/21 – 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.**
- Wednesday/Thursday, April 22/23- First Year Islander 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.
- Friday, May 1- Final Reflective Assignment- End of Semester Reflection due by 11pm. 5 bonus points for turning this in before end of day on 4/24. Must write bonus points on the title page under your name.
- Thursday 5/7- 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 (date tentative).
- May 8-14- Final Exams.