ESCI Selected Topics - Environmental Site Assessments
ESCI-6480.001/101    CRN 55162/55163
Department of Physical & Environmental Sciences
Fall 2020

COURSE SYLLABUS

A. COURSE INFORMATION

Course number/section:    ESCI 6480.001/101
Class meeting time:   Online Webinar Tuesdays 1700-2000
Class location:     TBD
Course Website:  55160.202009:  [F-20] ESCI-4480-001 - Environmental Assessment
https://bb9.tamucc.edu/webapps/blackboard

B. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: H.A. Tony Wood
Instructor Mailing Address: 6300 Ocean Drive, Unit 5850, Corpus Christi, TX 78412
Instructor Office:  6300 Ocean Drive, NRC Suite 1105, Corpus Christi, TX 78412
Office Hours:     By Appointment.  8:00-5:00 M-F
Telephone: (w) 361-825-3335
E-mail:  tony.wood@tamucc.edu

Appointments:  Students should submit a meeting request using Outlook Calendar. The
meeting should not be considered confirmed until it is accepted by the instructor. WebEx,
Facetime, or Zoom meetings are preferred. All face-to-face meetings will meet established
social distancing and face mask requirements. Walk-ins are sometimes accepted at the
discretion of the instructor.

C. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Course Description
This ESCI Special Topics course is designed to prepare the student to develop and conduct
Environmental Site Assessments in accordance with USEPA and ASTM protocols.

Extended Course Description
This course offers an interdisciplinary review of environmental regulations, natural
environmental conditions, industrial and pollution history, and the principles of
environmental risk assessment as applied to the evaluation of specific parcels of real
property.

Laboratory/field sessions will include the actual development of a Phase I Environmental
Site Assessment using the USEPA All Appropriate Inquiry or the equivalent ASTM E1527-
13 Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments processes.
This course initiates the process to become a USEPA designated Environmental Professional (EP) after the practitioner has conducted Environmental Assessments for a period of 5 years.

D. PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES

Prerequisites
None.

Co-requisites
Knowledge of United States environmental regulations is assumed; ESCI 4301 or ESCI 6302 are recommended.

E. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S), READINGS AND SUPPLIES

Required Textbook

Optional Textbook(s) or Other References
ASTM E1527-13 Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments processes.

Supplies
EDR or Banks report on a target site will be provided to the students in .pdf format.

F. 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.

Successful participation and study in this course will enable students to:
1. Understand the regulatory framework for environmental site assessments,
2. Demonstrate how to locate and interpret environmental information pertinent to a specific site,
3. Know the qualifications required to become an Environmental Professional (EP) in accordance with the USEPA definition. Initiate the 5-year calendar for becoming an EP,
4. Develop an ESA for a specific site,
5. Understand the potential liabilities associated with environmental pollution and for EPs performing ESAs.
G. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

- An online WebEx webinar will be presented weekly. Attendance is expected. Students who must miss a class are responsible for watching recorded sessions and video presentations (if available) and for obtaining notes and instructions or assignments from other class members.
- The textbook will be required reading. One or more chapters of the textbook will be assigned and discussed each week of the course. Reading and comprehension of the chapter(s) before each weekly webinar session is expected.
- One or more external websites will be assigned for review each week. These websites should be reviewed and the student should be prepared to discuss them prior to the next class session.
- There will be three take-home essay or PowerPoint assignments. Each will be due during the next class period unless otherwise specified. These assignments will not be accepted after the due date resulting in a zero score for that assignment.
- One examination will be given during the semester (at about mid-term). Students are expected to complete the exam on the scheduled exam date. Students with an excused absence from the professor must make up the exam.
- Students may work with a consulting firm, regulatory agency, realtor, bank, law firm, or industrial/commercial organization on an environmental assessment project identified by the professor. Students without an affiliated sponsoring organization will work on a project site identified by the instructor. Specifics of each project will be negotiated between the student, the instructor, and the supervising organization’s representative.
- Attendance on a one-day field trip to an off-campus location within 25 miles of TAMU-CC is required. Social distancing rules and mask rules will apply. Students will be responsible for their own transportation to the assigned location.
- Each student is required to write an Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) report based on their work with their assigned property during the semester. The report must include a professional quality binding and cover page, tabs, an executive summary, all standard Phase 1 report components, and a list of sources. The ESA report will be due by week 11-12 of the course. Late reports will not be accepted.
- Graduate students will be responsible for reviewing the reports from all class members and producing a final report for delivery to the property owner. Graduate students will present a summary PowerPoint presentation over the final consolidated ESA report and deliver it to the class during the last two weeks of the semester (or during the period scheduled for the final exam).
The course may include guest speakers during the semester representing a variety of expertise and experience in environmental issues. Students will be responsible for material covered by these speakers and it may be included on the exam.

H. MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>% of GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Discussions &amp; Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESA Report</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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I. COURSE CONTENT/SCHEDULE

Week 1
- Overview of textbook
- Introductions & expectations
- Overview of the course and the reasons for environmental assessments
- How ESA Reports should be organized
- The Importance of the Executive Summary
- Read Chapter 1 & 2 for next week
- Review USEPA websites on ESAs & Brownfields for next week

Week 2
- Environmental pollution liabilities
- Standards of practice
- Brownfields
- Historic Overview
- Special focus pollutants and contaminants
- Site selections
- Read Chapter 3 for next week
- Review the USEPA All appropriate Inquiry and ASTM E1527 websites for next week
- Assignment #1: Identify a brownfield or historic site in Texas with contamination from a source more than 60 years old and write a 2-3 page essay about it.

Week 3
• Initiating the ESA
• Information gathering (both ways)
• Mapping
• Title searches
• Read Chapter 4 for next week
• Visit a commercial environmental data search resource for next week
• Assignment # 2: Develop a set of historical maps and images for your ESA site

Week 4
• Assessing the physical setting
• Geologic
• Hydrologic
• Read Chapter 5 for next week

Week 5
• Historic uses of the property & surrounding areas
• Read Chapter 6 for next week

Week 6
• Regulatory agency resources & data
• Read Chapter 7 for next week
• Assignment #3: Prepare a report or a PowerPoint on the Physical Setting of your ESA site

Week 7
• Visual inspections of the property
• Indications of possible environmental issues
• Reviewing surrounding properties
• Prepare for the only course exam next week
• Read Chapter 8 for next week

Week 8
• Conducting ESA interviews
• Exam (This is the only exam in this course)
• Read Chapter 9 for next week
• Assignment # 4: Research & prepare a PowerPoint presentation on a topic from Ch. 9-10

Week 9
• Building materials & special building hazards
• Read Chapter 10 for next week
• Presentations of Ch.9-10 Power Points
• ESA Site Visit (This visit may be +/- 2 weeks depending on the site availability.)

Week 10
• Industrial & Commercial Activities
• Read Chapter 11 & 12 for next week
• Presentations of Ch.9-10 Power Point
• Developing the Phase 1 ESA

Week 11
• Special Resource Issues
• Reasons for Phase 2+ ESAs
• ESA Report Expectations

Week 12
• Environmental Site Assessments consolidation by graduate students

Week 13
• Preparation of a Budget to Conduct an ESA
• Presentation of Graduate ESAs

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.

J. COURSE POLICIES

COVID-19

Face Coverings - (cloth face covering, surgical mask, etc.) must be properly worn in all non-private spaces including classrooms, teaching laboratories, common spaces such as lobbies and hallways, public study spaces, libraries, academic resource and support offices, and outdoor spaces where 6 feet of physical distancing is difficult to reliably maintain. Extra masks will be made available if needed.

Research into this virus and its transmissivity is continuing. Any new Covid related policies developed and officially issued by the University will be strictly adhered to in this course, in meetings with the instructor, and on the course field trip.

Attendance/Tardiness
Attendance in the weekly class webinar is mandatory. Attendance may be accomplished by logging into the course website on Blackboard during each week of the semester. Students are expected to be courteous to others during class discussions and online.

Late Work and Make-up Exams
Because assignments can be completed and submitted online at any time over the course week, extensions will only be granted for extenuating circumstances. Assignments that are delivered late may be accepted for reduced credit until grading has finished. Make up exams must be completed after the classroom exam but within 2 weeks.

**Extra Credit**
The baseline information in this course is of such importance that students are encouraged to gain additional knowledge about the core topics rather than seeking extra credit to mitigate substandard grades.

**Cell Phone Use** – Only permitted for course relevant research and never during exams.

**Laptop Use** - Only permitted for course relevant research and never during exams.

**Participation** - Each student is expected to participate weekly. Participation in the live webinar discussions may be a function of personality type so participation will be evaluated based on live discussions and/or Blackboard Discussion Forum postings. Participation is mandatory and will be a component of the student’s grade.

### K. 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.

- **Covid-19 (University Policy)**
The TAMU-CC policy as of July 31, 2020 may be found at [https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/](https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/). It references [34999.C0.02, Usage of Face Covering to Reduce the Spread of Communicable Disease](https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/) requiring ..., “face coverings must be worn by all individuals (students, faculty, staff, and visitors) while on campus in the following areas:

  (a) Indoor public areas except where otherwise marked, even if the individual is alone. This includes all non-private office or residential spaces (e.g., hallways, lobbies, restrooms, classrooms, teaching laboratories, research laboratories, conference rooms, break rooms, and other community areas).

  (b) Outdoor spaces where adequate physical/social distancing (six (6) feet of physical space) is difficult to reliably maintain. 2.2. Face coverings are required for everyone in research laboratories. 2.2.1. Most face coverings do not provide respiratory protection and must not be substituted for proper respiratory protection that may be required as...
part of certain research duties. Respirators with exhalation valves do not impede the spread of communicable diseases unless they contain an internal filter.

Research into this virus and its transmissivity is continuing. Any new Covid related policies developed and officially issued by the University will be strictly adhered to in this course, in meetings with the instructor, and on the course field trip.

- **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)**
  The grade of W will be assigned to any student officially dropping a course. Please consult with the instructor before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, visit the Office of the University Registrar for the Course Drop Form that must submitted. No student is eligible to receive a W without completing the official drop process by this deadline. 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://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.c0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. 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/

- **Civil Rights Complaints**
  Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is committed to fostering a culture of caring and respect that is free from discrimination, relationship violence and sexual misconduct, and ensuring that all affected students have access to services. For information on reporting Civil Rights complaints, options and support resources (including pregnancy support accommodations) or university policies and procedures, please contact the University Title IX Coordinator, Sam Ramirez (Samuel.ramirez@tamucc.edu) or Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Rosie Ruiz (Rosie.Ruiz@tamucc.edu) x5826, or visit website at Title IX/Sexual Assault/Pregnancy.

- **Limits to Confidentiality**
  Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, are not able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report alleged or suspected civil rights discrimination that is observed by or made known to an employee in the course and scope of their employment. As the instructor, I must report allegations of civil rights discrimination, including sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, or sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator if you share it with me. These reports will trigger contact with you from the Civil Rights/Title IX Compliance office who will inform you of your options and resources regarding the incident that you have shared. If you would like to talk about these incidents in a confidential setting, you are encouraged to make an appointment with counselors in the University Counseling Center.

- **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.

L. 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.

- **Covid-19 (Governor Abbott’s Executive Order)**
  Executive Order GA-28 issued by Gov. Abbott on July 2, 2020 requires:
  “……all Texans to wear a face covering over the nose and mouth in public spaces in counties with 20 or more positive COVID-19 cases."

- **General Disclaimer**
  The instructor reserves the right to modify the information, schedule, assignments, deadlines, and course policies in this syllabus if and when necessary. The instructor will announce such changes in a timely manner online on the course Blackboard website.