### Syllabus Fall 2020

**Course title (number)** Environmental Sciences Colloquium (EVS 6920)

**Course delivery method** Online live lecture/discussion

# Term/credit hours

Fall 2020, 1 credit

Instructor

Dr. Dale Gawlik, Sanson Science 220, dgawlik@fau.edu, 297-3333

### Office hours

Fridays 12:00-2:00 and other times by appointment. Because an occasional conflict with regular office hours could occur, students may wish to make an appointment.

### **Class period**

Fridays 2:00-3:10

### **Online resource**

Canvas for EVS 6920, Environmental Sciences Colloquium. Students should enable all notifications in Canvas and check the site weekly to keep current with any changes in the course and to download assigned papers.

### **Required text**

None. There will be assigned readings posted in Canvas.

### Prerequisites

Graduate status

### **Course objectives**

Students that have completed the course will possess:

- 1. knowledge of current research and breadth of disciplines in environmental science.
- 2. practical skills in written and oral communication through student presentations, guest presentations, class discussions, and writing assignments.

### **Course description**

Students attend colloquia presented by faculty, professional environmental scientists and graduate students. Students gain experience in written and oral communication through class discussions, writing assignments and presentations. Assigned readings and guest speakers will help students expand their knowledge of the disciplines in Environmental Science. Discussions

of assigned readings on how to communicate effectively, student presentations and written critiques of presentations will provide students with practical experience in written and oral communication.

Instructor-led discussions of papers on effective communication: The class will start off with an instructor-led discussion of a paper on how to give an effective presentation (Langin 2017). The guidelines in this paper will serve as benchmark against which presentations will be critiqued. In addition, we would be negligent if we did not explore how COVID-19 might have changed scientific communication. The pandemic has put us in what might become a transformative period on how scientists communicate at conferences. Traditionally, large conferences take multiple years and many dollars to plan and execute. However, the sudden onset of the pandemic forced scientific societies to quickly shift to virtual conferences. The outcome of that shift is discussed in Kalia et al. (2020), which will be the second assigned reading and instructor-led discussion. Students who understand how conferences and scientific communication may be changing will be well-prepared to thrive in a post-pandemic environmental science field.

*Presentations*: Each student will be required to give one 15-min oral presentation on thesis research, internship, or a related topic of their choice in consultation with the instructor. After each presentation, including those of guest speakers, students will use the discussion board to critique the presentation based on the best practices outlined in the assigned papers on effective communication. Students will also give a second oral presentation on the same topic as their first, but in the format of a 3-slide 3-min lightning talk. The class and presentations will be recorded so if a student misses a class period the material can be reviewed at a later time.

*Class participation and discussion board*: The success and worthiness of this type of course largely depends on the students enrolled in it. Each student brings to class valuable experiences and a unique perspective on environmental science. Thoughtfulness and engagement in the topics each class period are both appreciated and accounted for in the final grade. In addition to live discussions in class, each student will use the Discussion Board to critique each presentation, including those of guest speakers, based on the guidelines in the assigned paper on effective communication. Critiques should be collegial and written in the spirit of how to improve the presentation if the presenter was to give the talk again.

*Final exam discussion*: The final exam will be an oral discussion and synthesis of the course. Each student is responsible for reviewing the assigned readings and their notes on discussions and presentations to identify emergent concepts from the presentations and how scientific communication might be improved in the future.

#### **Time requirements**

Students should expect to spend an average of about two hours per week on this course outside of class. Students should allocate time for preparing their presentations, reading assigned papers, and critiquing the presentations of class mates.

### Course topical outline

The syllabus contains only a general course schedule. Students should monitor Canvas for specifics on the paper and person leading discussions on a given date.

Date	Course activity
28 Aug	Introduction, syllabus review, assign dates for presentations, assign reading (Langin
	2017, Tell me a story! A plea for more compelling conference presentations)
4 Sep	Instructor-led discussion of Langin (2017)
11 Sep	Guest Speaker Dr. Andrew Cox, FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute; assigned
	reading (Kalia et al. 2020, Adapting scientific conferences to the realities imposed by
	COVID-19)
18 Sep	Instructor-led discussion of Kalia et al. (2020)
25 Sep	Student-led presentations
2 Oct	Guest speaker, Dr. Michelle Petersen, Post-doctoral Associate and Research
	Coordinator, FAU
9 Oct	Student-led presentations
16 Oct	Student-led presentations
23 Oct	Student-led presentations
30 Oct	Student-led presentations
6 Nov	Guest speaker Dr. Stephanie Romanach, US Geological Survey
13 Nov	Student-led presentations
20 Nov	Guest speaker TBD
4 Dec	Student-led presentations
11 Dec	Final exam discussion
(1:15-3:45)	

## Course evaluation method and grading scale

Grades will be based on a student's performance on five course components, with each component accounting for a percentage of the grade as in the table below. The grading system for this course is S (satisfactory)/U (unsatisfactory). A student who actively participates in class and completes all of the assignments at or above a satisfactory level will receive an S.

Course component	% of Grade
Discussions of assigned readings	10
Written critiques and class participation	20
Presentation 15-min	30
Presentation lightning talk	30
Final exam discussion	10
Total	100

### FAU Attendance Policy Statement

Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance. Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University-approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student's responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student's final course grade as a direct result of such absence.

#### FAU Code of Academic Integrity

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see University Regulation 4.001. http://www.fau.edu/ctl/4.001 Code of Academic Integrity.pdf

#### FAU Disability Policy

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU's campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at www.fau.edu/sas/.

#### FAU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center

Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to http://www.fau,edu/counseling/.