

Course Information

NATS1101.005

Fall 2025

Meeting times, days, and locations:

Wed 10:00AM – 10:50AM **SCI 2.215**

Fri 10:00AM – 10:50AM **Helix Hall 2.002**

Instructor Contact Information:

Name: Erica Kenney

Office: CB 1.101 M

Email: erica.kenney@utdallas.edu

Office Hours available by appointment

First Year Leaders: Marianne Dizon & Sid Patwardhan

FYL contact info provided in class

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce incoming freshmen to the intellectual and cultural environment of the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (NS&M). Students will learn about plans of study and career paths for majors in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Geosciences and Science and Mathematics Education. Basic study, problem-solving and other skills needed to succeed as an NS&M major will be covered. An overview of the connections within the disciplines of Natural Sciences and Mathematics will be presented, as well as their relationship to engineering, medicine and health, and other fields. Required for all first time in college freshmen in NS&M.

Student Learning Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Students will be coached through the transition from a successful high school student into a successful, responsible undergraduate university student and post baccalaureate professional.

Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. Begin the development of critical thinking skills needed in the scientific process.
2. Begin the development of communication skills required to explain scientific concepts.
3. Begin the development of social and personal responsibility and ethics required in society and the world at large.
4. Begin to proactively engage in the university and community.
5. Begin to develop plans for short and long-term goals.

Required Textbooks and Materials –

None

Support materials, assignments, links, and other resources will be posted in eLearning

Academic Calendar:

Week #	Week Dates	Wed: Faculty topic	Fri: FYL topic
1	Aug 27-Aug 29	Introduction	Introduction
2	Sep 3-Sep 5	Student Success Center	Campus scavenger hunt
3	Sep 10-Sep 12	Time Management	Campus Resources
4	Sep 17-Sep 19	Goal Setting	Communication
5	Sep 24-Sep 26	Academic Advising and related campus resources	Professional Development
6	Oct 1-Oct 3	Preparing for Spring Registration	Mental Health
7	Oct 8-Oct 10	Midterm Check-in – More resources & opportunities	Collaboration
8	Oct 15-Oct 17	Student Counseling Center	Money Management
9	Oct 22-Oct 24	Career Readiness Part 1	Teamwork
10	Oct 29- Oct 31	Career Readiness Part 2	Academic Advising/Degree Planning
11	Nov 5-Nov 7	Communication & Self Advocacy	Organization
12	Nov 12-Nov 14	Library Resources	Conflict Management
13	Nov 19-Nov 21	Problem Solving Start	Final Reflections
14	Nov 26-Nov 28	FALL BREAK	FALL BREAK

15	Dec 3 – Dec 5	Practical Problem Solving Application	Practical Problem Solving Application

GRADING POLICY:

Attendance & Participation	35 points
Assignments	40 points
Problem-Solving Project	25 points
Total	100 points

Grade ranges will be as follows: A+ 97-100; A 93-96; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 63-66; D- 60-62; F 59 and below.

LATE WORK POLICY: Late work is accepted up to 2 weeks past the original deadline. Grades for late assignments will be reduced by 50%

Note: Grading policy and assignments may be subject to change.

Course and Instructor Policies:

Attendance: This class is being taught in the traditional (in-person) modality. Therefore, traditional class attendance is applicable. The class participation will include, but is not limited by, involvement in classroom discussions, participating in assignments, emails showing communication with campus resources, and providing reflective and accurate assignments based on the topics addressed in the classroom. Excused absences will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will require advance communication for consideration of approval. If you have an emergency or other legitimate reason to miss class, please communicate with me or your First Year Leaders as soon as possible.

Class Participation: Regular class participation is expected and required. Students who fail to participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. A significantly large portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class. It also includes engaging in interpersonal, small and large groups, or other interactive activities during class requiring your attendance. Class participation is documented in eLearning by the instructor. Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to University requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Faculty/FYL Topics: There are several topics that students can and should learn in their first semester of the first year of their collegiate experience. Studies show that courses focused towards addressing the transitional and developmental growth of students during this time can foster increased satisfaction and improvement in grades, retention and integration into the campus experience.* For this class, the topics are intentional and foundational. Some of the topics are covered by the instructor- a member of the teaching faculty who have experience with the learning and development of college students. Some of the topics are addressed and facilitate by First Year Leaders (FYLs). The FYL is an exceptional student

leader who has chosen to focus his or her creativity and intellect in designing, implementing, evaluating and encouraging first-year students. There is no hierarchy for the presentations - or the presenters. Students are expected to treat each presenter - whether an internal part of the teaching team or guest speaker - with dignity, respect, enthusiasm, and civility.

*Padgett, R. D., Keup, J. R., & Pascarella, E. T. (2013). The impact of first-year seminars on college students' life-long learning orientations. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 50(2), 133–151. doi:10.1515/jsarp-2013-0011 Available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1515/jsarp-2013-0011>

Class Materials: Class materials that will be made available in eLearning to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. These materials may be downloaded during the course, however, these materials are for registered students' use only. Classroom materials may not be reproduced or shared with those not in class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved AccessAbility Resource Center accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Check both eLearning and your UTD email regularly to ensure that you don't miss any important updates, announcements, or assignments.

Assignments: Assignments in this course will be essential to a student's course grade and are designed to apply the material covered in class with the goal of supporting overall learning outcomes for this course – and support a successful transition to college life at UTD. Expectations for assignments will be posted to eLearning, listed in the class presentation, and clarified verbally during lecture. Students are expected to seek additional guidance from the faculty or FYL if additional information and guidance is needed. An assignment is on-time and fully graded if it is received by the due date. Late assignments will result in point deductions, or no grade if later than 2 weeks. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with the teaching team if there was an obstacle in providing the assignment by the proper date. The final decision about the grade for the assignment will be made by the faculty member - in consultation with the teaching team for the course.

For details on Late Assignments: See Late Work Policy above.

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Written assignments must be a student's original work without the use of AI writing tools (e.g. Chat GPT). Turning in work identical to that of another student will not be tolerated. If academic dishonesty is discovered, a student will receive a zero on the assignment. Expectations for collaborative or team-based assignments will be communicated clearly when assignments are introduced in class.

Problem-Solving Scenario Project:

Students will work with their peers to apply the content of this course to a realistic problem-solving scenario describing difficult circumstances possible to face while in college. Students will be organized into small teams and assigned a scenario to implement solutions to.

Your grade will be based on individual contribution. Students who do not put in the work cannot benefit from a “group grade.” Students are expected to communicate and work together respectfully as a team.

Deadlines and other details for this project will be provided later in the course

Exams: There are no formal exams for this course.

eLearning Course Access and Navigation: 1) This course can be accessed using your UT Dallas NetID account on the eLearning website. 2) Please see the course access and navigation section of the Getting Started with eLearning webpage for more information. 3) To become familiar with the eLearning tool, please see the Student eLearning Tutorials webpage. 4) UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The eLearning Support Center includes a toll-free telephone number for immediate assistance (1-866-588-3192), email request service, and an online chat service.

Student Resources: Students have access to resources including the McDermott Library, NS&M Academic Advising, The AccessAbility Resource Center, and many others. Students may find a list of all resources in the undergraduate catalog: <https://catalog.utdallas.edu/2024/undergraduate/resources/index>

Comet Creed: This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.