

## Working Course Syllabus

### NATS 1101: Natural Sciences and Mathematics Freshman Seminar

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#### **Course Information:**

**Section:** NATS 1101.014

**Semester:** Fall 2025

**Meeting:** Tues/Thurs 11:00-11:50am

**Room:** Tues - Helix Hall 2.002, Thurs – SCI 2.215

**Instructional Mode:** in person with online content

**Course Platform:** classroom and eLearning

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#### **Instructor Contact Information:**

**Name:** Meredith Prior

**Office:** Classroom Building (CB - not CB1), Suite 1.101, Office G (beside PS3)

**Phone:** (979) 883-2500

**Email:** [Meredith.Prior@utdallas.edu](mailto:Meredith.Prior@utdallas.edu)

**Office Hours:** By appointment or on designated drop-in days. Schedule an appointment here: <https://nsm.utdallas.edu/advising/>.

**Other Information:** Messages sent in eLearning may be overlooked. I recommend emailing me directly.

#### **First Year Leaders:**

**Name:** Raj Mitra

**Email:** [Raj.Mitra@UTDallas.edu](mailto:Raj.Mitra@UTDallas.edu)

**Major/Goal:** Neuroscience & Psychology – Masters > PhD

**Name:** Nathalia Ortega

**Email:** [Nathalia.Ortega@UTDallas.edu](mailto:Nathalia.Ortega@UTDallas.edu)

**Major/Goal:** Biology – Pre-med

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#### **General Course Information:**

**Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions:** none

**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. (1-1) Y

**Required Textbooks and Materials:** none

**Suggested Texts, Readings, & Materials:** Notes, supporting material, other resources will be posted on eLearning or/and MS Teams.

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### **Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes:**

The students will begin the transition from a successful high school student to a successful university student and a responsible citizen.

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.
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### **Course & Instructor Policies:**

#### **Class Attendance:**

Regular and punctual class attendance is expected. Students who fail to attend class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. A portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your attendance in this class. Class attendance is documented by faculty and first year leaders.

All students shall receive 3 excused absences, no questions asked. From the 4<sup>th</sup> absence onward, the attendance grade will be affected. University excused absences only include absence due to participation in a University-sanctioned event (i.e. athletic competition, etc.). These should be scheduled far enough in advance to provide the instructor with official documentation at the beginning of the semester or as soon as the student learns about the planned absence. Non-University excused absences are at the discretion of the instructor and will require prompt notification and documentation (ex: funeral, accident, etc.).

An excused absence does not excuse the student from obtaining the information or resources given to class while the student was absent, nor does it excuse the student from meeting course deadlines unless prior arrangements have been made.

#### **Class Participation:**

Regular class participation is expected regardless of course modality. Students who fail to participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. A portion of the grade for

this course is directly tied to your participation in this class. It also includes engaging in group or other activities during class that solicit your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures (and/or labs). Class participation is documented by faculty. 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](#).

**Class Materials:**

The Instructor may provide class materials that will be made available 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 Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

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**Academic Calendar:**

*Note: Topics, participation activities, and schedule will change according to the availability of speakers, resources, and personnel. This is a rough draft.*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Week of</b>	<b>Faculty Topics</b>	<b>FYL Topics</b>
1	Tues. 8/26/25		FYL Welcome & Intro
	Thurs. 8/28/25	NSM Welcome, Syllabus <b>(Acknowledgement, Survey)</b>	
2	Tues. 9/2/25		Knowing Campus, Getting Involved
	Thurs. 9/4/25	Communication & Self-Advocacy <b>(Quiz, Email Assignment)</b> Budgeting Time <b>(24/7 Plan)</b>	
3	Tues. 9/9/25		HS vs. College, Succeeding in New Environment
	Thurs. 9/11/25	Student Success Center Tour, Library Tour & Speaker <b>(Quiz, Annotated Bibliography)</b>	

4	Tues. 9/16/25		Time Management, Taking Care of Your Mental & Physical Health
	Thurs. 9/18/25	Student Resources <b>(Quiz, Schedule a Service)</b> Speaker TBD??	
5	Tues. 9/23/25		Topic TBD
	Thurs. 9/25/25	UTD Offices & Policies, Voter Registration <b>(Quiz)</b>	
6	Tues. 9/30/25		Topic TBD
	Thurs. 10/2/25	Academic Advising <b>(Quiz, Proof of Advising)</b>	
7	Tues. 10/7/25		Topic TBD
	Thurs. 10/9/25	Reading Academic Documents	
8	Tues. 10/14/25		Topic TBD
	Thurs. 10/16/25	Preparing for Next Semester <b>(Schedule Plan)</b>	
9	Tues. 10/21/25		Topic TBD
	Thurs. 10/23/25	Group Races: Reading Resources Speaker TBD	
10	Tues. 10/28/25		Topic TBD
	Thurs. 10/30/25	Group Races: Finding Resources Speaker TBD	
11	Tues. 11/4/25		Topic TBD
	Thurs. 11/6/25	Experiential Learning <b>(Quiz)</b> Speaker TBD	
12	Tues. 11/11/25		Topic TBD
	Thurs. 11/13/25	Final Project Introduction Speaker TBD	

13	Tues. 11/18/25		Topic TBD
	Thurs. 11/20/25	Group Check-In: Division/Labor Speaker TBD	
--	Nov. 24-28, 2025	Fall Break – No Classes NSM Advising Office is Remote	
	Thurs. 11/27/25	Campus Offices Closed Thurs/Fri (and possibly Wed)	Thanksgiving Day
14	Tues. 12/2/25		<b>Last Day w/ FYLs</b> Topic TBD
	Thurs. 12/4/25	Group Check-In <b>(Weekly Plan Reflections)</b> Speaker TBD??	
15	Tues. 12/9/25	<b>Last Class Day</b> <b>Final Presentations</b>	
	Wed. 12/10/25	Reading Day – No Classes	
	Thurs. 12/11/25		Final Exams – No Classes (Dec. 11-16, 2025)
16	Tues. 12/16/25	Final Exams – No Classes (Dec. 11-16, 2025)	<b>Last day of semester</b> <b>Grades due Fri. 12/19/25</b>

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**Grading Policy: \*subject to change when assignments finalized\***

**Grades:**

Attendance	25%
Quizzes	25%
Assignments	25%
Final Project	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Traditional Grading Scale**

vs.

**UTD's Grading Scale**

90-100%	A	4.000	97-100%	A+		4.000
			93-96	A	Excellent	4.000
			90-92	A-		3.670
80-89	B	3.000	87-89	B+		3.330
			83-86	B	Good	3.000
			80-82	B-		2.670
70-79	C	2.000	77-79	C+		2.330
			73-76	C	Fair	2.000
			70-72	C-		1.670
60-69	D	1.000	67-69	D+		1.330
			63-66	D	Poor	1.000
			60-62	D-		0.670
< 60	F	0.000	< 60	F	Failure	0.000

*NOTE: Grading policy and assignments are subject to change.*

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**Course & Instructor Policies:**

**Class Attendance:** The University's attendance policy requirement is that individual faculty set their course attendance requirements. Regular and punctual class attendance is expected. Students who fail to attend class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. In some courses, instructors may have special attendance requirements; these should be made known to students during the first week of classes.

Your first 3 absences will not count against you. However, you may miss important lecture material, information about assignments, guest speakers, and special activities. All subsequent absences will reduce your attendance grade, unless they are university excused or at the discretion of the professor and will require appropriate documentation to be provided within a reasonable amount of time. University excused absences are those resulting from University-sanctioned activities (ex: athletic competitions), are typically scheduled well in advance, and should be provided to the professor as soon as they are known. Excused or unexcused absence does not relieve the student from responsibility for content they miss or deadlines which occur while they are absent.

**Class Participation:** Regular class participation is expected. Students who fail to

participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. A portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class. It also includes engaging in group or other activities during class that solicit your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures (and/or labs). Class participation is documented by faculty. 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 facilitated by First Year Leaders (FYLs). The FYL is an exceptional student leader who has chosen to focus their 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>

**Assignments:** In any course, the assignment is a good indicator of a student's knowledge of the course material. In an online course, as detailed above, the assignment serves additional purposes. For each assignment, the presenter will seek to be clear in the expectation of the content. 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 could result in point deductions or no grade. 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 the faculty member- in consultation with the teaching team for the course.

**Exams:** There are no formal exams for this course.

**Group Project:** The group project will be assigned as shown on the schedule above.

**Extra Credit:** none

**Late Work:** Work may be turned in late for a reduced grade, up to a point. If an assignment or quiz is no longer actively accepting submissions, then special arrangements would need to be made with the instructor to complete the assignment. No work may be submitted after the semester ends, unless an Incomplete has been previously arranged.

**Off-Campus Instruction and Course Activities:** none

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### **Technical Requirements:**

In addition to a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable a successful learning experience. Please review the important technical requirements on the [Getting Started with eLearning](#) webpage.

### **Course Access and Navigation:**

This course can be accessed using your UT Dallas NetID account on the [eLearning](#) website. Please see the course access and navigation section of the [Getting Started with eLearning](#) webpage for more information. To become familiar with the eLearning tool, please see the [Student eLearning Tutorials](#) webpage. 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.

### **Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties**

The University is committed to providing a reliable learning management system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation.

Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and also contact the online [eLearning Help Desk](#). The instructor and the eLearning Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

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### **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.”*

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### **Community Health Information and Resources:**

During public health emergencies affecting campus, this page will provide UTD-specific information and guidance for students and employees. Please see <https://www.utdallas.edu/campus-health/>.

We encourage all faculty, staff, and students to stay home if you have symptoms of contagious illness, and to seek medical attention if your symptoms are severe. Currently, standard UTD absence policies and procedures are in effect and the supplemental tracking and reporting of contagious illness incidence in our UTD campus community (COVID-19, flu, or other illnesses) is not required.

**Academic Advising:**

**Office:** Classroom Building (CB - not CB1), Suite 1.101, Office G

**Phone:** (979) 883-2500

**Office Hours:** By appointment or on designated drop-in days. Email your assigned advisor or schedule an appointment here: <https://nsm.utdallas.edu/advising/>.

<b>Fall 2025 - NSM Assigned Advisors</b>			
<b>Biology / Molecular Biology</b>		<b>Actuarial Science / Chemistry / Geosciences</b>	
A-C	Djiana Zmiro	Jennifer Meedel	
D-J	Erica Kenney		
K-M	Mary Larson	<b>Biochemistry</b>	<b>Data Science</b>
		Allie Valenzuela	Rick Treter
N-Sg	Jose Polio		
Sh-Z	Meredith Prior	<b>Biomedical Sciences</b>	<b>Math / Physics</b>
		Linda Elgin	Kameron Svoboda

<b>Fall 2025 - NSM Advisors' Remote Days (<i>out of office</i>)</b>				
M	T	W	R	F
Erica Kenney		Meredith Permenter	Linda Elgin	ENTIRE OFFICE
Jennifer Meedel		Jose Polio	Rick Treter	
Kameron Svoboda		Djiana Zmiro	Allie Valenzuela	
To be determined: Mary Larson				

**Academic Support Resources:**

The information contained in the following link lists the University's academic support resources for all students. Please go to <https://oisd.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/#academic-support-resources>.

**Disability and Accessibility Services:**

It is the policy and practice of The University of Texas at Dallas to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. However, written notification from the AccessAbility Resource Center (ARC) is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please discuss it with me and allow one-week advance notice. Students who have questions about receiving accommodations, or those who have, or think they may have, a disability (mobility, sensory, health, psychological, learning, etc.) are invited to contact ARC for a confidential discussion. ARC is located in the Administration Building, AD 2.224. They can be reached by phone at 972-883-2098, or by email at [studentaccess@utdallas.edu](mailto:studentaccess@utdallas.edu).

### **Policies and Procedures for Students**

The University of Texas at Dallas provides a number of policies and procedures designed to provide students with a safe and supportive learning environment. Brief summaries of the policies and procedures are provide for you at <http://provost.utdallas.edu/home/index.php/syllabus-policies-and-procedures-text> and include information about technical support, field trip policies, off-campus activities, student conduct and discipline, academic integrity, copyright infringement, email use, withdrawal from class, student grievance procedures, incomplete grades, access to Disability Services, and religious holy days. You may also seek further information at these websites:

- [http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel\\_Risk\\_Activities.htm](http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm)
- <http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-HOPV.html>
- <http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/copypol2.htm>
- <http://www.utdallas.edu/disability/documentation/index.html>

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