Welcome to Scientific Thinking

What does it mean to be a graduate student? What does it mean to be a scientist? This is the fundamental question that this class will address. Using a discussion based approach, you will learn about expectations of being both a graduate student and a scientist. The course will teach you fundamentals is talking about research, looking for grant funding, reviewing literature, and more. In addition to the planned topics to be covered, you will have an opportunity to suggest topics as well.

Instructor Information

Office Phone: (965) 665-2845
Office: ESCNE 2.324
E-mail: Christopher.vitek@utrgv.edu

TEXTBOOKS

Reading Primary Literature by Christopher M. Gillen

OFFICE HOURS

9:00am—10:00am

UTRGV Policy requires that all university email communication be done using UTRGV email addresses.

Objectives:
By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Review a manuscript
- Understand how to engage in critical thinking
- Learn how to summarize research activities

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ASSIGNMENTS:
Your grade at the end of the course will be based on the total points you have, using the scale described under “grading scale". The assignments in this course are listed below, along with their point values.

- Participation: 100 points
- Elevator Talk: 25 points
- Journal Assignment: 25 points
- Peer Reviews: 25 points
- Grant Assignment: 25 points

Total points: 200

Assignments must be turned in on time. Late assignments will be graded with a 10% penalty for each day late. If you will be absent for a test, you may arrange to take it in advance.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible to schedule an appointment to initiate services. Accommodations can be arranged through SAS at any time, but are not retroactive. Students who suffer a broken bone, severe injury or undergo surgery during the semester are eligible for temporary services. Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at ability@utrgv.edu. Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY:
UTRGV is dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect. Those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, and VIOLENCE:
In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

GRADING SCALE:
Students will be graded based on percentage of points they receive out of the 300 possible.

- 180-200 points: A
- 160-180 points: B
- 120-160 points: C
- <120 points: F

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**CLASSROOM CONDUCT:**

Students are expected to be attentive and courteous during class. Cell phones, MP3 players, or video game units are not allowed. Student may use tablets or computers to take notes.

Lectures may not be videotaped unless you received specific permission from the instructor or guess presenter.

Students are expected to arrive on time for classes. Arriving late and disrupting the class when you enter is rude and distracting. Excessive tardiness may be penalized in the same fashion as excessive absences.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Attendance is mandatory. Students are best prepared for success in the course by attending the lectures. Excessive absences will be penalized through a reduction of your overall grade in the course and may result in your being dropped from the course.

Excused absences must provide written documentation within 1 week of the absence. Valid excused absences will require a note from an authorized source, including a note from doctor, work supervisor note, note from University official, note from a public official, receipts for auto or tire repairs, travel receipts. Excused absences also include officially sponsored university activities (such as athletics), religious holidays, or military service. Student should contact the instructor in advance of an excused absence to arrange to make up missed work.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has set learning outcomes required for education. This courses meets the following learning outcomes:

- **Critical Thinking Skills:** In this course you will learn to assess the importance of different control strategies for diseases, and identify possible outcomes. You will learn that there is no “one size fits all” approach to disease epidemiology, and identify what features must be known or determined in order to control an outbreak.

- **Communication Skills:** You will prepare written reports and work in small groups to discuss recent epidemiological research.

- **Teamwork:** You will work in small groups for your disease reports, as well as small groups for in class discussions.

- **Social Responsibility:** You will understand the need to disease programs such as surveillance, vaccination, and outbreak response, as well as the role that epidemiologists play in the control of disease.

**MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATIONS:**

Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available: Fall 2017 Module 1—Oct. 5 – Oct. 11; Fall 2017 Module 2—Nov. 29-Dec. 5; Fall 2017 (Full Semester) - Nov. 15-Dec. 6
**Tentative Schedule, may be changed**

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<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>The secret of my success</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Advice from peers</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Paper/Research Synopsis</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Elevator Talks</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Tips for a good presentation</td>
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<td>Publish or perish</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Publication discussion</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Class peer review</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>It’s all about the money</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>It’s all about the money, part 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Thanksgiving</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Viewer choice</td>
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UTRGV Calendar can be found at https://my.utrgv.edu/home (before login) with deadlines for dropping, holidays, etc. Final schedule is online at UTRGV.