

UMBC UGC New Course Request: NSCI 395 – Communication for Emerging Scientists I

Date Submitted: 9/10/2020

Proposed Effective Date: Fall 2020

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COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Number(s)	NSCI 395
Formal Title	Communication for Emerging Scientists I
Transcript Title (≤30c)	Comms for Scientists I
Recommended Course Preparation	N/A
Prerequisite NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a “D” or better.	English 100/100Y/100H
# of Credits Must adhere to the UMBC Credit Hour Policy	1.0
Repeatable for additional credit?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Max. Total Credits	1.0
Grading Method(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail

PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION (Approximately 75 words in length. Please use full sentences.):

NSCI 395

This course is required for STEM BUILD Trainees. In preparation for applying to summer internships and beyond, students will perfect their personal statements developed in the Summer Bridge program, practice cover letter-writing, and improve their resumes/CVs. Students will also develop their presentation skills and be introduced to science communication platforms and techniques for connecting with the general public. This course is the first in a two-course sequence. The second course is offered in the spring.

RATIONALE FOR NEW COURSE:

NSCI 395 is the first course in a two-sequence set of courses that are required for STEM BUILD Trainees (a group of students involved with the STEM BUILD 2.0 initiative. Students will take the courses in their second year of the program. The courses will be taught each fall (395) and each spring (396) at least until AY 2023 - 2024, when the final cohort of the formal STEM BUILD program will complete the sequence. There is a

possibility the courses will be opened to a wider range of students and continue to be offered beyond that time.

These courses are designed to provide support to the BUILD trainees in their endeavors to obtain summer research positions by directly instructing and coaching them on the critical elements of applications for these positions. This training will continue to serve them throughout their pursuit of graduate school and/or careers. NSCI 395 will focus on personal statements, cover letters, and resumes/CVs. Students will also be introduced to ways to share their research effectively with the non-scientist community, including via blogs and social media, and how, in order to be effective, that type of communication must differ from writing a formal research paper or proposal. Students will also be coached on their presentation skills and given opportunities to practice, which will benefit them during the interview process and throughout their careers as scientists.

This course is needed now, because STEM BUILD students need this training to increase their chances of applying successfully for summer internships after their second year. The course is at the 300 level because it provides specialized skills training for students who are expected to pursue research. While it may include some introductory-level writing training, the overall goal is to prepare students to apply successfully for research internships, travel grants, and other opportunities targeting upper level students. It is offered in the pass/fail format because the primary goal is for the students to obtain needed skills and gain competency in writing about themselves and their research for a range of audiences, not to overburden students already pursuing challenging majors. Consistent effort and participation combined with the ability to demonstrate competency in the skills taught by the end of the semester will be considered successful completion of the course.

The course dovetails perfectly with the rest of the BUILD programming. The summer before students enroll in this course, the students will have completed a Summer Bridge program, in which they will have prepared a draft personal statement that we will refine in NSCI 395. Other elements such as professional communication with faculty members and choosing the right opportunities to apply for, will be introduced in Summer Bridge and reinforced in this course. Other staff from the BUILD program, such as academic advisor Ms. Pauline McKelroy and BUILD program specialist Ms. Meika Samuel, may be brought in to the course as guest instructors on topics such as resumes and how to help prospective employers or research mentors outside UMBC understand the BUILD program.

The prerequisites for this course are minimal; introductory English is required to ensure students come in with baseline writing skills.

This course is not repeatable for additional credit.

OTHER NOTES/REQUESTS:

ATTACH COURSE SYLLABUS (mandatory):

See attached

