

**Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences Seminar
GEOL 800**

**Fall Semester, 2011
1 credit hour**

Course Meetings: Thursdays, 3:30-4:30 pm in PSC 006
Instructor: Dr. Alicia Wilson, EWS 302
Office Hours: By appointment. Reach me at: 777-1240, awilson@geol.sc.edu

The purpose of this course is to learn about current research across a variety of geological disciplines, and to start thinking about how you might convey your own research ideas to a general audience. The learning process begins by listening to a variety of research presentations, and thinking about different ways to effectively convey new ideas and supporting data. This benefit will accrue from your *regular* attendance at the department's weekly seminar and thoughtful review of the presentations that are made there.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop an appreciation for range of disciplinary research represented within the umbrella of Geosciences
- Learn about cutting edge developments across the field of Geosciences
- Develop critical thinking skills through question and assessment of presented research
- Assess the effectiveness of different styles and methods of persuasive communication

Each week, you will consider the following questions, which will improve your understanding of the research that is being presented, and help you to see which presentation styles are effective and which are ineffective:

1. What is the main contribution of this research? What was the question, and what did we learn?
2. Was the main point clearly conveyed? Why or why not?
3. What did you like (or not like) about the style of the presentation? Consider speaking style, slides, and pointer use.

GRADING

You are invited to review the presentations formally by taking GEOL 800 for a letter grade, or informally by taking the course on a pass/fail basis. If you take the course pass/fail, you will answer these questions briefly (a sentence each) and turn these in before you leave the seminar. Taking the course for a grade will require that you submit one-page critiques of the presentation research and one-page critiques of presentation style. Your written critiques will be due at the start of the following week's seminar or one week after the date of the critiqued presentation, whichever comes first. Finally, it is incumbent upon all of you to do a little background research on the seminar speaker. Read one of their recent papers, visit their web sites, and at the very least read the presentation abstract before the seminar. Whether you take the course on a pass/fail basis or for a letter grade, you are allowed no unexcused absences.

WHAT ELSE?

Each week I will post either the most insightful answer to each question or the consensus of the class, taken from the brief responses from the pass/fail students.

The seminar schedule is posted in the "Department News" section of our web site at: www.geol.sc.edu.