



**HC 497 Special Topics: Project-Based
Learning COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2026**

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Vanessa Quinn, PhD
Office Location: Waters Library 173
Office Hours: Monday 3-4pm
Office Phone: 903-468-3057
University Email Address: vanessa.quinn@etamu.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: **Email**
Communication Response Time: Typically one business day

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Texts and Other Necessities: No texts required; student and professor will use sources as needed for project.

Course Description

HC 497 Special Topics: Project-Based Learning is a special topics course designed as an independent study. Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a hands-on experiential form of pedagogy and learning in which the student learns by designing and carrying out the project. This is a non-traditional form of learning in which the student drives the project and the instructor will provide guidance and facilitate. This course focuses on real-world relevance through inquiry-driven challenges. Through a semester-long project, the student will identify a community- or campus-based problem, propose, and implement a solution through collaboration with campus and community partners. The student will present their findings/outcomes in a public demonstration.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. The student will identify a community-based problem relating to their field of study or interest through controlled inquiry-based investigation. This problem should be based in real-world relevance through a demonstrated campus or community need.
2. The student will propose a solution to a campus or community partner that could be realistically implemented. A time frame will be established and action steps will be identified for both the student and campus/community partners.

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3. The student will work toward implementing the proposed and/or revised solution within the campus or community.
4. The student will reflect on the process and present their outcomes/finding in a public demonstration to include faculty, staff, community members, and/or students, focusing on identification of marketable, transferrable skills developed through the process.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional Methods

This course is designed as an independent study with regular check-ins to assess progress.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Breakdown of assessments

Identification of Community-Based Problem:	10%
Proposal of Solution:	10%
Midterm Assessment/Reflection:	20%
Implementation of Solution:	20%
Public Demonstration of Project:	40%
TOTAL	100%

Assessments

Identification of Community-Based Problem: The student will compose a short narrative describing the identified need in the community or campus. What is the issue and who does it affect? Is this problem unique to this area or is it a demonstrated need throughout the region/state/nation?

Proposal of Solution: The student will propose a solution to the identified need in the community to campus or community partners. How can the issue be addressed? Who are the stakeholders or partners needed for a successful implementation? A time frame should be established and actionable steps should be identified for both the student and campus/community partners.

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Midterm Assessment/Reflection: The student will compose a short narrative of the process so far through the identified due date of the assignment. Describe the process so far – what obstacles have you encountered? Do you feel like the project is going to plan? Is it different than you expected or on track with your vision? What needs to shift and what is working?

Implementation of Solution: The student will implement the proposed solution within the campus or community. The majority of the student's semester will be spent on this step in the course. The timeline and actionable steps should be followed and or/revise as needed with weekly or biweekly check-ins with the instructor. A rubric will be developed collaboratively by the student and instructor to assess the success of project implementation.

Public Demonstration of Project: The student will develop a poster presentation of their semester's work and present in a public demonstration, such as at the Annual Research Symposium or Demo Day. The poster should provide an overview of the project, the proposed solution, and implementation process. Special attention should be given to the student's reflection on their growth throughout the process – what worked, or didn't work? What obstacles were encountered and how were they handled? Was the proposed solution able to be fully implemented? Why or why not? What skills did you develop that are tied to your future career? How will you use or leverage this experience in your future of work?

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at

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home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COURSE

CWID and Password

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Technology-Related Issues

Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students will need reliable computer and internet access for this course. Students must be able to effectively use myLeo email, myLeo Online D2L, and Microsoft Office.

Learning Management System (LMS) – D2L

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are the technical requirements:

- View the [Learning Management System Requirements Webpage](#).
- Learn more on the [LMS Browser Support Webpage](#).

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Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found on the [Brightspace Support Webpage](#).

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your instructor. Correspondence will always be through university email (your “myLeo” mail) and announcements in myLeo online (D2L). You will not RECEIVE email through D2L, so be sure to check your ETAMU email for communication. Students are encouraged to check university email daily.

Include the Following in Emails with Instructor:

- Course name and subject in the subject line
 - Salutation (Good afternoon, Dr. Jackson)
 - Proper email etiquette (no “text” emails – use proper grammar and punctuation)
 - Student name and CWID after the body of the email (possibly add to student signature on email)
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COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The [Code of Student Conduct](#) is described in detail online in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Students should also consult the [Rules of Netiquette Webpage](#) for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum.

ETAMU Attendance

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For more information about the attendance policy, please view the [Attendance Webpage](#) and the [Class Attendance Policy](#)

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

Use of Artificial Intelligence

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

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Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Services](#)

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and ETAMU Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health – Counseling Services

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.

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