STEMcomm VIP Syllabus

VVE, Variable Credits

Fridays, 2pm, 1440 Klaus

Instructor Information

Instructor	Email	Drop-in Hours & Location
Jennifer Leavey	Jennifer.leavey@biology.gatech.edu	Email to schedule appointment
Ed Greco	ed.greco@gatech.edu	
Michael Evans	mevans70@gatech.edu	
Liana Boop	liana.boop@eas.gatech.edu	
Robbie Richards	rrichards41@gatech.edu	

General Course Information

Description

This course explores how people learn science outside of formal educational settings. Team members produce novel, creative media about recent scientific discoveries and engineering innovations. These include but are not limited to: interactive museum-style exhibitions, online articles and videos, and festival events. Specifically, the team will create one exhibit or event per semester, and each team member will publish in the online science magazine Charged.

Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

There are no pre-requisites or co-requisites for this course.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Through this course, students will:

1. Learn and practice professional skills;
2. Make substantial contributions to the team project;
3. Experience different roles on a large, multidisciplinary team.

Course Requirements & Grading

VIP teams function like real-world project teams. Members work on different aspects of a shared project, ranging from sophomores to graduate students, and from first-time participants to those with multiple semesters of experience. Students may enroll for variable credit hours, which are considered in grading. **Note:** Zero-credit enrollment is reserved for paid participants and follows the same grading criteria.

Grading Overview

Each student is evaluated across three core areas, with three mandatory requirements. Regardless of role or experience, students must demonstrate achievement in all three areas:

1. **Documentation and Records (33%)**
   - Maintain individual documentation through reflective portfolio(required).
   - Contribute to team documentation on Teams

2. **Personal Contributions (33%)**
   - Complete charged posts and canvas assignments.
   - Engage actively in the project.
   - Pursue knowledge relevant to the project.
   - Experienced members may also contribute to project management.
3. **Teamwork and Interaction (33%)**
   - Participate in peer evaluations. Failure to submit results in a full letter grade deduction.
   - Attend meetings on time.
   - Collaborate toward team goals.
   - Coordinate and assist teammates.
   - Contribute to team presentations.

Rubric

Insert rubric of choice here.

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

Course Materials

Course Website and Other Classroom Management Tools

All documentation and team collaboration happens through our Teams site. Course assignments are submitted on Canvas. Team members also use the wordpress platform to create Charged magazine posts.

Peer evaluations are administered by the VIP Program Click Here to access peer-evaluations from off campus. Click here to access from on campus. You will be prompted to sign in. Users can only log in from on campus or via VPN. Students can only access the peer evaluation portion of the system during active evaluation periods.

Course Policies, Expectations, & Guidelines

VIP is a collaborative, multidisciplinary, project-based learning and research experience. Your success in this course depends not only on your technical contributions but also on your active engagement with your team and the broader learning process.

Your Role in the Learning Process

As a VIP student, you are expected to:

- Take initiative in exploring and applying knowledge relevant to your project.
- Collaborate effectively with team members across disciplines and experience levels.
- Document your work thoroughly.
- Reflect on your learning and contributions throughout the semester.

This course is a real-world team environment, where learning is dynamic, self-directed, and collaborative. Your growth depends on your willingness to engage, contribute, and learn from others.

Team Meetings and Participation

Attendance and active participation in **team meetings** and **sub-team meetings** are required. These meetings are essential for:

- Coordinating project tasks and timelines.
- Sharing progress and receiving feedback.
- Learning from peers and mentors.
- Contributing to team decisions and direction.

Failure to attend meetings without valid reason may negatively impact your grade and your team's progress. If you anticipate missing a meeting, communicate with your team and advisor in advance.

Use of External Resources

You are encouraged to consult external sources to support your learning and project work. However:

- Do **not present someone else's work as your own**.
- Always **cite and reference** external materials used in your notebook, code, presentations, or other deliverables.
- Proper attribution is essential to maintain transparency and integrity in a collaborative research environment.

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code and the student Code of Conduct.

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Attendance and/or Participation

On-time attendance in full team meetings and subteam meetings is mandatory and contributes to personal contributions and teamwork portions of the final grade.

Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams

Submissions can be submitted late with permission of an instructor.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. The Student-Faculty Expectations articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Additional Course Policies

VIP Room and Equipment Use Policy

VIP rooms and equipment are shared resources used by multiple teams. To ensure a productive and respectful working environment, the following rules apply:

1. Room Usage Priorities

Room use is prioritized as follows:

1. Scheduled team meetings, lectures, and learning modules

2. Weekly sub-team meetings (multiple groups may share the space)
3. Video conferences or special meetings with VIP stakeholders
4. Other project-related work (multiple groups may share the space)

Room schedules are available on the VIP website.
Note: A "good neighbor" policy applies—students may use rooms during other activities as long as they do not cause disruption. Quiet individual work or studying is allowed when it does not interfere with scheduled uses. Similarly, multiple groups may use a VIP room at the same time.

2. Cleanliness and Conduct

- Everyone is responsible for keeping rooms clean.
- Food is allowed, but spills must be cleaned immediately.
- **Gum must be disposed of properly—do not stick it under desks or on carpets.**
- Rooms are monitored by cameras; violations may be reviewed via video.

3. **Equipment Use**

- Equipment may be designated for general use or assigned to specific teams.
    - General use examples: Projector in Klaus 1440, monitors in VL 465 and VL 463B.
    - Equipment assignments may change each semester.
- If unsure about equipment access, contact: vip-request@ece.gatech.edu
- Use equipment only for its intended purpose. Misuse may pose safety risks.

Important Equipment Rules:

- Equipment may not be removed from VIP rooms without a signed loan agreement approved by a VIP Director.
- You are financially responsible for any equipment not returned in good condition.
- You must know how to operate equipment safely. Approval to use equipment does not imply safety training has been provided.

4. Computer Accounts

- Accounts are for individual use only—do not share with others.
- All usage must comply with Georgia Tech, USG Board of Regents, and State of Georgia policies.
- Respect privacy and data integrity. Having access to a file does not mean you are authorized to read or modify it.

5. BuzzCard Access

- Access is a privilege and is logged.
- Rooms are under video surveillance. In cases of theft, vandalism, or messes, logs and footage will be reviewed.
- Do not allow unauthorized individuals into VIP spaces.
- Always secure the room (close the door) when leaving.

Campus Resources for Students

Undergraduate Student Academic Success Resources:
A list of resources for undergraduate students' academic success and information about advising can be found at Success at Tech.

- 1:1 Tutoring: Students looking for additional assistance outside of the classroom are advised to consider working with a peer tutor through Knack. Georgia Institute of Technology has partnered with Knack to provide students with access to verified peer tutors who have previously aced this course. To view available tutors, visit gatech.joinknack.com and sign in with your student account.

Graduate Student Academic and Professional Success Resources:
A list of resources for graduate students is given on the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Education website. Specific information for current graduate students includes

- Academic Resources such as the Communications Center, Language Institute, Library, Catalog, Registrar, resources for conducting research, Advocacy and Conflict Resolution resources, and how to manage unexpected situations that may impact your academic performance;
- Student Resources such as Campus Services, Child Care/Family programs, Health & Wellness, Career Services, and the Student Resource Guide; and
- Professional Development such as the programming from the Career Center and other professional development resources and events"]

Student Well-Being:
At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A comprehensive list of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being (student-resource-guide (gatech.edu)

Course Policy on AI usage:

Whether you are writing for Charged Magazine or designing an event for the Atlanta Science Festival, our audience engages with us because they value your unique perspective as a scientist.

If a reader simply wanted a summary of a topic, they could ask an AI themselves. They are here to hear from you. We prioritize human authorship for two main reasons

- AI processes information, but it does not experience it. AI cannot convey the genuine excitement, frustration, or awe of scientific discovery that you can because it has never run an experiment or struggled with a problem set.
- Large Language Models are designed to generate the most probable next word, often resulting in writing that is "safe," "average," and tonally flat. *Charged Magazine* seeks to be vibrant and distinct. These are qualities that are often handled poorly by AI.

Permitted Use

- You are welcome to use AI to brainstorm article angles, suggest interview questions, troubleshoot phrasing, storyboard visual concepts, or overcome writer's block.

Prohibited Use

- Writing: You may not use AI to draft full articles or to interpret scientific data. The "voice" of your piece must be your own.
- Images: You may not use AI to generate final illustrations or photography for publication. AI-generated images often carry unresolved copyright issues and frequently contain scientific inaccuracies.

Editorial Guidelines

If you choose to utilize AI tools for brainstorming or outlining, you must adhere to the following rules

- Every output must be checked against the original primary source. You are the final editor and responsible for the accuracy of every claim.
- You must understand the material deeply enough to explain it during editorial review without consulting the AI.
- If you use AI at any stage of your workflow, you must append a "Tools Used" note to your submission, detailing specifically how it was used (e.g., "Used ChatGPT to generate headline ideas" or "Used Gemini to troubleshoot phrasing in paragraph 3").

		Poor	Adequate	Spectacular (reflection in plum)	Points
Documentation (1/3 of total)					
Individual Documentation	Reflective Portfolio	Unclear how the team member developed charged posts, lacks reflection, links or citations. Just to do lists or notes with no context.	Contains links to charged posts and describes motivation for charged posts	Reflects on how the student has grown as a communicator and how they still want to improve, also includes links to posts and motivation for posts.	
Team Documentation	Subteam Teams Channel	Just lists or files with no contexts	Constistent contribution to subteam channel on Teams. Clear what was accomplished by subteam and how	Links individual work to team work in a reflective way making it easy for future semesters to pick up.	
Contributions (1/3 of total)					
Attitude and approach		Uninterested in the project. Avoids work, waits for tasks to be assigned. Stops working when encounters obstacles, makes excuses.	Cares about the project. Proactively identifies or asks for tasks to do. Searches for solutions when encounters obstacles.	Same as previous + Has high standards for the team. Wants the team to succeed.	
Quality of effort		Sloppy or incomplete performance on weekly work. Unprepared, late, or misses meetings.	Work is timely, complete, and accurate. Comes to meetings prepared.	Work quality exceeds what is expected. Looks ahead, identifies and explores next steps.	
Learning		Unable or unwilling to develop knowledge or skills to contribute to the team.	Acquires knowledge or skills needed for the project.	Acquires knowledge or skills above/beyond the minimum needed for the project, to improve the team's performance.	
Personal contributions to the project		Given the student's experience, course level, and number of credit hours...			
		Very few contributions. The work was too simple. The work did not advance the project or help the student gain skills that would advance the project.	Adequate contributions. The work advanced the project and/or helped the student gain skills needed to advance the project.	Same as previous + Exceptional contributions.	
Teamwork (1/3 of total)					
Interaction		Interrupts or ignores teammates. Distracted during meetings (phone, email, etc.).	Avoids distractions during meetings and pays attention to others. Respects teammates' contributions, work, and ideas.	Same as previous + Shows an active interest in teammates' ideas and contributions.	
Engages with others' work		Does not pay attention to teammates' progress.	Knows what everyone on the team (or subteam) is doing.	Makes sure teammates are making progress. Provides encouragement or enthusiasm to the team.	
Communication		Does not share information. Takes actions that affect teammates without input.	Shares information with teammates . Communicates clearly.	Facilitates communication within team.	
Giving help and feedback		Gives no help or advice.	Helps and gives advice when asked.	Offers help and advice. Gives constructive feedback.	
Accepting help and feedback		Accepts no help or advice.	Respects and responds to feedback. Uses suggestions to improve.	Asks for feedback.	
Competed Peer Evaluations*		Did not complete peer evaluations.	Completed peer evaluations by the program's posted deadline.		