

Biology 431: Biology Seminar
Friday, 1-1:50 PM, MSB 202
1 semester hours
Syllabus Fall 2014

Instructor:

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Catalog Course Description & Prerequisites:

BIO 431 – Biology Seminar, 1 sem. hr.

Prerequisite(s): senior standing

Corequisite(s): BIO433; restricted to Biology majors.

A weekly departmental seminar on current biological topics

Rationale: The capacity to convey scientific information is essential to the study of science. The ability of scientists to effectively communicate ideas, concepts, recorded data, and new discoveries facilitates the advancement of scientific knowledge. This skill is vital for students entering professional and pre-professional programs in the life sciences. The completion of a course in seminar fulfills the mission of the college through the concentrated study in specialized fields.

Objectives: Upon completion of this course, the student will have:

- Selected a topic that is appropriately focused and manageable
- Used information literacy techniques to research their topic
- Prepared an annotated bibliography using appropriate resources for their topic
- Generated and presented a PowerPoint presentation describing current scientific knowledge on their topic using the following QEP Student Learning Outcomes
 - Identify main ideas and their potential relevance, summarizing and synthesizing key ideas (3B)
 - Apply new and prior information to the planning and creation of a product or performance (4A)
 - Communicate the product or performance effectively and clearly to others (4B)
 - Acknowledge sources and use information following the conventions of a particular discipline (5A)

Course Format: This class meets once a week for one hour during the regular semester. Attendance is mandatory. Early in the semester, students will be shown how to use the library resources to locate scientific information. These skills will be utilized to generate and present PowerPoint presentations relating to a specific topic. Specific topics will relate to an overarching theme relevant to current trends in biological sciences. The theme will change each semester but may involve a particular area of research, a controversial social/biological issue, or a disease. ***Students are expected to ask questions of the presenting student at the end of each seminar.*** Questions allow the presenter and the audience to clarify points of interest as well as expand on an area of the talk. The ability to think quickly and formulate answers to an audience member's questions as well as to the ability to verbalize clear, thought-provoking questions are important skills that must be practiced.

BIO 431 includes an information literacy emphasis as part of the U Research, Mississippi College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Students who have transfer credit for English 102 will need to complete satisfactorily a short information literacy tutorial as an introduction to research concepts and resources available at Mississippi College unless they have already done so in BIO 307 Cell & Genetics Laboratory. This tutorial **MUST** be completed by the fifth week of the semester.

Behavior: We will maintain a professional, respectful class environment. Please notify the instructor first if there is a perceived problem. **You may not use your cell phone in class!** That includes texting, checking the weather; shopping, using the calculator... you get the point.

Attendance: Your attendance at all class meetings is expected. Please refer to the Mississippi College Undergraduate Bulletin for clarification of the university's attendance policy. Absences are recorded on the grade report that is mailed at the end of the semester. Finally, frequent unexcused absences will negatively affect your final grade in the class.

Library Guide: Students will need to use the resources, databases, journals, etc. that are available from the Leland Speed Library in order to complete the assignments in this course. The link below will provide a quick and easy way to utilize these sources. For additional help, please contact a MC librarian or me.

LibGuides are used to share knowledge and information about your subject field, and promote library resources to the academic community. <http://mc.libguides.com/biologicalsciences>

Grading: Grading will be based on two oral presentations, class attendance, class participation, and a written assignment associated with the final seminar. The two presentations are graded on content, voice and body language of the speaker, how the speaker handles questions, and the PowerPoint presentations. See attached rubrics for additional information. Each assignment is worth the following percentage of the final grade.

Class attendance – 5%
Class participation – 10%
Scientist seminar – 15%
Annotated bibliography – 25%
Final seminar – 45%

A 100-90% B 89.9-80% C 79.9-70% D 69.9-60% F Below 59.9

It is your responsibility to keep up with your grades throughout the semester!!!

Assignments consist of two oral presentations and a written annotated bibliography by each student.

Seminar I: 5 minutes in length “Scientist Seminar”

The first seminar will focus on a historical aspect of biological sciences. Each student will choose a famous scientist (biologists are preferred) and report on his or her life. The presentation should include discussion of their scientific achievements. A maximum of five PowerPoint slides may be used for this presentation.

Written Assignment: Annotated Bibliography for “Final Seminar”

An annotated bibliography is an organized list of sources with an accompanying paragraph (or annotation) that describes, explains, and/or evaluates each entry in terms of quality, authority, and relevance. In other words, it is an organized way to take notes. You are required to use **at least 5 credible, relevant and appropriate references** for this assignment. **The annotated bibliography is DUE during class on Friday, October 3rd.** Each entry should contain the following:

1. THE REFERENCE-The reference in CBE format. Details can be found at <http://tim.thorpeallen.net/Courses/Reference/Citations.html>.
2. THE ANNOTATION-A short (~150-200 words) paragraph in which you address the following:
 - a. The main idea of the article
 - b. How the authors came to their conclusions. (In other words, what methods did they use?)
 - c. The article's thesis, conclusions, and/or recommendations.
 - d. Identify, for the reader, how the article is relevant to your research/hypothesis/proposal.

3. THE EVALUATION-make a statement about the type of source (e.g., a scholarly research article, an editorial from a professional magazine, a feature newspaper article, a chapter from a popular book, a U.S. government website of the author to write about the topic, quality of the source, objectivity, etc.)

FOR EXAMPLE

Smith, M.A., & Murray, R.A. (2003). Students that pay attention earn higher grades. *Life Sciences Education* 29: 1881-1886. [This is an example of an article published in a scientific journal.]

This scientific article asserts that students that pay attention in class have a higher retention rate and more academic success than those that are on facebook© Twitter© and Snapchat© during class. The scientists surveyed 150 sophomores and seniors at Mississippi College regarding their off-task use of internet in class and then correlated it with their grades on each of 4 exams and their final grade for the class. The authors suggest that while internet use in class may be helpful to on-task students, the academic risk posed to disengaged students warrants careful consideration prior to allowing the use of electronic devices in class. The authors did not survey the on-task students in this study however the study supports the findings of others and is directly related to my presentation that discusses the use of social media in academic environments. (This paper is highly cited, with over 350 citations since its publication in 2003).

Tells the methods

Evaluates the study and tells how it is relevant to project

Tells the main idea

Tells the conclusion

Talks about the source.

Don't confuse abstracts or summaries with annotations. Abstracts are the purely descriptive summaries often found at the beginning of scholarly journal articles or in periodical indexes. Annotations are descriptive and critical; they expose the author's point of view, clarity, appropriateness and/or authority.

Seminar II: 15 minutes in length, "Final Seminar"

Each semester a different theme will be chosen for this final seminar. The theme will be relevant to current trends in biological sciences and may involve a particular area of research, a controversial social/biological issue, a disease, etc. Each student will choose a specific topic under the given theme, research their topic, prepare a written assignment of their research (more details provided later), and prepare a PowerPoint presentation to present a seminar on the chosen topic. **Students will turn in their topic choice in class on Friday, September 19th.** This seminar should consist of 12 minutes discussion followed by 3 minutes of audience questions. **All PowerPoint presentations must be uploaded to Moodle by Monday, October 20th at 5PM.**

Students will also be expected to create a flyer announcing the time, date, and title of their seminar. The flyers should be posted throughout Hederman and Medical Sciences Buildings as well on your instructor's door. These flyers will advertise your seminar and allow for interested parties to attend. **Flyers must be uploaded to Moodle and posted in buildings by 5PM on the Monday before your scheduled seminar date.** Flyers should be removed after your seminar is given.

Early Alert System: Mississippi College has adopted the practice of finding students early in the semester who may be exhibiting behaviors that could ultimately have a negative impact on their academic progress. These behaviors are often called "red flag" behaviors and include, but are not limited to, excessive absences, poor test grades, and lack of class participation or evidence of non-engagement. Identifying these behaviors early gives the instructor the opportunity to raise the "red flag" on behalf of a particular student so that the student can take the appropriate action to redirect his/her progress. The system alerts the student, the student's advisor, and the Office of Student Success.

These messages are intended to help a student recognize an area of concern and to encourage him/her to make some choices to improve the situation. When a student receives an Early Alert message, the student should quickly make an appointment to talk with his/her professor about the situation. Also, students can make full use of the Office of Student Success to set academic goals and connect to campus resources.

Academic Integrity: All students are expected to complete their assignments based on their own skills and knowledge, unless otherwise directed by the instructor. All instances of academic dishonesty will also be reported to the department chair, the division and as appropriately to the college administration (to include the Dean of Academic/Student Affairs or other administrative officials) as necessary. The instructor also reserves the right to remove a student or students from the class as deemed necessary due to acts of academic indiscretion. Mississippi College students should display academic integrity in all situations. Honesty is expected from all students at all times. Dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, and falsifying information, is a serious offense and is subject to severe penalty. Adherence to the Mississippi College “Honesty Policy” (Mississippi College Undergraduate Bulletin) will be followed. **Refer to the Mississippi College Undergraduate Catalog for clarification of any point in relation to Academic Integrity.**

Special accommodations at Student Counseling Services: In order for a student to receive disability accommodations under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, he or she must schedule an individual meeting with the Director of Student Counseling Services **immediately upon recognition of their disability** (if their disability is known they must come in before the semester begins or make an appointment **immediately** upon receipt of their syllabi for the new semester). The student must bring with them written documentation from a medical physician and/or licensed clinician that verifies their disability. If the student has received prior accommodations, they must bring written documentation of those accommodations (example Individualized Education Plan from the school system). Documentation must be current (**within 3 years**). The student must meet with SCS **face-to face** and also attend two (2) additional follow up meetings (one mid semester before or after midterm examinations and the last one at the end of the semester). Please note that the student may also schedule additional meetings as needed for support through SCS as they work with their professor throughout the semester. Note: Students must come in **each semester** to complete their Individualized Accommodation Plan (example: MC student completes fall semester IAP plan and even if student is a continuing student for the spring semester they must come in again to complete their spring semester IAP plan). Student Counseling Services is located in Alumni Hall Room #4 or they may be contacted via email at: mbryant@mc.edu or rward@mc.edu or by phone at 601-925-7791.

Important college dates:

September 1, MondayLabor Day, No Day or Night Classes
September 4, Thursday Last Day To Drop a Full Semester Class with 100% Tuition Refund
September 5, Friday Priority deadline for ALL Degree applications for Dec. 2014 Graduation
October 6-7Fall Break
October 31, Friday LAST DAY TO DROP A FULL SEMESTER CLASS
November 7, Friday..... Participation deadline for ALL Degree applications for Dec. 2014 Graduation
November 25-30.....Thanksgiving Holiday
December 8-10Dead Days
December 10, Wednesday Last day of classes; night exams begin
December 11, Thursday Study Day
December 12- 17, Friday, Saturday, Monday, Tuesday, WednesdayFinal Exams
December 19, Friday..... Graduate and Undergraduate December Graduations

Course Schedule Fall 2014

Week	Date	Topic
1	August 29	Introduction & Expectations
2	September 5	
3	September 12	Scientist Seminar group #1
4	September 19	Scientist Seminar group #2 / Final Seminar Topic DUE
5	September 26	
6	October 3	Annotated bibliography DUE
7	October 10	Fall Break; Class will NOT meet
8	October 17	ACAT Exam
9	October 20 October 24	All PowerPoint Presentations DUE by 5PM Final Seminar group #1
10	October 31	Final Seminar group #2
11	November 7	Final Seminar group #3
12	November 14	Final Seminar group #4
13	November 21	Final Seminar group #5
14	November 28	Thanksgiving Holiday; NO Classes Meet
15	December 5	Finish presentations; course conclusions

RUBRIC FOR GRADING THE FINAL SEMINAR

STUDENT _____ DATE _____
 TOPIC _____ INSTRUCTOR _____

Category	Exemplary	Competent	Needs work
Knowledge/ Understanding 25 points SLO3B/4A	The presentation demonstrates a depth of scientific understanding by using relevant and accurate details to describe the topic. Presentation clearly identifies main issues of topic. Presentation shows evidence of student's own analysis, summary and synthesis of key sources. Research is thorough and in depth. It goes beyond what was presented in previous classes.	The presentation uses knowledge which is generally accurate with only minor inaccuracies, and which is generally relevant to the topic. Research is adequate but does not go much beyond what was presented in class or in the assigned text.	The presentation uses little relevant or accurate information. Presentation fails to identify any main issues related to the topic. Presentation restates facts presented by sources, but fails to add own analysis. Little or no in depth research is apparent.
Communication 20 points SLO4B/4A	The presentation is imaginative and effective in conveying the ideas to the audience. The presenter responds effectively to audience reactions and questions.	Presentation techniques used are effective in conveying main ideas, but failed to maintain the interest of the audience members. Some questions from the audience were not answered correctly or were unanswered.	The presentation fails to capture the interest of the audience and/or is confusing in what is to be communicated. All questions remained unanswered or were answered incorrectly.
Use of Visual Aids 20 points SLO5A	The presentation includes appropriate and easily understood visual aids, which the presenter refers to and explains at appropriate moments in the presentation. The presentation included a title slide, outline slide, a question slide. Sources were acknowledged correctly and references were formatted in CBE style.	The presentation includes visual aids, but these are too few, in a format that makes them difficult to use or understand, and/or presenter does not refer to or explain them in the presentation. The presentation included a title slide, outline slide, question slide. Some sources were acknowledged but not all. References were incomplete or incorrectly formatted.	The presentation includes no visual aids or visual aids that are inappropriate, and/or too small or messy to be understood. The presenter makes no mention of them in the presentation. The slides have too many words or the font is too small for the audience to read. The presentation failed to include a title slide, outline slide, question slide, and/or the reference slide.
Presentation Skills 25 points SLO4B	The presenter speaks clearly and loudly enough to be heard, uses variations in tone of voice and gestures to engage the audience. The presenter maintains eye contact. The presenter does not use "umm, like, etc" The presenter was dressed professionally in business casual attire.	The presenter speaks clearly and loudly enough to be heard, but tends to drone and/or fails to use eye contact, gestures, and body language consistently or effectively at times. There is minimal use of the words "umm, like, etc" The presenter was casually dressed.	The presenter cannot be heard and/or speaks so unclearly that s/he cannot be understood. There is no attempt to engage the audience through eye contact, gestures, or body language. The presenter reads straight from notes/notecards. The presenter's use of words such as umm and like are distracting to the audience. The presenter was slovenly dressed and unprepared for a professional presentation.
Timeliness 5 points	The presentation was 12 minutes in length \pm 2 minutes		The presentation was less than 10 minutes or longer than 14 minutes.
Flyer 5 points	Flyer was imaginative, colorful, grabbed one's attention and sparked interest in the topic Flyer included necessary information (location, date, time, title) Flyer was turned in on-time and posted at the appropriate locations	Flyer was adequate but failed to capture ones attention. Flyer included some but not all of the necessary information. Flyer was turned in on-time but not posted at the appropriate locations.	Flyer was inadequate and failed to capture one's attention. Necessary information was not included on the flyer. Flyer was turned in late and not posted at the appropriate locations.

TOTAL POINTS _____