

CLASS SYLLABUS

BIOL 4900 Senior Seminar Fall 2014

CLASS TIME: R 1:30 - 3:20 p.m., Seminar on R at 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Colleen McDonough

OFFICE HOURS: Monday 10-11, Wednesday 11-12; or by appt.

OFFICE: 2086 Bailey Science Center

PHONE: 333-5759 (main office), 333-5764 (my office)

EMAIL: cmcdonou@valdosta.edu

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students must demonstrate the ability to assimilate scholarly information on a topic given by the instructor and produce a professional quality talk and research review about the information. If accomplished, then this should demonstrate competence in communication skills, both oral and written. They also must show competence in biology content by attaining a score of 140 on the Major Field Test in Biology.

This is considered a capstone course. I expect senior level work in all aspects and therefore, this course should be taken seriously.

Standards

VSU General Education Outcomes on webpage:

(<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/VSUGeneralEducationOutcomes.shtml>) This course meets outcomes 4. and 7.

Department of Biology Educational Outcomes (Page 113 in 2014-2015 Undergraduate Catalog). This course meets outcome 1.

PREREQUISITES: senior status in biology major with most upper division biology elective taken.

COURSE POLICY:

Science Seminars: You will be required to attend most of the scheduled science seminars held 4-5 p.m. in **Powell Hall**. The schedule has not been totally set. As talks are added to the schedule, you will be required to attend. You will be completing an evaluation (given before the seminar) and handing it to me at the end of the question period. This will determine your attendance for the seminar.

There will be no texting or use of electronic equipment during these seminars. This is very rude and I will not tolerate this type of behavior from students for which I am responsible. If it is a problem, you will be removed from the **course**.

Major Fields Test: Students must take their first Major Field Test prior to the date given on the schedule. You are responsible for scheduling an appointment with the VSU Testing Office (245-3878). In order to pass this course, you must receive a grade of 140 or better. My suggestion is to review your notes from your previous courses and also review an introductory biology textbook for majors. First time taking the test is free to the students (biology department picks up the bill). If you have to repeat the test, you will be charged. All repeat tests must be taken by the date given on the schedule.

Classmate Seminars: All students in the course must attend the student seminars. You will be required to critique the talks and hand in questions for the speakers. There will be no texting or use of electronic equipment during these seminars. This is very rude and I will not tolerate this type of behavior.

Plagiarism: One of the biggest problems in this course last time teaching it is plagiarism. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. People failed because of it. All work (paper and powerpoint slides) will be checked in a number of different ways including electronically for similarities with published or previous works. See biology website and also refer to sheet on plagiarism to be handed out later.

GRADING POLICY: This class is graded satisfactory / unsatisfactory. Students will receive a satisfactory grade if they:

Present a coherent, non-plagiarized review paper of sufficient length on time. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Present a coherent non-plagiarized talk of sufficient length and answer questions coherently **AT YOUR SCHEDULED TIME. NO EXCEPTIONS**

Attend the science seminars and all student presentations.

Attend the library research class

Complete the exit questionnaire

Score >139 on Major Field Test Score

The written portion is due at mid-term, Oct 2. If you do not have a solid paper written by that time, you should drop the class.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students requiring classroom accommodations or modifications to testing, such as more time, need to be documented with the Access Office for Students with Disabilities. These students should discuss needs with me at the beginning of the semester. Students not registered must contact the Access Office, Farber Hall, Phone; 245-2498. Website: <http://www.valdosta.edu/access/>

FEDERAL PRIVACY ACT: It is illegal to release personal information about an individual to others. Therefore, I cannot give out your grades to anyone but yourself. I cannot give them out over phone or through email unless with written permission.

CLASS BEHAVIOR: Any student engaging in disruptive behavior will be asked to leave lecture or lab. They will forfeit the chance to hand in the work resulting from that laboratory.

Electronics USE: Electronics must be turned off during the class and seminars. Leaving class to answer or call is disruptive to other students and will not be tolerated. **DO NOT DO IT.** This includes the seminar. I will not be responsible for students who show disrespect.

PLAGIARISM AND OTHER FORMS OF STEALING: Adhere to the policy listed on the Biology Department's website (<http://www.valdosta.edu/biology/>). See list of items under "FOR STUDENTS"). If you are so time stressed that you can't individually do the work required in this course, consider withdrawing rather than face the repercussions and failing the course. More on this later.

Class Schedule: All seminars are in **Powell Hall Auditorium**

- August 21: Introduction/ Choose Topics / Plagiarism / How to sign up for Major Field Test
No seminar
- Aug 28: **Library Research (with Laura Wright): Odum Library room 3270**
Work on sources for topic, Check with me before leaving.
Seminar: Dr. Corey Anderson, Spatial Distribution of Spanish Moss,
- Sept 4: Plagiarism / **work on paper/10 sources due**
Sign up for Major Field Test
Seminar: Dr. Donald Thieme: Tales from the Crypt – Using ground penetrating radar (GPR) in cemetery studies
- Sept 11 work on paper/ 5 more sources due
Seminar: TBA
- Sept 18 Research continues
Seminar: Mike Stine:
- Sept 25** You should a rough draft of paper by this time: have friends read it
Seminar: Noel Burkhead: Causes and Locations of Modern Extinctions in North American Freshwater Fishes
- Oct 2** **Written Papers Due:**
Seminar: TBA
- Oct 9** Work on presentation
Seminar: Dr. Thiago Maia: Effector protein delivery by plant pathogens
- Oct 16 Prepare talk
Seminar:
- Oct 23 Continue to prepare talk
Seminar: Cheston Peterson
The Biology Major Field Test must be taken by this date
- Oct 30 No class
Seminar:TBA
- Nov 6 6 Student Seminars Presented – all students must attend
Seminar: Josh Reece
- Nov 13 6 Student Seminars Presented – all students must attend
Seminar: TBA
- Nov 20 6 Student Seminars Presented – all students must attend
Seminar: TBA
- Nov 27 Thanksgiving: Give thanks
No seminar
- Dec 4 Individual evaluations: Sign up list will be given out
Major Fields Tests that need to be repeated must be completed by this date