

**BIOL 4900**  
Credit Hours 0-3-1

**SENIOR SEMINAR**  
Department of Biology

**Instructor:** Dr. Timothy J. Fort

**Phone:** 229-249-2643

**Office Hours:** Thursday 11.00am – 1.00pm or by scheduled appointment.

**Office:** BC 1100

**Email:** tjfort@valdosta.edu

**Senior Seminar:** Monday 4.30 pm – 6.20 pm BC 2022

**Biology Seminar Series:** Tuesday 12.30 pm – 1.50 pm BC 1023

**Course Description BIOL 4900:**

The capstone course in biology. Students are required to attend outside lectures chosen by the instructor. This course assesses students' ability to research independently topics in biology, assimilate the information, and disseminate the information in an organized and understandable fashion in both written and oral forms. Besides demonstrating comprehension of their topic and competence in communication skills, students take the ETS Major Field test in biology and complete the departmental Senior Exit Questionnaire for successful completion of the course.

**Pre- or Co-requisites:**

Completion of all required courses in the senior curriculum for the biology major. Grade: Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U).

**Educational Outcomes:**

This course supports the Department of Biology Educational Outcome #1 and the Valdosta State University General Educational Outcomes #4 and #7.

**Specific Course Requirements:**

- 1) **Research paper.**
- 2) **Oral presentation.**
- 3) **Successful completion of ETS Major Field test in Biology (140 or higher).**
- 4) **Attendance of all scheduled class meetings.**
- 5) **Attendance and evaluation of required seminars.**
- 6) **Completion of Biology Senior Exit Questionnaire.**

**Major Field Test:**

The ETS Major Field test is a comprehensive, standardized test designed to evaluate the Student's general knowledge in the sub-disciplines of Biology. Successful completion of the ETS Major Field test is a course requirement. Students who fail to complete the ETS Major Field test will receive a grade of unsatisfactory (U) for the course. Each student is responsible for scheduling the Major Field Test through the VSU Testing office (Powell Hall-East, first floor, room 1131). Scheduling for can be done online: [www.valdosta.edu/academics/services/testing/welcome.php](http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/services/testing/welcome.php)

A fee is assessed to take the Major Field Test. The Biology Department will pay the fee for each student to take the test once. Students who fail to score at least 140 on the test must re-take it until a score of at least 140 is achieved. The student will bear the cost for any re-taking of the Major Field test. **Students should complete the Major Field Test by 11<sup>th</sup> March.** For more information on the Major Field Test in Biology please refer to the ETS website. (<http://www.ets.org/mft/about/content/biology>). **A photocopy of your ETS major field test score must be submitted to the instructor**

**Biology Seminar Series:**

**Students are required to attend all seminars in the Biology Seminar Series.** The Spring 2019 Biology Seminar Series schedule is yet to be finalized, but it is expected that there will be at least 4 Seminars and possibly several Biology Student Master's thesis defense presentations. Seminars will be held on Tuesday's at 12.30pm - 1.50pm. Students are required to complete an evaluation form for each science seminar attended. An evaluation form template will be emailed to all students at the beginning of the semester which should then be printed out in advance of each seminar by the student. In order to receive credit for attending a biology seminar, it is the student's responsibility to see the instructor immediately after each seminar and submit his/her signed completed evaluation form. **No late and/or electronically submitted evaluation forms will be accepted.**

**Attendance and Conduct:**

Attendance of all scheduled class periods (including all student presentations) and all Biology seminars is required of all students. Students are expected to arrive on time and should not enter a class or seminar late. Use of cell phones during class periods and science seminars is not permitted. **If you use your cell phone, or your cell phone activates, during a student oral presentation or formal biology seminar you will automatically receive an unsatisfactory grade for the course.**

**Title IX Statement:** Valdosta State University (VSU) is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive work and learning environment free from discrimination and harassment. VSU is dedicated to creating an environment where all campus community members feel valued, respected, and included. Valdosta State University prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex (including pregnancy status, sexual harassment and sexual violence), sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, national origin, disability, genetic information, or veteran status, in the University's programs and activities as required by applicable laws and regulations such as Title IX. The individual designated with responsibility for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning nondiscrimination policies is the University's Title IX Coordinator: Maggie Viverette, Director of the Office of Social Equity, titleix@valosta.edu, 1208 N. Patterson St., Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Georgia 31608, 229-333-5463.

**Access Statement:** Students with disabilities who are experiencing difficulty in accessing any of the materials or activities in this course should contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss accommodations.

### **Detailed Outline of Research Paper:**

You are required to submit a detailed outline of your paper by 18<sup>th</sup> February. Your outline should include a potential title for your paper and a detailed outline of the general sections and subsections within the paper with detailed notes, citations, etc. A correctly formatted reference section should be included. Copies of abstracts from all primary research articles included in the reference section should also be included.

### **Research Paper:**

You are required to write a paper on your selected topic. **A 1<sup>st</sup> draft of your research paper should be completed by the 4<sup>th</sup> March.** In class you will get feedback on your paper through peer review. **A 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of your research paper should be completed by the 11<sup>th</sup> March.** In class you will get feedback on your paper through a second peer review. **Your final completed paper must be submitted to the instructor in two formats (paper hardcopy and electronic) by 1<sup>st</sup> April.** The “paper hardcopy” version of the paper, along with copies of all cited primary research articles and signed plagiarism policy must be submitted to the instructor in an organized 3 ring binder. The “electronic” version of the paper must be submitted to the instructor via email as an attachment in Microsoft Word. Late submission of either the “paper hardcopy” or “electronic” version of the paper will result in an unsatisfactory grade for the course.

### **Oral Presentation:**

Students are required to give an oral presentation of their research topic. Oral presentations will be scheduled for the last few weeks of the semester with each student being assigned a specific date and time for their presentation. After research topics have been picked an oral presentation schedule will be generated and emailed to all students. Each presentation will be scheduled to last for a total of 30 minutes. For the first 20 minutes, the student will give a formal presentation of their topic using PowerPoint. The final 10 minutes of the allotted time is reserved for questions and class discussion. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that their PowerPoint presentation can be properly shown using the computer and projection system available in the assigned classroom. **The week prior to their presentation, each student must submit an electronic copy of their PowerPoint presentation via email to the instructor.**

### **Overall Format of Research Paper:**

#### **1) Title Page:**

Must contain the following: Title of the paper, Student name, Course title, Instructor name, Submission date.

#### **2) Abstract:**

Abstracts should be on a separate page and be a maximum of 300 words in length.

#### **3) Main body of the research paper consisting of:**

**i) Introduction:** An opening to the paper that provides the reader with a general introduction to the research topic.

**ii) Discussion:** A detailed discussion of specific scientific studies on the selected topic with references cited where appropriate. Subheadings for different sections within the discussion should be used as appropriate.

**iii) Conclusion:** A concluding section to the main body of the paper that summarizes the student’s interpretation of the information in the paper



## **Student Checklist of Course Requirements:**

- Completion of the online plagiarism tutorial (**By 28<sup>th</sup> January**)
- Detailed Outline with references for research paper (**Due 18<sup>th</sup> February**)
- Completion of MFT in Biology ( 140) – Submit photocopy of score to instructor. (**By 11<sup>th</sup> March**)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Draft of research paper ready for Peer Review (**By 4<sup>th</sup> March**)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft of research paper ready for Peer Review (**By 11<sup>th</sup> March**)
- Completion of Biology Senior Exit Questionnaire. (**25<sup>th</sup> March**)
- Oral Presentation PowerPoint (email) – (**Due 1 week before presentation**)
- Research paper “paper hardcopy” – (**Due 1<sup>st</sup> April in class**)
- Research paper “electronic copy” – (**Due 1<sup>st</sup> April before 8pm**)
- Attendance of all scheduled class periods (including all student presentations)
- Attendance of and submission of completed evaluation forms from Biology Series Seminars and Masters Student Presentations.