

## Syllabus: Biology 4900B – Senior Seminar – Fall 2009

**Instructor:** Dr. Archana Bhasin

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**Office:** 2093 Bailey Science Center

**Class:** Tues 2:00 - 3:50pm Bailey Science Center Rm. 1024

Thurs 4:00 – 5:00 pm Powell Hall Auditorium

**Office hours:** Tues 2:00 - 3:50pm when class does not meet or by appointment

**Course Objective (from the Undergraduate Catalog):** “The capstone course in biology. This course assesses students’ abilities to research independently topics in biology, assimilate the information, and disseminate the information in an organized and understandable fashion in both oral and written forms. Besides demonstrating comprehension of their topic and competence in communication skill, students take the ETS Major Field test in biology and complete the Senior Exit Questionnaire for successful course completion.”

**“Pre or co-requisite:** completion of all courses in the senior curriculum for the biology major.”

**Course requirements: in order to pass this course with a Satisfactory (S), you will need to complete the following:**

- a minimum score of 140 on the Major Fields Test
- a 30 minute PowerPoint presentation that is understandable to your classmates, is in your own words and that demonstrates your understanding of the material
- a review paper on your articles that is well-written, well-referenced, understandable to your classmates, is in your own words and that demonstrates your understanding of the material
- attendance at all class and Science Seminar sessions (speak with me about special circumstances)

**Schedule** (tentative and subject to change; please check your email regularly):

Sept. 1 – Sept. 29 Tuesday class will not meet, but Thursday Science Seminars beginning Sept. 10 must still be attended; please check the Science Seminar website for updated speaker schedules.

Oct. 6 – all students will take the Major Fields Test during class time (more details to follow)

Oct. 13 – presentations 1, 2

Oct. 27 – presentations 3, 4

Nov. 3 – presentations 5, 6

Nov. 10 – presentations 7, 8, 9

Nov. 17 – presentations 10, 11

Nov. 24 – presentations 12, 13

Dec. 1 – presentations 14, 15

In addition, students must schedule an appointment with me (approximately 30 minutes) one week prior to their presentation to evaluate their progress. Please bring an outline, references, drafts of paper and presentations, as well as any questions that you may have. You must come prepared!

**Plagiarism:**

**Plagiarism will absolutely not be tolerated!** Copying of text, whether intentional or not, from your sources will result in failure of the course. You must be diligent in citing all of your reference and you must avoid taking someone else's words, even if you quote them. A paper full of quotes does not demonstrate understanding and will result in failure of the course.

**Paraphrasing does not mean changing a word or two.** The best way to ensure that you do not plagiarize is to read the material, then step away from it for a day or two, and then begin writing. This method also allows you to gauge your understanding of the material.

**PowerPoint presentation and paper: Your presentation and paper must include the following:**

- thorough background on the system
- the biological questions that the authors are addressing
- the methods that the authors use to answer the questions
- the results of the experiments and interpretations of the experiments
- you must look at all the data and walk the audience through the data; do not merely accept the authors' interpretations without critical analysis
- your presentation should include appropriate figures and appropriate text font
- you must explain your presentation, not read your presentation; reading of your presentation does not demonstrate understanding
- your paper must be in review format (like a term paper) and should not have methods, results or discussion sections since this is not your work; see other review articles as a guide
- your paper must be thorough and complete, double-spaced, 12 pt font
- the length of the paper and the number of references is dependent on the topic; the paper should be approximately 10 pages with approximately 10 references minimum
- the paper should be spell-checked (don't let spell-check auto-correct scientific terms), grammar-checked and very well-edited by yourself and others
- references should be peer-reviewed articles, review articles by experts in the field, books or book chapters by experts in the field, accepted text references for general information; avoid newspaper articles and websites (you may use these to assist your understanding but do not depend on them for accurate information)
- use Inter Library Loan!; do not limit your articles to free ones or you will have a very incomplete story
- references should include authors (only use *et al.* if there are more than five authors), title, year published, journal, volume, page numbers
- on the day of your presentation, submit a folder containing your powerpoint slides, your paper and copies of all references used