



Valdosta State University, Department of Biology

BIOL 4900: Senior Seminar

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Instructor: Dr. Joshua S. Reece

Classroom: (Lecture) BSC 1202 R 1:30pm to 3:20pm; (Seminar) Powell Hall R 4pm-4:50pm

Office: Bailey Science Center Room 1213 Phone: 229-219-3293

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Office hours: Wednesdays 1:30pm to 3:30pm, and by appointment

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## Course Overview

Welcome to BIOL4900, Senior Seminar. This is the capstone course in Biology at VSU. It is designed to assess your ability to research topics, assimilate information, and disseminate that information to your peers in an organized, understandable, and comprehensive manner.

## Course Objectives

By the end of this course you will have demonstrated the ability to:

- 1) write a research paper
- 2) give a presentation on your research
- 3) attend and participate in a science seminar series

## Related Learning Objective for VSU Department of Biology

All five of the learning objectives for the VSU Department of Biology are objectives of this course: [http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/catalog/1213/ugrad/documents/UG\\_131-146.pdf](http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/catalog/1213/ugrad/documents/UG_131-146.pdf)

## Related Learning Objective for General Education Outcomes

- 4: Students will express themselves clearly, logically, and precisely in writing and in speaking, and they will demonstrate competence in reading and listening.
- 5: Students will demonstrate knowledge of scientific and mathematical principles and proficiency in laboratory practices
- 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze, to evaluate, and to make inferences from oral, written, and visual materials.

## Course Prerequisites

The course prerequisite is to have senior standing and to have completed or co-registered in all required courses in the senior curriculum for Biology.

## Course Credits

BIOL 4900 is a one credit course.

## Required Texts and Materials

There are no required texts.

## Grading

This course has a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading scheme. To achieve a satisfactory grade you must do the following:

- 1) Attend 80% of the seminars and submit questions for the speaker from each seminar
- 2) Score 140 or better on the Major Field Test
- 3) Attend 80% of class meetings
- 4) Present a coherent research paper
- 5) Give a coherent oral presentation of your research
- 6) Behave professionally during seminars and class meetings

Failure to meet all six of these requirements will result in an Unsatisfactory grade (which means you fail the course)

## Course Requirements

You are responsible for making an appointment with the VSU Testing Office to schedule your Major Fields Test. Failure to score 140 or better will necessitate retaking the test in order to pass the course, and you will be responsible for any fees related to retaking the test.

## Student Conduct

You will be respectful of your classmates and your instructor. Cell phone use is not allowed during class. If I see you using your cell phone during class, you will be asked to leave. If this causes you to miss more than 20% of the class or seminar meetings, you fail the course. In addition, you will write a manuscript (rubric at end of syllabus) and give a presentation on your research paper.

## Course Policies: Technology and Media

**Email:** Please email me only from a VSU email account, and use [jreece@valdosta.edu](mailto:jreece@valdosta.edu). I will not respond to emails from any non-VSU accounts.

## Accommodations Statement

Students with disabilities who are experiencing barriers in this course may contact the Access Office for assistance in determining and implementing reasonable accommodations. The Access Office is located in Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V), 229-375-5871 (Video Phone), and 229-219-1348 (TTY). For more information, please visit <http://www.valdosta.edu/student/disability> or email [access@valdosta.edu](mailto:access@valdosta.edu).

## Academic Integrity

**My Statement:** You can probably get away with some cheating/plagiarism. But, if I catch you, I will do everything I can to kick you out of my class and impose all possible penalties. I have zero tolerance, so do not risk it.

**University Prepared Statement:** Academic integrity is the responsibility of all VSU faculty and students. Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the Academic Integrity Policy as set forth in the

Student Code of Conduct and the syllabus. All students are expected to do their own work and to uphold a high standard of academic ethics. Cheating (including plagiarism) will not be tolerated. The instructor reserves the right to dismiss you from the course without credit if you are caught cheating. You will be respectful of your instructor and your fellow students at all times, or you will be dismissed from the class and potentially the course.

### **Class Schedule (see website for Seminar Schedule:**

<http://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/arts-sciences/science-seminars/2015-spring/>

Jan 22: Introduction/Choose topics/Plagiarism/How to sign up for Major Field Test

Jan 29: How to do scientific literature searches

Feb 5: Final topic approval and 10 primary literature sources due

Feb 12: work on paper, total of 15 primary literature sources due

Feb 19: Submit rough draft to class peers for review

Feb 26: Revise papers; sign up for presentation dates

March 5: Written papers due (midterm date)

March 12: Work on presentations

March 19: Work on presentations

March 26: Sign up for presentations

April 2: Give presentations to class

April 9: Give presentations to class

April 16: Give presentations to class

April 23: Give presentations to class

April 30: Major Fields Test must be completed with passing grade to be eligible to pass the course

### **Scientific Paper Rubric**

The topic for the scientific paper is up to the student to determine, but must be approved by the professor (see Class Schedule)

A satisfactory paper will meet the following minimum requirements:

- 1) 15 pages double spaced, with 1 inch margins, Times New Roman 12 pt font. Figures, Tables, and literature cited do not count towards the page total and should be at the end of the document.
- 2) Turned in on time
- 3) Include 15 approved primary literature citations
- 4) Coherent, informative, original work with spelling, grammar, and formatting that is publication quality. The format will match the scientific journal of the student's choosing, but it must match the chosen format, which will be indicated on the cover page of the paper.

### **Presentation Rubric**

The presentation will be on the same topic as the research paper.

A satisfactory presentation will meet the following minimum requirements:

- 1) Be no more than 12 minutes in duration, leaving 3 minutes for questioning
- 2) Include 15 approved citations
- 3) Be coherent, well organized, and presented in a clear and informative manner