

Valdosta State University

BIOL 7900, Graduate Seminar, Spring 2015

Instructor: Dr. Eric Chambers

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Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:00-2:00 pm or by appointment

Meeting times and places:

Science Seminar: 400-4:50 PM, Thursdays, Powell Hall Auditorium*

Class Meeting: 5:00-6:50 PM, Thursdays, BSC 1202

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

Course Description: BIOL 7900 is a graduate level course that focuses on the analysis and discussion of primary literature in the biological sciences.

Educational outcomes associated with this course include numbers 1 and 2 as specified by the VSU Biology Department for its Master's program, and general outcomes numbers 3, 4, 5, and 7 as specified by the University.

Course Requirements:

1. Science Seminars: Students must attend all Seminars hosted by the Biology Department unless other arrangements have been made with the instructor. You must also attend at least two of the seminars hosted by other VSU departments.

2. Discussion Leader: During the class meeting times we will discuss current topics of interest in biology. In order to ensure that these are productive sessions, each student will lead a discussion twice during the semester. You will be allowed to select the topic but you must clear it in advance with me.

You will select 2-3 readings from the primary literature and then finalize your selections by meeting with me in my office on the Wednesday **one week prior to your presentation**. Two of the papers must be primary literature, while the third can be a review article (or additional primary paper). You must then make the papers available to the other students in the course one week before your presentation.

The discussion should be a free-flowing debate so there is no need to prepare a formal Powerpoint presentation. Your job is to lead and guide the discussion. You should outline for the class the key points, strengths, and weaknesses in the papers. Pay close attention to sample design and statistical analysis.

3. Research Presentations: Each student will prepare and present a 20-25 minute presentation on their ongoing research (or proposed research). You will make this presentation using Powerpoint. Please be prepared for questions and constructive critiques from the instructor and fellow students.

4. Participation: A successful seminar experience is an interactive learning experience. It is vital that the class members actively participate through comments and discussion. A portion of your grade will be based on your contribution to class discussion. It is critical that you carefully read the papers each week. There will be two presenters each week—so you must keep up with the readings. Attendance at the Science Seminars is also built into the participation grade.

Grading: Grades will be based on a total of 300 points as described below. Grading for this type of course will be somewhat subjective but as you are all graduate students I will assume that you are an A student. Your grade will start to fall if you don't show up, don't participate or are clearly unprepared. Final grades will be based on the following point totals.

A = 270 – 300

B = 240 – 269

C = 210 – 239

D = 180 - 209