

BIOL 4900
Credit Hours 0-3-1

SENIOR SEMINAR
Department of Biology

Instructor: Dr. Timothy J. Fort
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Office Hours: Thursday 11.00am – 1.00pm or by scheduled appointment.

Senior Seminar: Tuesday 5.00pm – 6.50pm BC 1202
Biology Seminar Series: Tuesday 12.45pm – 1.35pm 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

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 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 3rd October.** 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 Fall 2017 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 12.45pm - 1.35pm. 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 class or a science 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 barriers in this course may contact the Access Office for assistance in determining and implementing reasonable accommodations. The Access Office is located in Farbar Hall. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V), 229-375-5871 (VP) and 229-219-1348 (TTY). For more information, please visit VSU's Access Office or email: access@valdosta.edu.

Privacy Act (FERPA):

Due to the Buckley Amendment, or Privacy Act, an individual's personal information cannot be released to anyone but that individual. As such, grades will not be discussed over the phone, by email, or released to a friend or relative.

Cheating / Plagiarism:

Please refer to the Student Code of Ethics in the Valdosta State University Student Handbook.
Please refer to the Valdosta State University, Department of Biology Plagiarism Policy.

It is imperative that all student papers are the student's own original work. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student caught plagiarizing shall receive a failing grade on their paper and a grade of unsatisfactory for the course. Each student will be required to read the VSU Department of Biology Plagiarism policy (see department webpage), print and sign the form indicating that they have read and comprehended the policy. The signed form must be included in an appendix with their submitted paper. By taking this course, you agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin, a tool within BlazeVIEW

In addition, students must complete the online plagiarism tutorial by 22nd August.

<http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/plagiarismtutorial.php>

Grading:

Discussion/Participation:	10 points
Oral Presentation:	40 points
Written Paper:	50 points
Plagiarism in paper:	Automatic zero for paper
Absence from a scheduled Class:	- 5 points
Each absence from Science Seminar:	- 5 points
Failure to complete Major Field Test:	- 40 points
Failure to complete the senior exit questionnaire:	- 30 points
Failure/late submission of outline of research paper:	- 20 points

Final Grade:

Satisfactory	(S) \geq 70 points
Unsatisfactory	(U) $<$ 70 points

Outline of Research Paper:

You are required to submit a detailed outline of your paper by 12th September. 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. 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 draft of your research paper should be completed by the 3rd October.** In class you will get feedback on your paper through peer review. **Your final completed paper must be submitted to the instructor in two formats (paper hardcopy and electronic) by 24th October.** 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:

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.

4) Literature cited

The literature cited must contain at least 10 primary research articles. Students may also cite no more than 3 review articles and no more than 2 textbooks. No web based references will be accepted unless they are from an online peer reviewed journal. All references included must be cited at least once in the body of the paper using the proper format. For this course we will adhere to the format specified in the instructions to authors for the Journal of Neurophysiology published by the American physiological society.
(<http://www.the-aps.org/mm/Publications/Info-For-Authors/Composition>)

5) Figures:

All included figures must be numbered and have an accompanying legend.

6) Appendix 1:

Include complete copies of all primary research articles cited.

7) Appendix 2:

Include a signed copy of the Department of Biology Plagiarism Policy

Specific Formatting of research paper

- i) 12 point Times New Roman Font.
- ii) Double Spaced
- iii) Left justified
- iv) 1 inch margins
- v) Page Numbering:
 - Title and Abstract pages are not to be numbered
 - Number all pages of the body, literature cited and figures (lower right corner)
- vi) Paper Length:
 - Paper must be a minimum of 10 pages in length
 - Title, Abstract, literature cited and figures do not count towards paper length.

Tentative Schedule:

DATE	TOPIC
15 August	Introduction / Organization / Topic Selection
22 August	Discussion of Topics / Oral Presentations (Online Plagiarism Tutorial Completed)
29 August	<i>No Class – Student Research</i>
5 September	<i>No Class – Student Research</i>
12 September	<i>No Class – Student Research</i> (Detailed Outlines with References)
19 September	<i>No Class – Student Research</i>
26 September	<i>No Class – Student Research</i>
3 October	Peer Review of Student Papers (Biology MFT Completed)
10 October	NO CLASS FALL BREAK
17 October	Biology Senior Exit Questionnaire
24 October	Research Paper Due (Hard copy in class, Electronic copy by 8pm)
31 October	Student Presentations
7 November	Student Presentations
14 November	Student Presentations
21 November	Student Presentations
28 November	Student Presentations

Student Checklist of Course Requirements:

- ___ Completion of the online plagiarism tutorial (By 22nd August)
- ___ Outline with references for research paper (Due 12th September)
- ___ Completion of MFT in Biology (≥ 140) – Submit photocopy of score to instructor. (By 3rd October)
- ___ Draft of research paper ready for Peer Review (By 3rd October)
- ___ Completion of Biology Senior Exit Questionnaire. (17th October)
- ___ Oral Presentation PowerPoint (email) – (Due 1 week before presentation)
- ___ Research paper “paper hardcopy” – (Due 24th October in class)
- ___ Research paper “electronic copy” – (Due 24th October by 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.

TOPIC SELECTION ORDER: _____