

Biology 4900—Senior Seminar
Fall 2018

Instructor: Dr. Timothy P. Henkel

Office: 2212 Bailey Science Center 249-4844

Office hours: W 10 - 11 am and by appointment

Email: tphenkel@valdosta.edu

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-requisites: Completion of all courses in the senior curriculum for the biology major.

Optional Text: *Writing Papers in the Biological Sciences*, Fifth Edition. McMillan, Virginia.

Course requirements: Ultimately, the course graded as "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory". In order to obtain a Satisfactory, you will need to complete all of the following:

- a minimum score of 140 on the Major Fields Test
- attend 95% of scheduled class meetings and seminars.
- Complete the Senior Exit Questionnaire
- Obtain at least 70% of points from the following assignments and projects
 - o Annotated Bibliography – 10 pts
 - o Peer Review – 10 pts
 - o GRFP Statements – 40 pts
 - o Oral Presentation – 30 pts
 - o Seminar Summaries – 10 pts

All assignments are due at the start of class on the assigned date. Assignments can be completed early; however, **no assignments will be accepted after the due date**. Assignments not turned in will receive 0 points. Rubrics for all assignments and projects are provided on the course Blazeview website.

Major Field Test: The ETS Major Field Test (MFT) is a comprehensive, standardized test designed to evaluate the student's general knowledge in the sub-disciplines of biology. The test scores will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the department's curriculum, and VSU's scores will be compared to the national average to identify possible weak areas in our curriculum. Thus, students should take the test seriously and make every effort to excel on it. Completion of the ETS Major Field Test with a score of 140 or higher is a course requirement, and students who fail to complete the ETS Major Field Test will receive a grade of unsatisfactory for the course.

Each individual student is responsible for contacting the VSU Testing Office (Powell Hall-West, First Floor, Room 1120; Telephone 229-245-3878) and arranging a time to take the ETS Major Field Test in Biology. Students must schedule the Major Field Test by Feb. 21 2012. 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.

Seminar Summaries: As part of BIOL 4900 you will attend the seminars hosted by the Department of Biology. Seminars are scheduled for Tues 12:30-1:30 pm, though not every week will have a seminar scheduled. It is your responsibility to be aware of the schedule and attend the seminar. For each seminar, you are required to complete a written summary. A rubric for seminar summaries is posted on the course Blazeview website. Summaries are due by 5pm the Friday immediately following the seminar. Seminar summaries should be in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx) and uploaded through TurnItIn on Blazeview.

Be aware that VSU policy is that missing 20% of a class results in automatic failure of that course. Thus, in the present case, if you are absent from 20% of the seminars, you will receive a grade of Unsatisfactory for this course.

Academic Honesty Policy: Cheating, plagiarism (submitting another person's material as one's own, or doing work for another person which will receive academic credit) are all impermissible. This includes the use of unauthorized books, notebooks, or other sources in order to secure or give help during an assignment or exam, the unauthorized copying of examinations, assignments, reports, or term papers, or the presentation of unacknowledged material as if it were your own work. Students are responsible for knowing, understanding and complying with the VSU Student Code of Conduct, in Appendix A of the Student Handbook (<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/student-handbook.php>)

If substantial evidence exists for a violation of this policy, ***the student(s) involved will receive a grade of 'U' for the course*** and an official record will be filed following the Academic Integrity Response along with a letter to the Dean of Students (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/academic-honesty-policies-and-procedures.php>).

Students are required to read and sign the Department of Biology's Plagiarism Policy. <https://www.valdosta.edu/biology/documents/resources/PlagiarismPolicy.pdf>

In addition, students must complete the plagiarism tutorial **by Aug 21** online at http://lib.usm.edu/plagiarism_tutorial/

TurnItIn: 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. For more information on the use of Turnitin at VSU see <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/turnitin-for-students.php>.

Access Office: Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications due to a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in the Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 245-2498 (V/VP) and 219-1348 (TTY).

Federal Privacy Act: It is illegal to release personal information about an individual to others. Therefore grades, averages, and other personal information about any person will not be released to another person or over email.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

Date	Topic
Aug-14	Course Logistics and Overview
Aug-21	Effective Scientific Writing
Aug-28	Independent Research
Sep-04	Independent Research
Sep-11	Peer Review; Annotated Bibliography
Sep-18	Independent Research
Sep-25	Independent Research
Oct-02	Paper Submission; Student Exit Questionnaire; First MFT Attempt Complete
Oct-09	Effective Scientific Presentations; Presentation Schedule
Oct-16*	Presenentation Preparation
Oct-23	Student Presentations
Oct-30	Student Presentations
Nov-06*	Student Presentations
Nov-13*	Student Presentations
Nov-20	Thanksgiving - No Class
Nov-27	Student Presentations

*currently scheduled Seminars