Biology 3987  
Biology Seminar  
Spring 2011, Sec. 2

**Syllabus**

**Instructor:** Patrick Schoff  
**Office:** 315 LSci  
**Phone:** 726-6926  
**email:** pschoff@nrri.umn.edu

**Life Sciences Librarian:** Sunshine Carter  
**Phone:** 726-8733  
**email:** scarter@d.umn.edu  
**Library Guide:** [http://libguides.d.umn.edu/biol3987](http://libguides.d.umn.edu/biol3987)

**Class meeting:** Mon & Wed 11:00-11:50 am, SSB 115; Fri 3:00-4:15 pm, LSci 185

**Course website:** [https://wiki.umn.edu/Biol3987F11Sec2/WebHome](https://wiki.umn.edu/Biol3987F11Sec2/WebHome)

**Office Hours:** Wed 10:00-10:50 am, or by appointment

**Course Prerequisites.** 90 credits

**Course Goals and Objectives.** In Biology Seminar students will develop the skills necessary to deliver an effective scientific presentation. Specifically, students will:

1) Attend, evaluate, and discuss three Biology Department seminars (Fridays, 3:00 – 4:15); chosen by the instructor.  
2) Attend and evaluate five additional Biology Department seminars; chosen by the student.  
3) Select a subject appropriate for a scientific presentation.  
4) Use print and electronic resources to gather scientific information.  
5) Synthesize and organize information necessary to present an accurate, coherent, and interesting seminar.  
6) Construct and present a 35 - 40 minute public presentation using PowerPoint and other media.  
7) Prepare an abstract, bibliography, and seminar announcement.  
8) Critically evaluate student seminar presentations.

**Course Requirements.** Each student will develop and present a 35 minute talk on a topic of their choosing (subject to the instructor’s approval). Preliminary work will include submission of a topic and a thesis statement, generation of an abstract and outline, and construction of a bibliography consisting of at least ten primary literature sources and
other references. Deadlines for these various components will be found in the Session Schedule. In addition, seminar announcements must be posted in the Swenson Science Building two days before each presentation. Seminar presentations will be conducted using PowerPoint or other presentation software and evaluation will be based on coherency and completeness, and delivery. Presenters are also expected to solicit and answer questions from students and the instructor. A laptop computer and projector will be provided, but there are no provisions for software or storage devices.

Biology Seminar students are expected to evaluate all of presentations, including Departmental and in-class seminars. Each student will also complete a self-evaluation.

Finally, attendance is mandatory for all student seminars; planned absences must be excused prior to class. Students are expected to participate in all aspects of the course, including asking pertinent questions of the speakers and offering detailed evaluations of student and Departmental presentations.

Grading. This course will be graded on an A-F basis; grades will be based on the following activities. Please note: students are responsible for tracking their own deadline dates. Failure to submit a required assignment by the deadline will result in point reduction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Departmental seminars</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student seminar</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary work</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title &amp; Thesis</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bibliographies</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation, incl. Q &amp; A</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student seminar evaluations</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Q &amp; A</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Total = 200 points

A = 100 – 93%
B = 89 – 83 %
C = 79 – 73%
D = 69 – 63%
### Deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Due no later than:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Departmental seminar evaluations</td>
<td>day of seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary seminar topic and thesis statement (email)</td>
<td>September 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final seminar topic and thesis statement (email)</td>
<td>September 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft bibliography (5 sources)</td>
<td>October 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline</td>
<td>two weeks prior to presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>one week prior to presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract posting</td>
<td>two days prior to presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final bibliography (at least 10 primary sources)</td>
<td>with presentation</td>
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University Policies

Access for Students with Disabilities
Individuals who have any disability, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the start of the semester. Methods, materials or testing may be modified to provide for equitable participation.

Promotion of Bias-free Instruction
The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all of its students shall have equal educational opportunities. The University expressly forbids discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, disability, veteran's status, ethnicity, religion, creed, national origin or marital status. If you believe that your Biology instructor has not followed this policy, you are invited to bring this to the attention of the Biology Department Head (207 Swenson Science Building; 726-7271) or the Associate Dean of the College of Science and Engineering (140 Engineering; 726-7585). Your conference will be kept confidential.

Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty is a serious offense that tarnishes UMD's reputation and discredits the accomplishments of students. This course will adhere to UMD's Student Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found at http://www.d.umn.edu/assl/conduct/integrity. This policy sanctions students with penalties up to and including expulsion from the university.

Student Conduct
The instructor will enforce and students are expected to follow the University's Student Conduct Code (http://www.d.umn.edu/assl/conduct/code). Disruptive classroom behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach, or student learning, is prohibited.