

SC/BIOL 3100 2.0
Current Topics in Biological Research
Fall 2012

Course Description: This fall course is open only to students registered in an Honours Biology program, and it is normally open only in the year prior to that in which students will undertake their thesis work (SC/BIOL 4000 8.0 or SC/BIOL 4000 3.0). The course tutors students in a number of research-related skills: (a) searching strategies, (b) bibliography management and annotations, (c) writing for the public, (d) audio-visual presenting at conference standards (students work in pairs), and (e) summarizing the literature of a particular faculty member.

During the first week we will permanently split the class into two streams, one with a cell-molecular-physiology focus, and one with an ecology-evolution-physiology focus. Two Mondays (including the first day) will involve both streams (i.e. all students), and we will meet in a computer lab in the TEL building. Other classes will only involve the stream you are in. There will be three types of classes: tutorials related to skills development and assignments, guest lectures by Faculty, and seminar presentations by students.

The Faculty research review segment of the course will provide an opportunity to discover and evaluate a Faculty research seminar in order to assist students with making decisions about approaching supervisors for their 4th year Honours thesis. Skills developed in this segment will include comprehension and analysis of advanced research material unfamiliar to the student (covering a broad range of biological research fields), as well as literature review writing.

Course Personnel: I am the Course Director, **Alex Mills** (Room 134 Chemistry Building: ammills@yorku.ca). If you wish to arrange an appointment with me, please send your email from an @yorku.ca email account – emails from other accounts (e.g. hotmail, gmail, etc.) will likely languish or expire in an email spam folder. Be sure to include your full name and student number in your e-mail text or in the subject line. I will read and respond to e-mail queries once a day on weekdays. I may post specific office hours. I am often not on campus on Thursdays, and Tuesdays are the best day for finding me.

There will be one TA/ Marker, Jessica Ferraro.

The Librarian who will be assisting for the first presentation is Illo-Katrynn Maimets (Biology Librarian), 102K Steacie Science and Engineering Library. ilo@yorku.ca

Required Textbook:

McMillan, Victoria E. 2011. Writing Papers in the Biological Sciences (5th edition). Bedford/St. Martin's

Course Timetable: Lectures/Tutorials are Mondays 2.30 to 5.20 pm.

Important Dates

November 9 – Last date to drop course without receiving a grade

December 3 – Last class for fall term.

Grading: 100% Assignments:

The four skills session assignments are cumulatively worth 70% of the final grade

- Assignments 1 through 3 → $3 \times 17.5\% = 52.5\%$
 - Seminar Presentation → $17.5\% = 17.5\%$
 - Literature Review Essay → $30\% = 30.0\%$
- $= 100\%$

All final grades will be carefully evaluated before submission and marks at grade borderlines will be carefully assessed. I will deal only with situations where there is clear evidence of an arithmetic error in a grade calculation. Students may petition for a regrade as an option if there is a dispute other than a calculation error over a grade. Remember on regrading, a mark could go up, it could go down, or it could remain the same. The regraded mark will stand.

Professional Conduct During all Seminars and Skills Sessions: You are expected to conduct yourself appropriately during all seminars. Ensure that your cell phones and other devices are turned off, and remember that there will be no laptop use for any non-course activity (like e-mail, FaceBook, internet surfing, etc.). Refrain from reading newspapers or partaking in other disruptive activities during the class. Department of Biology faculty members **volunteer their time** to present a seminar and mark essays in BIOL 3100. Please be respectful.

Course Schedule: See spreadsheet posted on the Moodle website.

Assignment due dates – Assignments are due at the start of the class for the particular date given.

Tentative list of **faculty members giving seminars** (with schedule to be advised separately):

Cell/ Molecular/Physiology Stream (Stream A) – Peter Cheung, Art Hilliker, Michael Scheid, Thilo Womelsdorf, Mark Bayfield, Gary Sweeney

Ecology/Evolution/Physiology Stream (Stream B) – Bridget Stutchbury, Sapna Sharma, Roberto Quinlan, Amro Zayed, Chris Bergevin, Laurence Packer

Attendance is Required. Embedded within the final grade is an attendance mark of 14%. You don't get marks for attending class, but you lose 2% for each Monday you miss. There will be attendance sign-in sheets at each class. You must sign in both BEFORE the class begins and AFTER class. Please sign in before 2:30 pm: If everybody comes at 2:29 pm to sign in, the resulting chaos will result in some people not signing in by 2:30 and losing their attendance mark. A single missing signature will be considered as an absence; i.e. if you sign in but not out, or vice versa, you will be considered as absent and lose the 1% for that session.

Missed Classes: Medical excuses for missed classes must be submitted to Dr. Mills within **2 working days** (by the end of Wednesday) of the missed class, *with your name and student number clearly legible*. The medical note should be date-stamped by the undergraduate biology office (Rm 108 Farquharson). It is your responsibility to arrange this before the office closes. If more than 1 class is missed for any reason other than a valid and verifiable medical excuse, a deduction will be made from the attendance mark, as this course is focused around listening to research seminars, and seminars cannot be re-offered nor is reading a .pdf copy of the presentation a reasonable alternative to attending the seminar. If you have a long term verifiable medical issue that requires missing more than one class, you will be advised to drop the course. Because of the structure of this course, 100% attendance is required to maintain its integrity.

Academic Integrity: Please review the University's policy on academic honesty (http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69#_Toc89156096). See also <http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity/> and http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/. This policy includes all forms of plagiarism on written assignments and evaluation. You are expected to take the responsibility to inform yourself of definitions and expectations of the academic honesty policy. By this juncture in your academic career, you have already had ample opportunity to be informed about your responsibilities with regards to academic integrity. To provide positive reinforcement of the policy and our expectations, Dr. Paula Wilson, former Associate Dean in the Faculty of Science and Engineering with responsibility for academic honesty will provide a discussion in class on the policy and our expectations on October 17.