

Department of Biology Course Outline

SC/BIOL 3100 2.0 – Current Topics in Biological Research Fall 2016

Course Description

The course has 2 learning objectives. First, the course provides insight into the research programs of several faculty members in the Department of Biology. Second, the course provides students with the opportunity to develop skills to read and evaluate scientific research papers, and to enhance their written and oral communication skills in Biology. This course is a prerequisite for students wishing to enroll in the Honours Thesis course in their 4th year of study (SC/BIOL 4000 8.00 or SC/BIOL 4000 3.00). Two lecture hours per week in the fall term. Two credits. This course was previously taught by Dr. Samuel Benchimol, and I would like to acknowledge his contribution to the present course outline.

Prerequisites

None

Course credit exclusion: None

Note: Open only to Honours students majoring in Biology, Environmental Biology or Environmental Science (life sciences stream).

Course Instructors and Contact Information

Lecturer: Dr. Arthur Hilliker
Department of Biology
Farquharson 002/016
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hilliker@yorku.ca

Communication:

You may contact me by e-mail at: hilliker@yorku.ca
Please include "BIOL 3100" in the subject line and your full name and student number in your e-mail text. If you wish to have an appointment with me, please contact me by e-mail first. Course information and resources will be posted on the York University Moodle course website.

Schedule

Time: Mondays 2:30 – 4:30 pm

Location: Life Sciences Building, Room 103

Evaluation

The final grade for the course will be based on the following assignments weighted as indicated:

- Short 2-paragraph summaries on 1 of 2 weekly faculty presentations: **20%**
 - due on the Friday following the presentations (*to be submitted to my mailbox at Farquharson Building Room 247 by 4 pm on Friday*)
 - If there are more than 10 faculty presentations, you will need to prepare **only** a total of 5 summaries.

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| 2. Critical summary article on a specific research paper: | <u>25%</u> |
| • due on Monday, October 17, 2016 (in class) | |
| 3. Review article based on a faculty member's published research: | <u>25%</u> |
| • due on Monday, December 5, 2016 (in class) | |
| 4. Student presentation / Student evaluation: | <u>30%</u> |
| • November 21, 28 and December 5 | |

Late submissions will be given a 0 mark. There is no final exam.

Important Dates

Last date to drop course without receiving a grade is Nov 11, 2016. You may withdraw from a course using the registration and enrolment system after the drop deadline until the last day of class for the term associated with the course. When you withdraw from a course, the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as "W". The withdrawal will not affect your grade point average or count towards the credits required for your degree.

Resources

Textbook: None

Course Website: The BIOL 3100 Moodle site will include all announcements, course materials, resources, discussion forums, and grades. <http://www.yorku.ca/moodle/>.

Learning Outcomes

The course has 2 learning objectives.

First, the course provides insight into the research programs of several faculty members in the Department of Biology.

Second, the course provides students with the opportunity to develop skills to read and evaluate scientific research papers, and to enhance their written and oral communication skills in Biology.

Additional learning objectives may be provided for individual topics throughout the course.

Experiential Education and E-Learning

E-Learning components:

- Moodle Website

Course Policies

1) Late submissions will be given a 0 mark. There is no final exam.

2) Academic Writing Support at Bethune College:

Bethune College offers help with academic writing (Bethune Writing Centre) and provides peer tutoring. If you are having difficulty expressing your thoughts and wish to improve your writing skills, please visit the Bethune College website (<http://bethune.yorku.ca/>) for further information.

3) Accommodations:

Students who feel that there are extenuating circumstances that may interfere with their ability to successfully complete the course requirements are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Course Director as soon as possible.

University Policies

Academic Honesty and Integrity

York students are required to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and they are subject to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty (<http://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/academic-honesty-senate-policy-on/>). The Policy affirms the responsibility of faculty members to foster acceptable standards of academic conduct and of the student to abide by such standards.

There is also an academic integrity website with comprehensive information about academic honesty and how to find resources at York to help improve students' research and writing skills, and cope with University life. Students are expected to review the materials on the Academic Integrity website at - <http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity/>

Access/Disability

York University is committed to principles of respect, inclusion and equality of all persons with disabilities across campus. The University provides services for students with disabilities (including physical, medical, learning and psychiatric disabilities) needing accommodation related to teaching and evaluation methods/materials. These services are made available to students in all Faculties and programs at York University.

Students in need of these services are asked to register with disability services as early as possible to ensure that appropriate academic accommodation can be provided with advance notice. You are encouraged to schedule a time early in the term to meet with each professor to discuss your accommodation needs. Please note that registering with disabilities services and discussing your needs with your professors is necessary to avoid any impediment to receiving the necessary academic accommodations to meet your needs.

Additional information is available at the following websites:

Counselling & Disability Services - <http://cds.info.yorku.ca/>

Counselling & Disability Services at Glendon - <http://www.glendon.yorku.ca/counselling/personal.html>

York Accessibility Hub - <http://accessibilityhub.info.yorku.ca/>

Ethics Review Process

York students are subject to the York University *Policy for the Ethics Review Process for Research Involving Human Participants*. In particular, students proposing to undertake research involving human participants (e.g., interviewing the director of a company or government agency, having students complete a questionnaire, etc.) are required to submit an *Application for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants* at least one month before you plan to begin the research. If you are in doubt as to whether this requirement applies to you, contact your Course Director immediately.

Religious Observance Accommodation

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for an in-class test or examination pose such a conflict for you, contact the Course Director within the first three weeks of class. Similarly, should an assignment to be completed in a lab, practicum placement, workshop, etc., scheduled later in the term pose such a conflict, contact the Course director immediately. Please note that to arrange an alternative date or time for an examination scheduled in the formal examination periods (December and April/May), students must complete an Examination Accommodation Form, which can be obtained from Student Client Services, Student Services Centre or online at

http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/exam_accommodation.pdf (PDF)

Student Conduct in Academic Situations

Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy and mutual respect. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the instructor to maintain an appropriate academic atmosphere in the classroom and other academic settings, and the responsibility of the student to cooperate in that endeavour. Further, the instructor is the best person to decide, in the first instance, whether such an atmosphere is present in the class. The policy and procedures governing disruptive and/or harassing behaviour by students in academic situations is available at - <http://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/disruptive-and-or-harassing-behaviour-in-academic-situations-senate-policy/>