

Meeting time and place:

Science Seminar: 4:00 – 4:50 PM, Thursdays, Powell Hall Auditorium

Class Meeting: 5:00 – 6:50 PM, Thursdays, BSC 1202

Instructor: Dr. Gretchen Bielmyer

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General course description: This course involves discussion and analysis of current topics in biology. Educational outcomes associated with this course include numbers 1 and 2 as specified by the VSU Biology Department for its Master's program, and general outcomes numbers 3, 4, 5, and 7 as specified by the University.

Completion of the course requires the following:

1. Attendance at the Science Seminar: Mandatory for all speakers hosted by the Biology Department. While optional, it is expected that you will attend at least half of the talks hosted by other departments.

2. Discussion Leader: Class meeting times will be devoted to discussion of current topics in biology. Each student will lead the discussion once during the semester. The topic for discussion is up to you, but there can be no duplication. Topics will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Thus, if you have a topic you would really like to discuss, be sure to request it early. During weeks in which Biology is hosting a seminar speaker, you should find papers and focus the discussion on the subject of the speaker's talk.

In order to initiate discussion, you must provide 2-3 readings from the primary literature one week before your presentation (i.e., the readings should be ready for distribution during the class meeting prior to the one you will lead). Seminars should encourage free-flowing debate, so no formal (i.e., Powerpoint) presentation is required. You should also avoid re-reading the papers during class. Everyone in the class should have read the papers, so the goal is to critically evaluate the issues these papers raise. Thus, your main focus should be to provide an outline of key points, strengths and weaknesses in each paper, and other points for discussion.

3. Presentations: Each student will present a 20-25 minute research or related topic seminar, using power point. Students should be prepared for questions and constructive critiques from the instructor and fellow students.

4. Participation: As already stated, seminars are about discussion. Thus, it is critical that each of you actively participate. Consequently, a portion of your grade will be based on your contributions to each week's discussion.

Grading: Grades will be based on a total of 300 points as described below. In addition, you need to be aware that there is a punitive attendance policy. The seminar requires active participation by all of you. So, if you are not here, the class will suffer dramatically. Consequently, for each unexcused absence, you will lose one letter grade off your final grade.

1. Discussion Leader	100 points
2. Presentation	100 points
3. General participation:	100 points
Total	300 points

Evaluating the above is admittedly subjective. I will start the seminar assuming everyone has an A. As long as you do your job, that will not change. However, if you don't show up or don't participate, then your grade will start to fall. Final grades will be based on the following point totals:

- A = 270 - 300
- B = 240 - 269
- C = 210 - 239
- D = 180 - 209

BIOL 7900 Tentative Course Schedule

Month	Date	Seminar Speaker & Topic	Discussion Leader
January	10	None	Organizational Meeting
	17*	TBA Dr. Brian Harfe Director, Program in Developmental Genetics University of Florida, College of Medicine Hosting Dept: Biology	
	24	Microbiology candidate; Room 2022; 1:00-2:00 <u>RFID Tag Could Mean the End of Bar Codes?</u> Dr. Haiquan (Victor) Chen Valdosta State University Hosting Dept: Dept. of Mathematics & Computer Science	
	29	Microbiology candidate; Room 2022; 12:30-1:30	
	31	TBA Dr. Shaun Ault Valdosta State University Hosting Dept: Dept. of Mathematics & Computer Science	3 Seminars:

February	7*	<u>Developing sustainable water-use solutions for agriculture: manipulating crop physiology to increase drought tolerance</u> Dr. Diane Rowland University of Florida Hosting Dept: Biology	
	14*	<u>Springs, the Floridan Aquifer, and the Balance Between Man and Nature</u> Dr. Robert Knight, Director of the Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute Hosting Dept: Biology	
	21	<u>Development of Self-Driving Vehicles</u> Dr. Carl D. Crane III, Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Center of Intelligent machines and Robotics University of Florida Hosting Dept: PAGE, Engineering Studies program	3 Seminars:
	28*	TBA Charles Wright Department of Biology Valdosta State University Hosting Dept: Biology	
March	7*	TBA Dr. Renée S. Arias Molecular Plant Pathologist USDA-ARS-National Peanut Research Laboratory Dawson, GA Hosting Dept: Biology	
	14*	TBA Josh Salter Department of Biology Valdosta State University Hosting Dept: Biology	
	21	None	SPRING BREAK
	28	No seminar this week due to the GA Academy of Sciences Meetings	
April	4	TBA Dr. Iwan Elstak Valdosta State University Hosting Dept: Mathematics and Computer science	3 Seminars:
	11*	TBA Dr. Matt Gilg University of North Florida Hosting Dept: Biology	
	18*	TBA Dr. Choogon Lee	

		College of Medicine Florida State University Hosting Dept: Biology	
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* Dates when the Biology Department is hosting the Science Seminar speaker. Attendance at the Science Seminar is **mandatory** on these days.

Dates when candidates for faculty positions in the Biology Department will be presenting a seminar have not yet been set. However, they are typically scheduled from 12:30-1:30 PM on Tuesday or Thursday. It is expected that all students without a scheduling conflict will be present during those times.