

Valdosta State University  
Department of Biology, College of Arts and Sciences  
BIOL 4900 B: Senior Seminar  
Syllabus, Fall 2013

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Instructor : Dr. Cy L. Mott

Office : Bailey Science Center 1212

Office Hours : Monday 2:00 ±4:00 P. M., Tuesday 3:30 ±4:30 P. M. or by appointment

Phone: 229-333-7851

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Note: Please DO NOT send messages through BlazeVIEW, as they are not automatically forwarded to my VSU email account. Using the email address above will result in the most prompt response.

Course Time and Location : Lecture (BSC 1202): Wednesday 3:30 ±5:20 P. M.

Major Field Test : The ETS Major Field Test is a comprehensive, standardized test designed to measure student achievement in the disciplines of biology, zoology, and botany. The 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 September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013. 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

Friday immediately following the seminar. Seminar summaries should be in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx) and uploaded through TurnItIn on Blazeview.

Participation/Assignments : You are expected to participate in class discussions and be engaged during student presentations. Attendance is mandatory for all classes, and students arriving > 5 minutes late will be marked as absent. Any student missing > 20% of course/seminar

HDFK RWKHU & RQVHTXHQWO\ DQ\ RQH DLGLQJ D<sup>3</sup>FKHD  
of cheating to the instructor will be considered an accomplice and subject to similar penalties as those actually cheating.

I maintain office hours for students needing to discuss course material, and these hours will always be available unless students are otherwise notified in advance. Office hours are meant to address specific questions students may have, not to re-teach lecture material in the case of student absence. If students cannot attend these scheduled office hours, they may make an appointment for an alternate time. However, if a student schedules an appointment outside of scheduled office hours and does not arrive, that student will lose the opportunity to schedule appointments outside of established office hours in the future.

NEVER, EVER, EVER, EVER EMAIL ME TO ASK WHAT YOU MISSED IF YOU ARE ABSENT; IT IS YOUR JOB TO CONSULT WITH CLASSMATES AND DETERMINE WHAT YOU MISSED!!!

Notes/Study Tips :

- a) 5HPHPEHU ZKHQ VHQGLQJ DQ HPDLO WKDW \RXU SURIHVV I should begin with Dear Dr. (insert name), then continue with your message written in DFWXDO (QJOLVK ZRUGV QRW WH[W ODQJXDJH DQG FRQ<sup>3</sup>7KDQNV LQ DG Read that many of people (i.e. your professors) are not biologically linked to WKHLU SKRQH V LQ WKH ZD\ REVHUYHG LQ \R allow up to three (3) business days before sending a follow- XS HPDLO LI \RX KDYHC received response.
- b) 'RQ W VLP SO\ ZULWH GRZQ WKH WKLQJV WKDW WHY LQVW PD\ EH VD\ LQJ VRPHWKLQJ LPSRUWDQW HYHQ ZKHQ WKH\ VXUH LI LW V LPSRUWDQW ZULWH IF YOU STRUGGLE TO IDFW DVN GRQ W WHOO KLP KHU WR V Education, so get what you need out of it.
- c) 7KH SKUDGRHQ W NQRVZKH PRVW SRZHUIXO SKUDVH LQ WKH us to push past the boundaries of current knowledge. Students are often embarrassed to DGPLW WKH\ GRQ W NQR WRIPERZKLOU LEZXKDW KDV DOOR greatest scientists to uncover new things. 2GGV DUH LI \RX GRQ W NQRZ K GRHV QRW NQRZ HLWKHU «
- d) When students say<sup>3</sup> can multi-task while studying ; what they really mean is<sup>3</sup> enjoy doing twice as much work for half of the result . If you eliminate distractions (TV, music, crowds, etc.) your increased focus will allow you to absorb the information much faster and more completely, allowing you time for more enjoyable activities (unless studying is your most enjoyable activity).
- e) 7KH SKUD Degree QR ORQJHU DSSOLHV DV DSSUR[LPDWHO are graduating with a biology degree, to such extent that just having the degree is no longer the easy way into getting a job. Due to the overabundance of degree-holders, those with lower GPAs will only have those jobs available to them that better students did QRW ZDQW DVN PH DERXW QRW VDOWLQJ \RXU IRRG GXUL
- f) 0RVW VWXGHQWV YLHZ KLJKHU HGXF It will take a job with now as a student, and you should get into the habit of practicing good workplace ethics now: be on time, be prepared, and take responsibility for yourself (because no one else will!)

TENTATIVE Schedule: Subject to change

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
14-Aug	Course Logistics and Overview	
21-Aug	Effective Scientific Writing	Plagiarism Tutorial Citation Card Final Topic Selection
28-Aug	Student Research, No Class	
4-Sept	Student Research, No Class	
11-Sept	Effective Scientific Presentations Peer Review of Research Paper	Paper Draft
18-Sept	Student Research, No Class	
25-Sept	Student Research, No Class	
2-Oct	Paper Submission/Senior Exit Questionnaire	Research Paper
9-Oct	Student Presentations	
16-Oct	Student Presentations	
23-Oct	Student Presentations	
30-Oct	Student Presentations	
6-Nov	Student Presentations	
13-Nov	Student Presentations	
20-Nov	Student Presentations	

Research Topics:

- \* HRJUDSKLF UDQJH HGJH reproductive strategies SHFLHV ¶
- Diversity of reproductive strategies in the amphibians
- Social organization of beavers and/or other colonial mammals
- Ecosystem engineering by vertebrate and/or invertebrate taxa
- \* HRJUDSKLF UDQJH HGJH HIIHFWV RQ VSHFLHV ¶ PRUSKRO
- Conservation value of geographically <sup>3</sup>

- Geographic range edge effects on physiological processes
- \* O R J H U ¶ V 5 X O H
- Value of amphibians in medicinal research
- Effects of cerebral asymmetry on animal behavior
- Geographic range size versus evolutionary age
- Relationships between geographic range size and body size
- Parthenogenesis in vertebrates
- Effect of predator intraspecific size variation on trophic cascades
- Economic value of amphibians