

**BSC 660 – Introductory Graduate Seminar - Syllabus**  
**Fall 2015 - Department of Biological Sciences - Marshall University**

<b>Professor:</b>	<b>Dr. J.V. Valluri</b>
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<b>Office Hours:</b>	<b>Thursday 10:30-3:30, or by appointment.</b>

**Course Materials:** Handouts to be given in lecture. We may use Blackboard to distribute images or slides from the lectures, supplementary material or exercises, etc. The discussion paper for each week will be distributed on Blackboard.

**Lecture:** 4:00-4:50 MTWR in S374    **Note:** Tues/Thurs is BSC 660; Mon/Wed is BSC 662 which you are expected to attend (a sign-up sheet will be used in BSC 662).

**Course Description:**

Topics relevant to preparation for a career in the life sciences including: literature searches and interpretation, scientific ethics, preparation and delivery of scientific presentations, grantsmanship, and career development tools.

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**Goals:**

Most of you have the goal of pursuing a career in some aspect of scientific research, development, education, or professional application. As such, we feel that it is important to give you the opportunity to begin to develop those skills necessary and applicable to any of these paths. Furthermore, we want you to use this course as a relatively structured way to build the foundation of your Masters project, and leave prepared to move quickly and efficiently through the rest of your program. As such, in BSC 660 we will strive to:

- provide you with a framework to encourage communication and develop your speaking and writing abilities and styles.
- develop your ability to critically read scientific literature and synthesize it into you own ideas.
- introduce you to the process of scientific evaluation and provide you with tools to build rational and convincing arguments.
- provide the opportunity for you to develop skills with an emphasis on your own personal interests.

**Expected Learning Outcomes:**

We expect that during this course you will develop skills that will put you well on your way towards being an effective researcher and communicator. There is no one single way to give a talk or write a paper, but there are methods that present information effectively and convincingly, and there are methods that lead to confusion or misunderstanding. As such, we will not be asking you to memorize or conform to any specific style, but we will ask you to work with us, your peers, and your supervisors to form your own style that meets the criteria of effective communication for each type of writing or speaking. By the end of this course, we expect that you will have developed the ability to:

- critically evaluate scientific literature and presentations.
- present convincing arguments in a clear and concise manner.
- develop compelling professional and scientific documents and presentations.

### Assignments and Grading Policy:

Your grade will be based on the scores you receive for a number of assignments, and on your participation in class discussions.

CV:	10%
Abstract:	15%
Grant Proposal	40%
Paper Presentation	20%
Participation:	<u>15%</u>
Total:	100%

We will use this scale to determine final grades: 100 - 90 = A; 89 - 80 = B; 79 - 70 = C; 69 - 60 = D; <59 = F. Each assignment will be described in more detail as its due date approaches, but briefly your grade will rest on the completion of a graduate research proposal to the appropriate funding agency, your leadership of one paper discussion during the semester, the creation of an abstract describing your proposed research work, and the creation of an academic *curriculum vitae* (CV).

**Late assignments will only be accepted with a university approved excuse.**

### Attendance:

Attendance is taken both in BSC 660 and in BSC 662. You are expected to be present at all times for both courses. Any unexcused absence will result in the loss of 2.5% of your final score for this course. You must sign yourself in to each class. **Signing in another student for any reason will be considered to be dishonest conduct, and be treated as such** (see section on Academic Honesty).

Missed or late assignments can be made up only in the case of a University approved absence. Marshall's policy on excused absences can be found in the academic calendar. It is your responsibility to be familiar with University policy. In cases of inclement weather, the University's policy will again be followed; it can be found on the web at: <http://www.marshall.edu/ucomm/weather.html>

### Academic Honesty:

We take scientific integrity very seriously, and will not tolerate any form of dishonest conduct. You are responsible for knowing the University's policies on academic honesty, which can be found in the student handbook or on the web at this location:

**[http://www.marshall.edu/muonline/Academic\\_Dishonesty\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.marshall.edu/muonline/Academic_Dishonesty_Policy.pdf)**

For all assignments, we expect that all references or borrowed material used in your reports or talks are properly cited, and that you work independently. Duplication or improper use of work will not be tolerated. Examples of this include, but are not limited to, use of borrowed material in figures or slides without proper reference, **any duplication** of material between students in talks or written reports, presentation of other lab members work as your own, and any incidence of plagiarism as defined by the university (see link above).

### Students with Disabilities:

Marshall University is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with physical, learning and psychological disabilities. University policy states that it is the responsibility of students with disabilities to contact the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS) in Prichard Hall 117, phone 304 696-2271 to provide documentation of their disability. Following this, the DSS Coordinator will send a letter to each of the student's instructors outlining the academic accommodation he/she will need to ensure equality in classroom experiences, outside assignment, testing and grading. The instructor and student will meet to discuss how the accommodation(s) requested will be provided. For more information, please visit <http://www.marshall.edu/disabled> or contact Disabled Student Services Office at Prichard Hall 11, phone 304-696-2271.

**BSC 660 Schedule**  
(Please note that this schedule is subject to change)

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>General Topic</u></b>
<b>Aug. 25.</b>	Introduction to Course
<b>Aug. 27.</b>	Grantsmanship I: The Program Announcement; The Grant (Hypothesis, Aims, Background)
<b>Sept. 1.</b>	Paper Discussion
<b>Sept. 3.</b>	The Art of the Curriculum Vitae/Biographical Sketch
<b>Sept. 8.</b>	Paper Discussion
<b>Sept. 10.</b>	Grantsmanship II: The Grant (Rationale, Preliminary Data, Research Design)
<b>Sept. 15.</b>	Computer-Based Searches: Literature
<b>Sept. 17.</b>	Paper Discussion
<b>Sept. 22.</b>	Computer-Based Searches: Grants
<b>Sept. 24.</b>	Paper Discussion
<b>Sept. 29.</b>	Writing an Abstract
<b>Oct. 1.</b>	Paper Discussion
<b>Oct. 6.</b>	Ethics in Science
<b>Oct. 8.</b>	Paper Discussion
<b>Oct. 13.</b>	Grantsmanship III: Additional Documentation
<b>Oct. 15.</b>	Paper Discussion
<b>Oct. 20.</b>	The Art of the Poster
<b>Oct. 22.</b>	Paper Discussion
<b>Oct. 27.</b>	The Art of the Talk
<b>Oct. 29.</b>	Paper Discussion
<b>Nov. 3.</b>	<b>Grant Proposal Due to NSF</b>
<b>Nov. 5.</b>	Paper Discussion
<b>Nov. 10.</b>	Paper Discussion
<b>Nov. 12.</b>	Paper Discussion
<b>Nov. 17.</b>	Paper Discussion
<b>Nov. 19.</b>	Paper Discussion <b>Curriculum Vitae Due</b>
<b>Nov. 24.</b>	Thanksgiving/Fall Break
<b>Nov. 26.</b>	Thanksgiving/Fall Break
<b>Dec. 1.</b>	TBD
<b>Dec. 3.</b>	TBD <b>Graduate Documents Due (Plan of Study)</b>