

COURSE SYLLABUS OUTLINE

Course Title and Number: Graduate Seminar II (BSC 662)

Semester and Year: Fall 2014

Lecture: Wednesday 6:00-8:20, room S-374

Instructors:

Name: Dr. Jayme L. Waldron

Office: S-378

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 9:00-10:00, or by appointment.

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Name: Dr. Jennifer Mosher

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Course Overview:

Graduate Seminar II is a one-credit, graduate level course in which students gain experience in scientific writing, and in preparing and presenting scientific talks in formats that are commonly used in scientific professions. The course is designed to provide presentation practice for students who are at different stages of their graduate careers. Presentation types include research proposals, research progress reports, critical reviews of published literature, and thesis defenses. Course grades are based on writing scientific abstracts, knowledge of the subject area, speaking skills and preparing quality illustrations.

Credit: 1 hour in biological sciences

Prerequisites: Graduate Student, BSC 660, 661

University Policies: By enrolling in this course, you agree to the University Policies listed below. Please read the full text of each policy by going to www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs and clicking on "Marshall University Policies." Or, you can access the policies directly by going to http://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/?page_id=802

Academic Dishonesty/ Excused Absence Policy for Undergraduates/ Computing Services Acceptable Use/ Inclement Weather/ Dead Week/ Students with Disabilities/ Academic Forgiveness/ Academic Probation and Suspension/ Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Students/ Affirmative Action/ Sexual Harassment

Text Information:

No requirements. Resources will be provided on blackboard or via email.

***Computer Requirements:** Microsoft Word and Microsoft Powerpoint

Desired Learner Outcomes/Objectives:

- (1) To enhance research and communication skills.
- (2) To be able to critically evaluate scientific literature and presentations.

- (3) To be able to present convincing arguments in a clear and concise manner.
- (4) To develop compelling professional and scientific documents and presentations.

Assessment:

All assignments in this class are designed with the goal of developing your skills as an effective communicator and evaluator of scientific work. There will be both written assignments and oral presentations assigned for credit. Details of these assignments will be given to you as the class progresses.

Grading Policy: Grading scale will be as follows:

90-100% = A 80-89% = B 70-79% = C 60-69% = D ≤ 59% = F

Seminar Abstract	20%
Slide and Figure Presentation	20%
Oral Presentation	40%
Participation/Peer Review	10%
Attendance	10%

1. **Seminar Abstracts.** Seminar Abstracts must be prepared by all MA and MS students. The title of the abstract should be concise and accurately reflect the content of the abstract. The body of the abstract should accurately summarize the content of the presentation. Abstracts should include an opening statement that indicates the importance of the research, and a brief summary of methods, results and conclusions. The body of the abstract (excluding the title) should not exceed 300 words. Draft abstracts are due on **September 17, 2014**. Final abstracts are due for all students on **September 24, 2014**. Failure to complete the abstract assignments on time will result in the deduction of a letter grade on the assignment.
2. **Seminar Presentations.** Each student will present a seminar to the class. The type of seminar to be given depends upon whether the presenter is an MA or MS student and on how long he or she has been enrolled in the BSC program. The following brief descriptions should be used as guidelines for preparing seminar presentations.
 - a. **MA Seminar Presentations.** Each MA student will present one seminar during the course of the semester. The seminar must be approximately 15 minutes in length (plus 5 minutes for discussion/questions). The student is required to present a synthesis of two to three recent (within last five years) research articles from high-impact, peer-reviewed journals directly related to his or her area of interest. The subjects of the articles should be sufficiently related to allow the student to synthesize the findings into a clear and well-supported description of recent research. The topic for discussion should be chosen *via* discussion with the student's MA advisor and other Biology faculty. **Critical elements here are: Objective of the seminar that draws the papers together in a single topic; appropriate background information; discussion of methods and experimental design; presentation of results; and discussion and overall conclusions that ties the research data back to the overall objective.**
 - MS Seminar Presentations.** Each MS student will present one seminar during the course of the semester. The seminar must be approximately 15 minutes in length (plus 5 minutes for discussion/questions), and must reflect the student's thesis progress. The content of the seminar is to be determined by the student in consultation with the student's advisor, and other committee members.

- a. Third semester students (and more senior MS students who are not graduating in the current semester) must present a research progress seminar. The student should describe the methods used to collect and analyze his or her data. The student should present the data collected and analyzed during the course of his or her thesis research to date, and discuss how the preliminary data address a specific research question or hypothesis. The student should discuss how their data and analyses compare with the findings of previous studies. **Critical elements here are: discussion of methods and experimental design; data gathered to date; bearing of data on study hypotheses and relation to earlier work.**
- b. MS students who are graduating in the current semester may present a final thesis defense seminar. Students should present a summary of previous research in the field in order to provide a context for the importance of their work. The student should discuss the methods used to collect and analyze the data, and present the data collected and analyzed during the course of his or her thesis research. The student should discuss how the final data answer a specific research question or address a specific hypothesis (or not), and must discuss how their data and analyses compare with the findings of previous studies. Thesis defense seminars may be up to 40 minutes in length with 10 minutes for questions.

Participation: Each student is expected to not only attend seminar, but to participate by paying attention, asking questions, and providing constructive written feedback to presenters. Students will be assigned 2-3 dates (depending on the number of students registered for BSC662) on which they will be requested to provide written feedback for the presenters. The dates will be assigned and posted with the final presentation schedule. **No question asked during seminars will result in a "0" for the assignment.**

Attendance: Attendance is MANDATORY. You will have to sign-in during every class period. Please consult the university policy on excessive absences (see link at beginning of syllabus). You can miss three classes (i.e., 10% of lectures). After the third absence, 3% will be deducted from your final grade for EVERY missed class.

Cell phones/texting: Mobile phones are not permitted in class. You will be dismissed from class if you are caught texting or if your phone rings. You will be given an absence for the day.

Laptops/ipads/notebooks/etc: Computers may not be used in class. Lectures may not be recorded. Notes must be taken using paper and writing utensils.

COURSE OUTLINE/DAILY/WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

Week (Dates)	Speakers
Sep 11	
Sep 13	
Sep 15	
Sep 17	
Sep 22	
Sep 24	
Sep 29	
Oct 1	
Oct 6	
Oct 8	
Oct 13	
Oct. 15	Jessica Wooten (Title TBA)
Oct. 20	
Oct 22	
Oct 27	
Oct 29	
Nov 3	
Nov 5	
Nov 10	
Nov 12	
Nov 17	
Nov 19	
Dec 1	