

Department of Biology Course Outline

BIOL 3100 2.0, Current Topics in Biological Research
FALL 2020

Course Description

A review of faculty research in the Department of Biology. Students develop critical analytical skills to evaluate scientific literature and enhance communications skills in Biology. Designed to prepare students for the Honours Thesis (SC/BIOL 4000 3.00 or SC/BIOL 4000 8.00) course.

Prerequisites (strictly enforced)

None.

Note: Open only to Honours students majoring in Biology, Environmental Biology or Environmental Science (life sciences stream). **Required for all students taking SC/BIOL 4000 3.00 or SC/BIOL 4000 8.00.** Normally taken in the year prior to completing the Honours Thesis.

Course Instructor(s) and Contact Information

Dr. Nik Kovich kovich@yorku.ca

Please contact me by email (not phone) and put the course, your name and student number in the subject line. When contacting me to make an e-appointment, please provide me with three days and times you are available and I will try to find a mutually agreeable time. Please note that I am **unavailable** from 9:00 – 10:30 pm on weekdays as I teach students research in my lab during those times.

Schedule

Mondays 2:30 – 4:20 pm Online

Evaluation

This course is to help you learn about research in the Department of Biology, but primarily to help you develop the writing skill and practice necessary to succeed in the Honours Thesis. As such, it will consist of a lot of writing!

Writing assignments*	65% (submission for Sept. 15 + best 8 of 11 submissions Sept. 21 – Nov. 30)
Pre-class assignments**	18% (best 8 of 11 submissions Sept. 21 – Nov. 30)
Peer Editing	12% (2 assignments throughout term)
Course Reflection	4% (due Tues. Dec. 8)
Participation	1% (over whole term; includes asking questions of presenters)

* written & submitted after each Professor's Q&A—due by end of each class (to Crowdmark); no exceptions. Some of these may require you to edit and resubmit the following week.

** Typically two questions based on each Professor's chosen paper posted to Crowdmark by 10:00 am the day of the seminar (at least 1 content related question; 1 question related to more personal aspects of doing research, being a scientist etc.). Missed submissions will count towards the three dropped submissions.

Important Dates

Assignments that are due in class must be submitted to Crowdmark.

Drop Deadline: September 22, 2020 (last day to drop without it showing on transcript)

Withdrawal Deadline: December 8, 2020 (last day of classes; course appears on transcript with a “W”)

For additional important dates such as holidays, refer to the “Important Dates” section of the Registrar’s Website:

<https://registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/fw19>

Resources

No textbook is required for this course. You will need to be able to access eClass for course content.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Develop skill in reading and evaluating scientific research papers.
2. Develop and enhance written and oral communication skills, including editing of own writing and that of peers.
3. Describe research conducted in the Department of Biology.

Course Content

This course is an excellent opportunity to find out about research within the Department of Biology and with whom you would like to work with for your 4th year Thesis Project (BIOL 4000 3.0 or 8.0). Ask a lot of questions and be prepared to write!

Course Schedule:

Date	Speaker	Assignment (subject to change)
Sept. 14	No speaker; What writing is & isn't	This I Believe – due by Sept. 15
Sept. 21	Dr. Mark Bayfield	2 Qs; Summary (due 4:30 pm)
Sept. 28	Dr. Valerie Schoof	2 Qs; Summary (due 4:30 pm)
Oct. 5	Dr. Steven Connor	2 Qs; Summary (due 4:30 pm)
Oct. 19	Dr. Emanuel Rosonina	2 Qs; Summary (due 4:30 pm)
Oct. 26	Dr. Niko Troje	2 Qs; Summary (due 4:30 pm)
Nov. 2	Dr. Peter Cheung	2 Qs; Summary (due 4:30 pm)
Nov. 9	Dr. Satinder Kaur Brar	2 Qs; Summary (due 4:30 pm)
Nov. 16	Dr. Jean-Paul Paluzzi	2 Qs; Summary (due 4:30 pm)
Nov. 23	Dr. Sapna Sharma	2 Qs; Summary (due 4:30 pm)
Nov. 30	Dr. Dasantila Golemi-Kotra	2 Qs; Summary (due 4:30 pm)
Dec. 7	No speaker; Course Reflection	Course Reflection due 10 am

Experiential Education and E-Learning

A lot of working in science is digesting information from other researchers through reading, listening to guest seminars, and asking questions (this is true of research and of other careers in science, such as medicine, pharmacy, environmental consulting, etc.). In this course you'll have an opportunity to engage in all of these activities. As well, you'll be asked to reflect on what you're doing in the class and your writing.

Other Information

Presentations will be asynchronous (watch before Q&A sessions), Q&A sessions will be synchronous
Zoom link: <https://yorku.zoom.us/j/94442479333?pwd=ZHJWdW9Mbm95VVRCVes5VINaczVjUT09>

Course Policies

1. You are expected to come to class having read the paper and watched the seminar. Our presenters are taking time out of their busy schedules to present and it is rude to not prepare. You will submit two questions by 10 am the day of class (via Crowdmark) and should be prepared to ask one of those questions (I may call on you to ask your question so bring them with you!) during the Q&A sessions (2:30 pm Mondays). If you do not submit questions ahead of class (*e.g.*, you forgot, had computer issues) it will count towards the dropped pre-class assignments (see evaluation scheme above). No late pre-class assignments will be accepted.
2. Missed classes will count towards the dropped writing assignments (see evaluation scheme above). No late writing assignments will be accepted.
3. All cases of plagiarism will be reported and you will have an exploratory meeting with the Departmental Undergraduate Program Director that could result in a grade penalty.
4. Presentations will be pre-recorded. Following question periods, you are typically expected to write summaries of speaker seminars during class as writing assignments (due at end of class). Alternatively, you may be expected to prepare a graphical abstract.
5. In your questions to presenters, peer reviews, comments, and posting to any in-class forums you are expected to be polite. While it is okay to disagree with your colleagues, you should do so politely and not make personal attacks.

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/>

Important - A note from the Faculty of Science Committee on Examinations & Academic Standards:

Numerous students in Faculty of Science courses have been charged with academic misconduct when materials they uploaded to third party repository sites (*e.g.*, Course Hero, One Class, etc.) were taken and used by unknown students in later offerings of the course. The Faculty's Committee on Examinations and Academic Standards (CEAS) found in these cases that the burden of proof in a charge of aiding and abetting had been met, since the uploading students had been found in all cases to be willfully blind to the reasonable likelihood of supporting plagiarism in this manner. To avoid this risk, students are urged not to upload their work to these sites. Whenever a student submits work obtained through Course Hero or One Class, the submitting student will be charged with plagiarism and **the uploading student will be charged with aiding and abetting.**

Note also that exams, tests, and other assignments are the copyrighted works of the professor assigning them, whether copyright is overtly claimed or not (*i.e.* whether the © is used or not). Scanning these documents constitutes copying, which is a breach of Canadian copyright law, and the breach is aggravated when scans are shared or uploaded to third party repository sites.

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 disability 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 - <https://www.glendon.yorku.ca/counselling/>

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

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 and submit an [Examination Accommodation Form](#) at least 3 weeks before the exam period begins. The form can be obtained from Student Client Services, Student Services Centre or online at http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/exam_accommodation.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-andor-harassing-behaviour-in-academic-situations-senate-policy/>