BIOL 401: Critical Writing in Biology (Spring 2011)

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Office hours by appointment.

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BSBE 116, 845-4342
Last name A-H

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BSBW 305, 845-6626
Last name I-Z

Office hours by appointment. For assistance, contact the GTA assigned to your last name.

LECTURE: Mondays 3:00-3:50pm, HECC 203

PREREQUISITES: BIOL 213, 214 or upper division BIOL courses

AGGIE HONOR CODE
"An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do."

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System. For additional information please visit: www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/

PLAGIARISM
While the instructor encourages discussion among students in the course regarding the reading and lecture material, it is ethically unacceptable for one to copy another’s work and present the ideas as one’s own. Do not do this!!! You will receive a zero for the assignment and be reported to the Aggie Honor System Office. If you plagiarize a journal assignment, you will receive a zero for the journal and will also receive a 10 point deduction from the paired final essay. Please ensure that journals and final essays are in your own words!

COURSE ATTENDANCE
You are expected to attend the lectures and to turn assignments in on time. University-excused absences will be accepted for late assignments (http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07) with no penalty. Late CPR or Final essays will incur a 10 point penalty for each day late past the due date and time if a University-approved absence is not confirmed.

SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE
Access is available through TAMU Library electronic journals. You are responsible for obtaining all of the literature via the TAMU online resources. (http://library.tamu.edu/portal/site/Library)

Required reading material


Suggested background material

SUGGESTED TEXTS
“A Short Guide to Writing about Biology, 6th edition” (Jan A. Pechenik, 2007)
I recommend obtaining a grammar book such as “Easy Writer: A Pocket Guide, 2nd edition” by Andrea A. Lunsford or “The Elements of Style, 4th Edition” by Strunk, White, and Angell. Some grammar help is available in the suggested text, and additional material will be provided during the semester.

WEBCT AND TURN-IT-IN
The course syllabus, lecture material and updates will be placed in eLearning. (http://elearning.tamu.edu/). You can also access the library through the eLearning website.

We will use the TurnItIn system to help you avoid plagiarism this semester. You will access TurnItIn through eLearning. The link is under the “course content” tab. You will need to choose the appropriate assignment title to submit your essay. There is a demo assignment to help familiarize you with the system.

Every written assignment for this course (journals as well as final essays that are submitted to CPR or directly provided to the instructor) must be submitted to TurnItIn. Failure to do so will result in a grade of ZERO for that particular assignment. Late journal submissions to TurnItIn may be made but incur a 3-point deduction each day (after 3:50 p.m. on the due date).
Late TurnItIn submissions for the CPR assignments incur a 10 point penalty for each day the submission is late. For example, if a CPR assignment is due at 2:00 p.m., but you don’t submit the essay to TurnItIn until 2:10 p.m. on that date, 10 points are deducted from the final grade. If the submission does not occur within 10 days, the student earns a ZERO for the assignment.

JOURNAL ENTRIES
There will be 9 “journal” assignments. Some of the journals will be written at home, while others will be assignments that are revised in class (in-class peer review). You must be in class when we do the in-class peer review assignments or you will not receive credit for that journal exercise. If you do a poor job on the peer review, you will lose points from your score.

The first “journal” is actually a practice CPR assignment on plagiarism to help familiarize you with the CPR software. You must complete both portions (text entry and calibration stages) and score above 60% on the assignment to receive full credit.

The purpose of these essays is for you to hone your writing skills while integrating the course material. You will receive full credit if you complete your assignment on time. Late assignments are not accepted unless you have a University-approved excuse (each journal is worth a maximum of 10 points). Your final journal grade will be determined from 8 of the 9 assignments. Therefore, you may miss one journal assignment without penalty.

If you fail to provide either the appropriate in-text citation or a Literature Cited section in the format designated by the instructor, you will lose 5 points from the final journal score.

You must submit written journal assignments to TurnItIn BEFORE you bring them to class for in-class peer review. Failure to do so will result in a grade of ZERO for the assignment. Late essay submissions to TurnItIn may be made but incur a 3-point deduction each day (after 3:00 p.m. on the due date).
CALIBRATED PEER REVIEW™ (CPR)

There will be 4 writing assignments submitted to CPR for grading during this semester. In each case you will be assigned a journal article and a series of guiding questions and goals to be considered for writing each essay. The assignments will be available through the CPR website (http://cpr.tamu.edu). The four CPR assignments will be based upon three papers from the primary scientific literature. Each CPR assignment will build upon the previous one. Be sure to complete all portions of each assignment.

You may not work with anyone else on the CPR assignments at the grading stage. However, I encourage you to let your peers read your essays and provide feedback prior to the CPR essay submission stage. If any stage of the assignment is not completed by the due date, you are required to provide a University-approved excuse in order to receive a make-up assignment. The excuse must be provided within 3 days of the due date for that portion of the assignment.

All CPR essays must be submitted to TurnItIn BEFORE 2:00 pm the day that the essay is due in the CPR system. Failure to submit to TurnItIn will result in a ZERO on the final CPR grade. Late TurnItIn submissions for CPR assignments incur a 10 point penalty for each day the submission is late.

I reserve the right to either add or remove points from final CPR grades as a particular situation warrants. This policy includes student-initiated grade changes as well as those changes I choose to make if I believe an assignment has been incorrectly scored.

RE-GRADING POLICY

If you feel that your CPR assignment was graded unfairly, you may submit a re-grade request to Dr. Carney within one week of the final due date of the assignment. There will be no exceptions to the 1-week rule. You must write an argument outlining your rationale for why you deserve additional credit and send it in a Word attachment to Dr. Carney via email. I will use this information as well as information from your original CPR assignment to determine a grade. It is possible that your grade will decrease rather than increase after my assessment because I will re-grade the entire assignment.

COURSE GRADES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPR Assignments (grades based upon writing quality and content)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPR#1</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPR#2</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>CPR#4</td>
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GRADING SCALE

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<td>90-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
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AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) POLICY STATEMENT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, in Cain Hall or call 845-1637.

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**IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY DATES**

Jan 24  Last day to drop with no record
Apr 4   Last day for Q-drop (no penalty)

**LECTURE OUTLINE**

Jan 24  Course Introduction
Jan 31  Introduction to Genetics and Behavior/Plagiarism
Feb 7   Reproductive behavior in flies (I.) (Manoli et al. 2005)
Feb 14  Reproductive behavior in flies (II.) (Manoli et al. 2005)
Feb 21  Journal 2 due in class= Manoli et al. 2005 practice essay
        **In-class peer review**= Journal 3
Feb 28  Kimura et al. 2005 (I.)
Mar 7   Kimura et al. 2005 (II.)
Mar 14  SPRING BREAK
Mar 21  **Journal 4** due in class= Kimura et al. 2005 practice essay
        **In-class peer review**= Journal 5
Mar 28  Social Recognition (mice)
Apr 4   **Journal 6** due in class= compare and contrast Manoli et al. 2005 and Kimura et al. 2005
        practice essay
        **In-class peer review**= Journal 7
Apr 11  Social Recognition (voles) (Lim et al. 2004)
Apr 18  **Journal 8** due in class= Lim et al. 2004 practice essay
        **In-class peer review**= Journal 9
Apr 25  Return Lim et al. 2004 papers for final discussion/review

**Bolded dates** are those for which you receive credit for class participation, so you must attend class on these dates.

**OTHER IMPORTANT COURSE DATES (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

Feb 10 (TH)  Practice CPR essays due 2:00 pm (counts as ½ journal #1)
Feb 17 (TH)  Practice grading portion due 2:00 pm (counts as ½ journal #1)
Mar 3  (TH)  CPR #1 essays due 2:00 pm (essay based upon Manoli et al. 2005)
Mar 10 (TH)  CPR #1 grading portion due 2:00 pm
Mar 31 (TH)  CPR #2 essays due 2:00 pm (essay based upon Kimura et al. 2005)
Apr 7   (TH)  CPR #2 grading portion due 2:00 pm
Apr 14 (TH)  CPR #3 essays due 2:00 pm (essay to compare and contrast the two papers)
Apr 21 (TH)  CPR #3 grading portion due 2:00 pm
Apr 28 (TH)  CPR #4 essays due 2:00 pm (essay based upon Lim et al. 2004)
May 2 (Mon)  CPR #4 grading portion due 4:00 pm  (Note: This final due date is on MONDAY)