

BIOL 4181-010

SEMINAR IN BIOLOGY



Instructor: Dr. Laurel Fohn, MD, PhD

Email: lfohn1@angelo.edu

Phone: 325-486-6644

Office: Cavness 107

Office Hours:

Posted on office door and on first day of class. Additional office hours will be by appointment only. All office hours/ appointments will occur in a socially distanced manner and may occur via telephone, Blackboard Collaborate, outdoors, etc.

Attendance:

There will be assigned seating and roll is taken at each class meeting for both in-person and remote students and factors into your grade as described below.

Course Information

Course Description

In the professional world of biology compiling, organizing, and presenting information to our peers is a vital necessity. This course is designed to help you develop skills that will allow you to effectively search for information, organize it, analyze it, and present it to others.

Prerequisite and Co-requisite Courses

While there are no pre-requisite courses, as this is a senior level biology course, a basic understanding of biology is expected.

Prerequisite Skills

Proficiency in accessing and utilizing ASU Blackboard platform, internet websites, using ASU Library resources, and proficiency with Microsoft Word and/or PowerPoint are expectations of the course.

Course Objectives

- Develop skills in oral and written expression
- Learn how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems
- Learning to *analyze* and *critically evaluate* ideas, arguments, and points of view

Student Learning Outcomes

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

- Identify, locate and use primary, refereed journals and other literary resources in biology.
- Synthesize and write a literature review article (report) using proper citation.
- Prepare and deliver an oral presentation based on the primary research literature in an area of biology that interests you (subject to approval).
- Critically evaluate other students' scientific writing and oral presentations.

Course Delivery

This is a face-to-face course with online components that students are expected to access in [Blackboard](#).¹

The goal is to provide face-to-face instruction to students who are eligible and have passed the daily wellness screen (no illness, no symptoms of illness, and no contact with COVID19), while also allowing students who may need to learn remotely to participate via virtual class sessions. Therefore, sessions may be livestreamed and/or recorded using Blackboard Collaborate.

Required Texts and Materials

There is no textbook required for this course.

- Internet access to use the course Blackboard (Bb) site, the library website, and ASU email
- Flash (USB) drive or ASU P drive

Technology Requirements

Technology: Students will need to utilize and check their **Angelo State University email** account for all email communications with the instructor and for course announcements. Additionally, students should maintain the ability to utilize **Blackboard** to access grades, reading assignments, synchronous lectures via Collaborate, exams, quizzes, assessments, and other course material.

To successfully complete this course, students need to have access to a **smart phone, reliable internet, and a computer (a PC or Mac computer/ laptop or iPad) with**

webcam capable of utilizing **Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor**.

Access to some exams and quizzes may be through Blackboard and may utilize Respondus Lockdown Browser and/ or video recorded via Respondus Monitor. Respondus requires a desktop computer or laptop (not a Chromebook) and a webcam. For best results, use an ethernet cable to connect to your Internet source instead of relying on Wifi. Refer to the Blackboard course for Respondus installation instructions.

This class will utilize Blackboard Collaborate (which requires a web cam).

Communication

Faculty will respond to email and/or telephone messages within 2 business days (Monday through Friday) during working hours.

All private email communication will be done exclusively through your ASU email address. Check frequently for announcements and policy changes. In your emails to faculty, include the course name and section number in your subject line.

Virtual communication: Office hours and/or advising may be done with the assistance of the telephone, Collaborate, Skype, etc.

Grading/ Assessment

METHOD OF ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

The student learning outcomes will be assessed by a literature review article, oral presentation, and class participation, which includes online assignment modules, in-class activities, peer review evaluation and audience participation. Course grades will be determined as indicated in the table below.

Assessment	Percent of Total Grade
Literature Review Article	35
Oral Presentation	25
Class Participation	30
Total	100%

Grading System

Course grades will depend on completing course requirements and meeting the student learning outcomes.

This course uses the following grading scale:

- A = 90.0-100 percent
- B = 80.0-89.9 percent
- C = 70.0-79.9 percent
- D = 60.0-69.9 percent
- F = 0-59.9 percent (Grades are not rounded up)

Assignment and Activity Descriptions

1. Literature review article

- a. Working independently or collaboratively (in groups of 2), students will create a literature review article, which is a written report suitable for a scholarly audience on a current research topic in the biological sciences. The **instructor must approve the topic**. The article will be based on a synthesis of the primary research literature without plagiarism. I will help you to develop the article as we will discuss these concepts in class in some detail. Please see the Instructions to Authors handout for more detailed instructions and grading rubric. Both are available on Bb.
- b. **Due dates:**
 - i. **October 4**—Each student or group will submit 3 typewritten copies of the final draft of their review article (including literature cited) as well as email a copy to me (lfohn1@angelo.edu). You must submit a completed paper; **NO rough drafts**. Classmates will anonymously review your article. You are required to address/ incorporate their critique comments into your revised manuscript.
 - ii. **November 1: The revised manuscript along with marked rough drafts/reviewer comments is due.**
- c. **Grading criteria overview:** (see the Grading Rubric on Bb)
 - i. Format, grammar, spelling, organization, neatness = 25%
 - ii. Content = 35%
 - iii. Response to student reviewers' comments = 15%
 - iv. Sources (format and correct use) = 25%
 - v. Individual adjustments to your groups' grade will be made as necessary based on peer and self evaluations of the group.

Policy on late papers: Late papers will be deducted 10% of total value each day it is late. No exceptions.

Fatal error policy:

Fatal errors are spelling, grammar, and formatting errors that prevent the reader from clearly reading the literature review article. Articles containing more than 3 fatal

errors will be returned without a grade. Authors will have 24 hours to fix the error(s) and resubmit the article. Resubmitted articles will be graded, but will only be marked at 89% of the earned grade. So, the highest grade that can be earned if the literature review article must be resubmitted is a B. Please see the Fatal Error Policy handout for a list of fatal errors available on Bb.

2. Oral Presentation:

- a. Each student (individually) will create a 10-12 minute oral presentation on a current research topic in the biological sciences based on an in-depth understanding of a primary literature article related to the literature review article. The instructor must approve the topic. A 3-5 minute question period from the audience will follow. The presenter is expected to have a level of understanding of the topic sufficient to answer reasonable questions from the student audience. Visuals are required and may be presented using Microsoft PowerPoint. You may also bring in other objects when appropriate to the topic (e.g. handouts, maps, posters, zoology or botany specimens, agar plates, skeletal material, etc.). Please see the Presentation Evaluation Handout available on Bb.
- b. **Due dates:**
 - i. **One day before your oral presentation:** Submit a copy of your presentation on Bb.
 - ii. **Day of your presentation:** Please bring a backup copy of your presentation stored on a Flash (USB) Drive or on your personal space on the university's P drive.
- c. **Grading criteria overview:**
 - i. Oral presentation scores will be calculated using an evaluation form, which is available on Bb. Your grade will be determined by an average of the instructor's score and the class average score after throwing out the extreme high and low scores.
 - ii. **Evaluation form criteria:** Design and Structure = 33%, Content = 33%, Oral Presentation Skills = 33%

Policy on late presentations:

Late presentations will be deducted 25% of the total value for each day it is late, specifically because they have to be rescheduled. No exceptions.

3. **Class Participation:** You are expected to participate in various assignments and activities designed to facilitate your learning of the content of this course.
 - a. **Assignment Modules:** These modules include brief presentations and assignments to help you prepare for class. **Modules should be completed BEFORE coming to class.**
 - b. **In-class activities:** You must be present and you must participate to receive credit.
 - c. **Peer evaluation and audience participation:** Members of the audience will be graded by completing the evaluation form for each speaker. The names of the

evaluators will be removed from the forms and the forms given to the presenter. In addition, all members of the class are expected to be involved in the question and answer session following each presentation.

- d. ***Policy on missed class participation:*** Students who are not present or do not participate will not have the opportunity to make-up missed points, even for an excused absence; however, to accommodate issues that may arise, they may be allowed to participate via livestream.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING POLICY:

Many careers today are collaborative in nature. Furthermore, education research supports the use of collaborative learning as a meaningful way for students to construct knowledge. The literature review article is collaborative regarding editing and review, it is to be written independently. All other assignments should be completed individually. I expect that you will work professionally with your group and contact me with any concerns or questions regarding your group's progress.

THREE BEFORE ME POLICY: (Thanks Dr. G!)

Since this is a senior level course, I expect you to find answers to common questions in the syllabus, on Blackboard, or other handouts I provide. Before asking me this type of question (for example, deadlines or format), please consult at least 3 resources. *You are always welcome, however, to ask questions to help clarify something you have found in one of the resources available for this course.*

General Policies Related to This Course

All students are required to follow the policies and procedures presented in these documents:

- [Angelo State University Student Handbook](#)²
- [Angelo State University Catalog](#)³

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in all work. Any student found guilty of any form of dishonesty in academic work is subject of disciplinary action and possible expulsion from ASU.

The College of Science and Engineering adheres to the university's [Statement of Academic Integrity](#).⁴

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA) and subsequent legislation.

Student Disability Services is located in the Office of Student Affairs, and is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability. It is the student's responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting an employee of the Office of Student Affairs, in the Houston Harte University Center, Room 112, or contacting the department via email at ADA@angelo.edu. For more information about the application process and requirements, visit the [Student Disability Services website](#).⁵

All paperwork associated with this request needs to be completed and submitted to the faculty member at least one week prior to accommodation implementation.

Therefore, within the first week of class, please contact the employee charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing accommodation requests:

Dr. Dallas Swafford
Director of Student Disability Services
Office of Student Affairs
325-942-2047
dallas.swafford@angelo.edu
Houston Harte University Center, Room 112

Incomplete Grade Policy

It is policy that incomplete grades be reserved for student illness or personal misfortune. Please contact faculty if you have serious illness or a personal misfortune that would keep you from completing course work. Documentation may be required. See ASU Operating Policy 10.11 [Grading Procedures](#)⁶ for more information.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious topic covered in ASU's [Academic Integrity policy](#)⁷ in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism is the action or practice of taking someone else's work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one's own. Plagiarism is literary theft.

In your discussions and/or your papers, it is unacceptable to copy word-for-word without quotation marks and the source of the quotation. It is expected that you will summarize

or paraphrase ideas giving appropriate credit to the source both in the body of your paper and the reference list.

Papers are subject to be evaluated for originality. Resources to help you understand this policy better are available at the [ASU Writing Center](#).⁸

Student Absence for Observance of Religious Holy Days

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. See ASU Operating Policy 10.19 [Student Absence for Observance of Religious Holy Day](#)⁹ for more information.

Title IX at Angelo State University

Angelo State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. In accordance with Title VII, Title IX, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE), and other federal and state laws, the University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. The term includes sexual harassment, nonconsensual sexual contact, nonconsensual sexual intercourse, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence or dating violence), sexual violence, and any other misconduct based on sex.

You are encouraged to report any incidents involving sexual misconduct to the Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator, Michelle Miller, J.D. You may submit reports in the following manner:

Online: [Incident Reporting Form](#)¹⁰

Face to Face: Mayer Administration Building, Room 210

Phone: 325-942-2022

Email: michelle.miller@angelo.edu

Note, as a faculty member at Angelo State, I am a mandatory reporter and must report incidents involving sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator. Should you wish to speak to someone in confidence about an issue, you may contact the University Counseling Center (325-942-2371), the 24-Hour Crisis Helpline (325-486-6345), or the University Health Clinic (325-942-2171).

For more information about resources related to sexual misconduct, Title IX, or Angelo State's policy please visit the [Title IX website](#).¹¹

Health/ Safety/ COVID-19 Policy

Please refer to ASU's [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) Updates](#)¹² web page for current information about campus guidelines and safety standards as they relate to the COVID-19 pandemic.

You are required to complete the daily wellness screen each day prior to attending class. Faculty members may also ask you to display your daily screening badge. If you are not feeling well, please complete the screen and do not return to class until you are cleared for return through the system.

Current research on the COVID-19 virus suggests there is a significant reduction in the potential for transmission of the virus from person to person by wearing a mask/facial covering that covers the nose and mouth areas. Therefore, the CDC and I highly recommend and encourage the wearing of an appropriate mask/facial covering before, during, and after class. You are also asked to maintain safe distancing practices, hygiene, and hand washing to the best of your ability. **No food or drink may be consumed in the classroom.**

Modifications to the Syllabus

This syllabus, including grade evaluation and course schedule, is subject to modification on potentially short notice based on developing circumstances.

Course Schedule

This is a tentative schedule for the semester. However, **assignment and presentation due dates are firm.** I will notify you in a timely manner should the schedule need to change. You will have the opportunity to list your top three preferred dates for your presentation. I will make the presentation schedule based on these lists.

+ Assignments are intended to provide you with background information so that you are prepared to participate in class. **Assignments should be completed BEFORE coming to class.**

Week/dates*	Topics	Assignments*
Week 1 Aug 23	Introduction and Criteria for selecting a topic	Student interest form/ available times
Week 2 Aug 30	The Biological Literature – Primary vs Secondary Sources Finding Sources Citing sources What is a literature review?	Library Information Literacy Blackboard Course & https://www.angelo.edu/services/library/handouts/
Week 3 Sept 6	LABOR DAY: We will not meet in person; however, you will need to submit your Topic Selection and Presentation Approval / Date Request Form Today	Prepare topic selection form Literature Review Article Module (including reading/ evaluating a review article)
Week 4 Sept 13	Literature review article discussion/ evaluation Evaluating primary literature sources Article summary Plagiarism Topics	Primary Literature Module (including reading article/ fill out critique)
Week 5 Sept 20	3 Primary Articles Due (per student) with critique of 1 of them Writing for clarity, flow, and content	Find 3 primary articles, critique 1
Week 6 Sept 27	Writing for clarity, flow, and content (continued) Review Paper Outline Due	Complete Review Paper Outline
Week 7 Oct 4	REVIEW PAPER Final draft DUE- 3 printed copies with Literature Cited Critiquing scientific writing	Critiquing Scientific Writing Module
Weeks 8 Oct 11	Bring critique of colleague's work to class Addressing reviewer's comments	Critique colleague's paper
Week 9 Oct 18	Planning & Preparing oral presentations Learning to critique oral presentations Receive reviewer comments of review article	Oral Presentation Module Review oral presentation grade form
Week 10 Oct 25	Student workday- addressing reviewers comments/ presentation prep	Incorporate reviewer comments into paper/ Prep Oral Presentation
Nov 22	Last day to drop/ withdraw	Last day to drop/ withdraw
Week 11 Nov 1	Student presentations (3) FINAL REVIEW PAPER DUE	Incorporate reviewer comments into paper/ Prep Oral Presentation
Week 12 Nov 8	Student presentations (3)	
Week 13 Nov 15	Student presentations (3)	
Week 14 Nov 22	Student presentations (3) Last day to drop/ withdraw	Last day to drop/ withdraw
Week 15 Nov 29	Course Review & Evaluation Student presentations (3)	
Week 16 Dec.6: 1pm to 3 pm	Final Exam Week No final exam (Last Presentation and late presentations if needed)	

Links

- 1 <https://blackboard.angelo.edu/>
- 2 <https://www.angelo.edu/current-students/student-handbook/>
- 3 <https://www.angelo.edu/academics/catalog/>
- 4 <https://www.angelo.edu/live/files/27603-student-handbook-2020-21#page=96>
- 5 <https://www.angelo.edu/current-students/disability-services/>
- 6 <https://www.angelo.edu/content/files/14197-op-1011-grading-procedures>
- 7 <https://www.angelo.edu/live/files/27603-student-handbook-2020-21#page=96>
- 8 https://www.angelo.edu/current-students/writing-center/academic_honesty.php
- 9 <https://www.angelo.edu/content/files/14206-op-1019-student-absence-for-observance-of>
- 10 <https://www.angelo.edu/incident-form>
- 11 <https://www.angelo.edu/title-ix>
- 12 <https://www.angelo.edu/covid-19/>