

## Graduate Seminar (BIOL 7900), Spring 2012

Dr. Brad Bergstrom, 1107 BSC, 333-5770, [bergstrm@valdosta.edu](mailto:bergstrm@valdosta.edu)  
Office Hours 1-2:30 MW, other times by appt.

### Meeting times and places

**Science Seminar:** 4:00 – 4:50 PM, Thursdays, Student Union Theater\*

**Class Meeting:** 5:00 – 6:50 PM, Thursdays, BSC 1024

\*<http://www.valdosta.edu/cas/scisem/Spring2012.shtml> (check schedule regularly)

**Course description:** BIOL 7900 is a graduate level course that emphasizes presentation, analysis and discussion of current primary literature in the biological sciences. Students will improve their scientific reading, oral and written communication skills. Educational outcomes associated with this course include numbers 1 and 2 as specified by the VSU Biology Department for its Master's program, and general outcomes numbers 3, 4, 5, and 7 as specified by the University.

**Course Requirements:** (A) students must attend the following 4 PM “Science Seminars” (see link above for schedule): all of those sponsored by the Biology Dept. and at least 1 sponsored by another dept. You will fill out an evaluation form (provided) for each seminar attended. (B) each student will be the presenter and discussion leader for 2 class sessions; for each of those 2, you will summarize, explain and lead discussion on a set of 3 (or more, if you choose) articles, 1 of which may be a review and the others primary literature. You must finalize the set of papers to be discussed with me no later than my office hours Wednesday *the week before* your presentation. You must make the papers available electronically or in print by at least 1 week before the class in which they are presented. ***To have adequate background to understand and explain the topic, each presenter will need to read more than the 3 papers that the whole class reads.*** You will choose one of your two presentation topics and write a ca. 5-page summary of the arguments, citing the 3 papers, and at least 4 additional sources, with properly formatted Literature Cited section at the end. Paper due the last scheduled class day. Each student will also participate fully in each week’s discussion.

### **Instructions for Presenters/Discussion leaders:**

- 1) First, introduce the major topic with a brief (say, 10 min) summary of the principle(s) or theory(ies) relating to the study (you may consult some of the references in the paper, and/or a specialized text in the subject area);
- 2) Define, in your own words (as plain English as possible), and in an explanatory way, the important terms used in this paper—the terms most necessary to understand in order to understand the premise, the results and the conclusions of the study;
- 3) Does the study mostly support, or mostly refute (or, perhaps modify) the prior consensus on how the system works, i.e., the cause-and-effect relationships between/among the variables tested?
- 4) Are the sampling design and statistical analyses robust enough to justify the conclusions?

**Points and Grading**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Presenter/Discussion Leader 90 pts @ 2 | 180 |
| Discussion while not presenting        | 90  |
| Written Summary                        | 70  |
| Science Seminar evaluations            | 60  |
| TOTAL                                  | 400 |

**Grades:** A 360-400, B 320-359, C 280-319, D 240-279