

BIOL 7900: Graduate Seminar
Valdosta State University, Biology Department, College of Science & Math
Fall 2024: Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. John G. Phillips (he/him)
Office: BC 2210
Phone: (229) 219-3594
Email: jphillips1@valdosta.edu

Course Information: A (CRN # 86226): Mondays 5:00pm–7:00pm – BAILEY 2202

Office (Student) hours: Mondays 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM Tuesdays 2:00PM – 5:00 PM
Or by appointment (please send an email to my valdosta.edu account with “appointment” in the subject line and I will accommodate as time permits).

Pre- or Corequisite: Admission to the VSU Biology Graduate Program ***A grade of C or higher is required**

Course Description: An introduction to the biology graduate program, with emphasis on students developing autonomy and taking ownership of the rest of their degree program.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Students will develop a firm grasp on the biology master’s curriculum and expectations
2. Students will lay the groundwork for their thesis/internship/capstone plans and plan out the remainder of their time at VSU to ensure maximum success
3. Students will learn how to apply the scientific methods test hypotheses, collect and analyze data, and present the results and conclusions in written formats used in peer-reviewed journals.
4. Students will explore potential career opportunities and ensure their graduate program-of-study sets them up for maximum success in pursuing such opportunities.

Laboratory Assignments and Grading: Students will be graded on participation and completion of tasks as assigned by the professor. All late assignments will be subject to a 10% penalty per day late.

- a. **Assignments (75%)** Throughout the course there will be **11 assignments, each weighted equally. Students’ grades will be an average of these assignments.**
- b. **Departmental Seminars (25%)** All graduate students are required to attend our departmental seminar series (Tuesdays at 12:45pm). For each speaker, students must submit a 1-page write up demonstrating understanding and synthesis of the speaker’s presentation **ABOVE AND BEYOND** what is to be expected from a student at the undergraduate level. Students; grades will be an average of these assignments.

Attendance Policy: Students arriving late or leaving early may be counted as present, but the student must discuss the absence with the professor that day after/during/before class. Absences resulting in >20% of missed laboratory time (i.e., three classes) may result in an automatic grade of F as per university policy. Full absence regulations are available in the online catalog at <http://catalog.valdosta.edu/undergraduate/academic-affairs/>

Class Conduct:

1. **Arrive on time.** If you are more than 20 minutes late without clearing it with me, you will not receive credit for participating in that class.
2. **BE RESPECTFUL** of your classmates and instructors both in and outside of the classroom.
3. Cell phones are not to be. **This means no texting during class unless I give permission.**

Academic Integrity: By taking this course, you agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin, a tool within Blazeview. **USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO COMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED AND WILL RESULT IN A MINIMUM OF FAILURE OF THE ASSIGNMENT. REPEAT OFFENDERS WILL AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE AN ‘F’ IN THE COURSE.** This includes any software that re-writes your work for you (e.g. Grammarly).

Mid-term, or in-progress grades: The instructor is required to submit in-progress grades prior to mid-term (**October 9th, 2024**). In theory, a mid-term grade is necessary for students to assess how they are doing in class by midterm. In this course, students will have feedback on several lab quizzes, lab assignments, and any homework or group assignments. Students will be assigned an overall average grade at this point on the normal scale of A-F viewable on Banner. Students receiving a grade of anything besides an “A” should therefore carefully evaluate their option of dropping this course by midterm without academic penalty. The deadline for withdrawal is listed in Banner about a week later. ***NOTE:** Some significant graded components for this class won’t be due until after mid-term grades are submitted. Therefore, poor performers will have the ability to improve upon these grades, while high performers are ill-advised to rest upon their laurels.

CLASS SCHEDULE (tentative to change per professor’s discretion)

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment
1	Aug. 19	Syllabus and Course Introduction – EXPECTATIONS (, great)	Fill out academic plan – due Sept. 16th
2	Aug. 26	Departmental Grad Student Social – MEET IN BAILEY SCIENCE CENTER ATRIUM	SHOW UP
3	Sept. 2	Labor Day – NO CLASSES	Address your mental health
4	Sept. 16	Grad student handbook and stuff	Submit suggested edits to biology grad student handbook – due Sept. 23rd
5	Sept. 23	CV/Resumé	CV/Resumé – Sept. 30
6	Sept. 30	Job prospects	Three Job ads due – Oct. 7
7	Oct. 7	Pick/communicate your committee/advisor/etc. SIGN UP FOR SPRING CLASSES!	File Grad Committee Paperwork – Oct. 21st
8	Oct. 14	Fall Break – NO CLASSES	Address your mental health
9	Oct. 21	How to design a thesis/scientific method	Submit an abstract for your thesis proposal - due Oct. 28th
10	Oct. 28	Data and Statistics	Testing Hypotheses Worksheet - due Nov. 4th
11	Nov. 4	How to write part 1	Writing Sample for Peer-review - due Nov. 11th.
12	Nov. 11	How to write part 2	Comments on peers’ writing sample – Due Nov. 18th
13	Nov. 18	Thanksgiving Break – Still CLASSES! How to literature	Annotated Bibliography – due Nov. 4th
14	Nov. 25	How to publish your work	Manuscript Reviews Due - Dec. 2nd
15	Dec. 2	General Wrap up and Potluck – MEET IN BAILEY SCIENCE Conference Room (2023)	SHOW UP
16	Dec. 9	NO LABS. FINALS WEEK Dec. 9th	Address your mental health

Privacy Act (FERPA): The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibit the public posting of grades by social security number or in any manner personally identifiable to the individual student. No grades can be given by email or over the telephone, as positive identification cannot be made by this manner. Grades will be posted through Blazeview course website.

Non-Discrimination and Title IX Statement: Valdosta State University (VSU) upholds all applicable laws and policies regarding discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, political affiliation, or disability. The University prohibits specific forms of behavior that violate Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities that receive federal funding. VSU considers sex discrimination in any form to be a serious offense. Title IX refers to all forms of sex discrimination committed against others, including but not limited to: sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, and sexual violence by other employees, students or third parties and gender inequity or unfair treatment based on an individual's sex/gender. The designated Title IX Coordinator for VSU is Ms. Selenseia Holmes. To view the full policy or to report an incident visit: <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/title-ix/>

Access Office: Students with disabilities who are experiencing barriers in this course may contact the Access Office (<https://www.valdosta.edu/student/disability/>) for assistance in determining and implementing reasonable accommodations. The Access Office is located in University Center Room 4136 Entrance 5. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V), 229-375-5871. For more information, please visit VSU's Access Office or email: access@valdosta.edu. To request reasonable accommodations for pregnancy and childbirth, contact Ms. Myia Miller, Title IX Compliance Officer, at maburden@valdosta.edu. Please note, you will be required to provide documentation from an appropriately licensed medical professional indicating the requested accommodations are medically necessary.

COVID-19 related policy: As the Blazer Creed articulates, members of the VSU community are expected to live by the high standards of civility, integrity, and citizenship and embrace their responsibility as a member of the Blazer community. In recognition of this responsibility, and in response to the best available science and current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Georgia Department of Public Health, while face coverings are no longer required, individuals are strongly encouraged to continue wearing a face covering indoors. **Unvaccinated individuals are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated. Vaccines remain available at no cost for all members of the university community by appointment at Student Health Services. For COVID Vaccines, please call ahead for an appointment at 229-333-5886.**

Campus Gun Carry Statement (HB 280): If you choose to carry and concealed weapon on campus, you are responsible for knowing and following the law. Refer here for FAQ: valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/police/campuscarry/

SOI Statement: At the end of the term, all students will be expected to complete an online Student Opinion of Instruction survey (SOI) that will be available through SmartEvals. Students will receive an email notification through their VSU email address when the SOI is available (generally at least one week before the end of the term). SOI responses are anonymous to instructors/administrators, and they will be able to access results only after they have submitted final grades. Before final grade submission, instructors will not be able to see any responses, but they can see the percentage of students who have or have not completed their SOIs. While instructors will not be able to see student names, an automated system will send a reminder email to those who have yet to complete their SOIs. Students who withdraw or drop a course will also be sent invitations to complete the Dropped Course Survey. Complete information about the SOIs, including how to access the survey, is available on the SOI Procedures webpage.