Instructor: Dr. Austin Nuxoll
Office: Bruner 320
Phone: 308.865.8602
Email: nuxollas@unk.edu
Office hours: For off-campus students, please arrange office hour appointments by email

Course Description:
Students will discuss weekly student and faculty speakers, primary literature, and Ted Talks. This course is designed to introduce students to a number of biological research areas. In this course, students learn about current issues in biology, critically evaluate primary literature and scientific presentations, and present research to their peers.

Course Objectives: Following completion of this course, students should be able to:
1. Discuss scientific findings critically with their peers
2. Have a broad understanding of different fields within biology
3. Effectively communicate to their peers the major findings, limitations, and logical next steps of a research article

Textbook:
None. All resources for this class can be found online and in Canvas.

Computer and Software:
Access to a computer with internet access, Microsoft PowerPoint. Software can be purchased through UNK bookstore at a discount. We will have video presentations that require the use of a webcam. These can be found through Walmart or Amazon starting around $10.

Communication
The best way to reach me is through email. I will respond to email fairly quickly and if you need to talk to me please email me and we can set up a time to talk further. You should frequently check your UNK email and Canvas for course assignments or announcements. Seminars and other pertinent information will be posted on Canvas.

Grading
Discussion (10pts/each) 100
Ted Talk/Podcast (20pts) 30
Presentation Review (10pts/each) 20
Presentation (60pts) 60
Total 210

Grades will be assigned using the Department of Biology standard grading scale: follows: A (93-100%), A- (90-92%), B+ (88-89%), B (83-87%), B- (80-82%), C+ (78-79%), C (73-77%), C- (70-72%), D+ (68-69%), D (63-67%), D- (60-62%), and F (below 60%).

Discussion
I will post seminars on Mondays and you will have until the following Saturday to participate. Then students must comment on one other student post by the following Tuesday. To receive full credit, students must have **2 significant contributions weekly**. Your responses must contribute something new to the discussion and not simply agree or disagree to the previous response. **References** will be required to support your statement. Please be considerate of your classmates’ responses; abusive comments or attacking other student’s comments will not receive credit as comments should be constructive even if you strongly disagree with another student.

Possible topics of discussion for each presenter may include methodology, statistics, experimental design, the quality of figures, clarity of presentation, data interpretation, and conclusions. Students should also discuss peer-reviewed articles that are relevant to the topic. Discuss major findings of the article and whether they refute or support the speaker’s hypothesis. I want to know what your thoughts are on the research, don’t simply summarize the article. The reference should be included in the text as well as at the end of your post. Posts should be kept to ½ to 1 page in length.

**TED Talks**

Students will find a TED Talk or podcast (Radiolab, Nature podcast, etc.) on a topic of their choice and write a small summary and lead discussion on that topic for the week. The summary and discussion should include relevant peer-reviewed articles and critical review of the talk. Guidelines are as follows:

You really can pick any TED talk/podcast you would like (as long as it is related to biological sciences), if it is a short TED talk (some are 5 minutes long) you may need to supplement more of your summary with outside literature. Write a short summary, provide a link to the talk or podcast for your group, make sure you support your summary with references. You will be assessed based on the following:

Did you provide a link to the TED talk or podcast?

Did you provide enough background information so those not familiar with the area were able to understand?

Did you adequately summarize the talk/podcast?

Did you find a primary peer reviewed article related to the talk and discuss the relevant findings of that paper and the implications of those results? (Don't simply summarize what the authors found)

Did you facilitate discussion among your group members and fully answer any questions posed by other group members?

For members not leading discussion, you must comment once on each talk for that week. This must be a significant post including a reference. Simply agreeing or disagreeing will not receive full credit. You should be expanding the discussion on the topic. This is not a critique of the students post on the TED talk. I expect posts to focus on the science of the talk.

**Presentation**
PowerPoint presentations will be due October 30th. Students will be responsible for reviewing two student presentations during the next week. These reviews are due by November 6th. Students must make the necessary changes based on the students' reviews by November 22nd. We will discuss the first five presentations (Alphabetically by last name) beginning on November 27th. We will discuss the other four presentations the week of December 4th. Students have the option to present on any topic within the biological sciences or if you have completed Biol. 831E you can present your distance project. I highly encourage students to present their research findings when appropriate. For students presenting on a topic rather than their research, you must include 1 – 2 peer-reviewed studies. Please provide background information relevant to your topic and explain the significance of the research in this area. Presentations should contain original figures from these studies with the proper citations. Students should compare and criticize different studies. Please do not simply restate the findings the authors provide.

In addition to the one or two peer-reviewed articles you are presenting on or your own research, there must be a minimum of 5 supporting peer-reviewed articles. All references must be cited in a literature cited section. Figures must also be cited and must be from a peer-reviewed article to contribute to your 5 minimum references.

Presentations should include title page, introduction to the topic, results, conclusions, and citations. Additionally, students must have organized presentations that are easy to follow and should be approximately 10 minutes long. It is important that you are able to critical evaluate your peer-reviewed articles. Do not just summarize the research.

Students are required to present on a different topic each time they take this class and should write in the notes section on title slide what semester of 881 this is for you and your previous topics.

**UNK Library**
The library is a good resource when looking for articles that may not be available online. The following links are especially usefully to distance students.

http://library.unk.edu/services/distance.php
http://library.unk.edu/services/illld.php
If you have specific questions about Interlibrary loan contact Sheryl Heidenreich at heidenreichs@unk.edu.

**Academic Dishonesty**
Plagiarism will not be tolerated, please refer to the student handbook or ask me for more clarification on the subject if unsure what constitutes plagiarism. It is expected students work independently on assignments unless otherwise stated by the instructor. Group work where not specified will be considered cheating and students will receive a zero for that assignment. Multiple offenses will result in the student(s) receiving a failing grade for the course and possible removal from the program.

**Withdraw (W) and Incomplete (I)**
In unusual circumstances beyond the student’s control, an incomplete (I) may be issued. The (I) is issued as a final grade with the student having 12 months to complete the necessary work. If
the coursework is not completed in this time the (I) will be converted to a failing grade (F) on the student’s transcript. Students may withdraw from the course before 9 weeks have been completed and a (W) will appear on the transcript. Students are responsible for filling out the necessary paperwork to complete this process. Instructors are not able to withdraw students. If the student drops the class the (W) will not contribute to the student’s overall GPA.

**Student Accommodations**

**Students with Disabilities or Those Who are Pregnant** Students with disabilities or those who are pregnant are encouraged to contact me for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska at Kearney to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to students with documented disabilities or those who are pregnant. To receive accommodation services for a disability, students must be registered with UNK Disabilities Services Coordinator, David Brandt, in the Academic Success Office, 163 Memorial Student Affairs Building, 308-865-8214 or by email brandtdl@unk.edu. For those needing accommodation due to pregnancy, you need to visit with Student Health. The following link provides information for students and faculty regarding pregnancy rights. [http://www.nwlc.org/resource/pregnant-and-parenting-students-rights-faqs-college-and-graduate-students](http://www.nwlc.org/resource/pregnant-and-parenting-students-rights-faqs-college-and-graduate-students)

Attached is the link to the above statement for your convenience. [http://unkcms.unk.edu/offices/disability_services/](http://unkcms.unk.edu/offices/disability_services/)

**Reporting Student Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence or Sexual Assault**

Reporting allegations of rape, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking enables the University to promptly provide support to the impacted student(s), and to take appropriate action to prevent a recurrence of such sexual misconduct and protect the campus community. Confidentiality will be respected to the greatest degree possible. Any student who believes she or he may be the victim of sexual misconduct is encouraged to report to one or more of the following resources:

**Local Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault Advocacy Agency** 308-237-2599

**Campus Police (or Security)** 308-865-8911

**Title IX Coordinator** 308-865-8655

Retaliation against the student making the report, whether by students or University employees, will not be tolerated

If you have questions regarding the information in this email please contact Mary Chinnock Petroski, Human Resources Director ([petroskimj@unk.edu](mailto:petroskimj@unk.edu) or phone 8400).

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