

BIOL 821 Directed Readings: Prion Diseases Summer 2021, One Credit Class

Instructor: Dr. Suzanne Rose

Email: rosesl2@unk.edu (*after roses is a lower case L)

Phone/Text: 531-333-8301

Student Hours

I will be available Monday-Friday during the day from 8AM MST – 5PM MST to respond to questions via email, text, or phone. On Canvas, there is also a discussion board “Ask the Professor” for any questions you have. I check these periodically throughout the day and you can expect a response by the end of the day most of the time. If I am unable to get back to you, I will try my best to respond with an estimated response time. If you want, you can also set up an appointment. During appointments, I will be available via phone or online face-to-face time with video calling (Skype, Zoom). Please send me an email to set up an appointment. Your success in this course is important to me and part of that is accessibility to me. Therefore, if you have questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me!

Course Materials

Required:

The Family That Couldn't Sleep: A Medical Mystery (2007) D.T. Max. ISBN 9780812972528.

You will need to purchase, rent, or obtain a copy/ebook from the UNK bookstore or library of within the first week. This book is also available on Amazon new or used in paperback, kindle, and as an e-book.

You will also be assigned journal articles and other readings to complete assignments during the course. These will be posted to our course Canvas site.

Course Description

There are many human diseases that are caused by prions. These can be classified as genetic, infectious, or sporadic. This class will look at all three types and discuss the impacts, implications, and unanswered questions. An understanding of infectious disease and human genetics will be useful but not necessary.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will be able to characterize prion structure, production, and pathogenesis that cause disease.
2. Students will have knowledge of the diseases caused by prions and how those diseases are transmitted.
3. Students will know the limitations of prion research and be able to discuss the central questions still surrounding prions and prion disease.

Assignments

We will begin by reading The Family That Couldn't Sleep: A Medical Mystery by D.T. Max, and then we will read some scientific literature on prion topics. Each week 2 students or I will lead a discussion on the readings. You will be graded based upon your weekly participation in discussion and the leadership that you demonstrated your assigned weeks of leading discussion.

Weekly Participation in Discussion

You will be graded based upon the following areas:

- 1) **How often you participate.** You should check the discussion board at a minimum of every three days and post comments, questions, etc. You are welcome to suggest other readings, websites, and similar materials that may carry discussion and inquiry in new directions. Feel like you are talking to yourself? To keep a discussion going and to allow everyone to participate in a meaningful way, we need comments to be made through time. Grades will be lowered if all comments are posted on one visit to the Blackboard site or you wait until the last day. You should make a minimum of two significant contributions each week. Posts that are made late in the week and have no responses will not count toward your two comments. Our discussions will be Wednesday to Tuesday each week.
- 2) **The quality of your contribution.** Say what? This is a subjective category, but the more insightful your comments the better the quality of discussion will be. Conciseness and clarity are necessary to keep the workload for this class to a reasonable level, so page long postings are discouraged. Your comments should be supported by references and should be relevant to the current topic of discussion.
- 3) **How well you interact as classmates.** Be nice. These are online discussions of scientific issues. You should read all postings, and you should respond to some of them. Your responses should demonstrate that you are aware of the discussion that has been taking place. Go beyond either "agreeing" with someone or "disagreeing" with someone and state your reasons. Be polite and constructive in your responses. This topic can be inflammatory, so we want to practice interacting in a constructive way with each other.

Leading Discussion

Leaders will be expected to read the assigned material for that week. You will then come up with different topics, assignments, or questions to discuss with your direction. Be creative. I will be grading your leadership based upon the learning that took place that week, the quality of the questions or assignments, and the student interactions that occurred. Two students will be working together on this in case someone cannot be present each day to monitor the discussion board. Students should contact each other ahead of time to make a plan so that you create a nice, cohesive discussion plan for your week. Remember that you are leading discussion, so you do not need to respond to every comment! You just to ensure that the discussion is being monitored (please let me know if there is a problem that I need to address), and that the discussion keeps going on the right track.

Grading

One Credit

8 weeks of discussion participation (10 pts/wk)	80 pts
2 weeks of leading discussion (25 pts/wk)	<u>50 pts</u>
Total	130 pts

Grading Scale. Grades will be assigned using the standard grading scale for the Department of Biology, as 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%).

Accommodation

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of the University of Nebraska at Kearney to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to students with documented disabilities. To receive accommodation services for a disability, students must be registered with UNK Disabilities Services Coordinator, David Brandt, in the Disability Services for Students office, 175 Memorial Student Affairs Building, 308-865-8214 or by email unkdso@unk.edu

Students Who are Pregnant

It is the policy of the University of Nebraska at Kearney to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to students who are pregnant. To receive accommodation services due to pregnancy, students must contact Cindy Ference in Student Health, 308-865-8219. 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>

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.

Veterans

UNK works diligently to support UNK's military community by providing military and veteran students and families with resources and services to help them succeed. Veterans Services assists with the GI Bill process and acts as a liaison between the student and the Veterans Administration. If you need assistance or would like more information, please contact Lori Weed Skarka at 308-865-8520 or unkveterans@unk.edu.