

Senior Seminar, BSC 4931, Spring 2017

Department of Biological Sciences, Florida International University

Sections **U02 (T 12:30-1:45) in DM 163** and **U03 (T 3:30-4:45) in AHC4-202**

Your instructor: John Cozza

Email: jcozza@fiu.edu (please include "SENIOR SEMINAR" in the subject line)

Office hours in OE 216: **Mon 2-3, 5-6+; Tues 11-12, 2-3 & 5-6+; Weds 2-3 & 5-6+** (but not the evenings of 2/1 & 3/1), or by appointment. Office phone: 7-4932.

DATE	WHAT'S HAPPENING	Check-in	WORK DUE
10 Jan	Introduction; choosing and researching a topic	Personal introductions	Read syllabus & project ideas <i>asap!</i>
17 Jan	Reading and discussing scientific papers	Biodiversity news item*	Read posted papers <i>1/17-add/drop; 1/18-\$\$</i>
24 Jan	Discussing and refining project topic; finding needed papers; form groups	Project topic & motivation	Self-introduction, including tentative project topic and progress on references
31 Jan	Writing a science paper discussion	Career plan B	Project title and annotated list of 5+ references
7 Feb	Preparing and presenting a science talk	Giving back (individually)	General outline (1 page)
14 Feb	How to critique a science talk; <i>Critique of slides (anonymous)</i>	Idea for collective action	Powerpoint intro or results slide for critique: Submit on Blackboard by Sunday Feb 12
21 Feb	Improving your detailed outline Info on ETS exam	Idea for sustainability	Detailed outline + refs (<i>in progress—for group work</i>)
28 Feb	Presentations: Group 1	*Post title on Google Docs by Sunday Jan 15	Detailed outline (2+ pages) with citations & 12+ refs (not annotated)
7 Mar	Presentations: Group 2		<i>I encourage you to bring your slides or paper in progress to office hours—the sooner the better!</i>
14 Mar	<i>Spring break—no class</i>	<i>3/20-last DR</i>	
21 Mar	Presentations: Group 3		
28 Mar	Presentations: Group 4		
4 Apr	Presentations: Group 5 Editing a science paper		Final deadline to submit revision of detailed outline for credit.
11 Apr	Sustainability and our future		Read posted papers
18 Apr	Wrap-up: reflections & next steps + course evaluations†	† <i>evaluation online!</i>	Project papers due
25 Apr	ETS Major Field Test in Biology in OE 309. U03: TBA; U04: TBA		

We may adjust this schedule, based on the needs and progress of the class. *This schedule, and the syllabus info below, may change at any time due to unforeseen*

circumstances. Please check Blackboard for the latest version, and **be sure to read all course emails**—you are responsible for all changes announced by email or in class!

Course goals: This seminar is your “capstone” experience as a biology major at FIU. We will work individually, in groups, and as a class to integrate what you have learned in a supportive and interactive environment. A major goal is to provide you with a valuable experience in scientific writing and verbal/visual communication.

Course themes:

- Climate change, as it relates to some aspect of biology
- Biodiversity loss and conservation

Course project:

- Original individual paper: a hypothesis-driven mini-review of a current topic in climate change or biodiversity conservation. 10 pages, excluding figures and references.
- Individual Powerpoint presentation of 2-3 selected results from the published primary research on your topic. 10-12 minutes long, plus 3-5 minutes for questions at the end.

Evaluation:

Attendance and participation	15 points (@ 1 point/class)
Annotated list of 5+ references	5 points
General outline	5 points
Detailed outline with 12+ refs	5 points
Presentation	30 points
Paper	40 points
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TOTAL	100 points

ETS major field test in biology **Required**; 1 pt. **extra credit** for each 10th percentile > 50th
So 50-59th percentile = 1 pt, 60-69th = 2 pts., 70-79th = 3 pts.,
80-89th = 4 pts., 90-99th = 5 pts.

Grades: A = 93-100 points, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 70-76, D = 60-69, F = 0-59. You must earn a C or better to pass the course.

Examples of the preliminary written work that will help you to develop your project—annotated references, general outline, detailed outline—are posted on Blackboard.

Rubrics for your completed project—presentation and paper—are also posted. *Study the rubrics carefully and use them as checklists!*

All **written work** must be brought to class as a hard copy—you will work in groups to help each other to improve it. Please format all written work with standard (1”) margins, text aligned left, in 12-point Times New Roman font, and fully double-spaced (*not 1.5!*). References should be single-spaced, with a space between each reference. All work must also be submitted to “turn-it-in.com” to ensure originality. Go to the “Assignment dropbox” on Blackboard for the links.

Preliminary work earning 3 points or less initially should be **revised and resubmitted** ASAP to earn a maximum of 4 points. Late work may be penalized—but presentations cannot be late!

Bring your **presentation** to class as a Powerpoint on a memory stick or similar device—not online or by email! *Please plan to be early for class on the day you present—to load your presentation onto the class computer before class begins.*

In addition to the hard copy you hand in, you will submit your final paper electronically within Blackboard to “**Turn-it-in.com**,” which will check it for plagiarism. You will receive a “% similarity report” from “Turn-it-in,” and you will then have one opportunity to re-submit your paper after you have eliminated any inadvertent plagiarism. After this, any paper that includes any non-coincidental plagiarized material will receive an F.

What constitutes **plagiarism**? Plagiarism is “using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author's work as one's own...” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/plagiarism>). This simply means do not copy material from your research sources—**put everything in your own words!** *Copying and pasting and then changing some words is still plagiarism, and will still be detected!* And quoting an author's words, though acceptable in other disciplines, is not appropriate for scientific writing. All work must be original, and may not have been submitted for credit to any other course. This too will be checked by “Turn-it-in.”

To **improve your writing**, consult published or online style guides such as:

Bates College (2011). How to write a paper in journal style and format.

(<http://abacus.bates.edu/~ganderso/biology/resources/writing/HTWgeneral.html>)

Griffies, S., Perrie, W., & Hull, G. (2013). Elements of style for writing scientific journal articles.

(https://www.publishingcampus.elsevier.com/websites/elsevier_publishingcampus/files/Skills%20training/Elements_of_Style.pdf)

Marek, P. (2014). The basics of writing in APA style.

(http://www.macmillanhighered.com/Catalog/uploadedFiles/Content/Worth/Custom_Solutions/Psychology_ForeWords/Marek_Ch04_APASTyle_Color.pdf)

Tischler, M. (2014). Scientific writing booklet (<http://cbc.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/marc/Sci-Writing.pdf>)

in M. Dorak (ed.) Scientific writing resources (http://www.dorak.info/mtd/sci_write.html)

Personalized help with your writing is available *for free* at the FIU Center for Excellence in Writing. Get started at <http://writingcenter.fiu.edu/>. They will go over each step of your paper with you!

Please do not hesitate to come to office hours for help or just to update me on your project, and see me or write me about any concerns—the sooner the better!

As a **progressive learning community**, FIU does not tolerate sexual harassment or any other civil rights violation against any student or staff.

See the FIU Student Code of Conduct at http://www2.fiu.edu/~jms/standards_of_conduct.htm

FIU's discrimination and sexual harassment policies are available at <http://regulations.fiu.edu/regulation>