

BIOL 4201 Senior Seminar, Fall 2020 Syllabus

Dr. Troy Murphy

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Office: CSI 416

Office hours:

Wed 11:30-12:30pm; Fri 11:30-1:30pm, Zoom appointment

Additional hours: by appointment

Lecture & lab schedule

Pre-seminar discussion: M 3:00-4:00pm, Zoom

Departmental seminar: M 4:00-5:15pm, Zoom

Course webpage

http://www.finchwrangler.com/Troy_Murphy/4201.html

The course schedule, readings, and other course documents will be posted on the course webpage.

Course description

The Biology Department coordinates a weekly seminar series that brings outstanding biologists to Trinity University. The senior seminar course is designed to provide senior Biology majors with the opportunity to use the knowledge and experience gained in your coursework by engaging with these speakers and the work they present. Each week, you will complete pre- and post-seminar reflections, read scientific articles, discuss the articles with the speaker in a pre-seminar “journal club,” and attend the seminar presentation.

Course objectives

Our learning objectives for the course are for students to demonstrate the ability to:

- summarize a body of scientific work at general public and discipline-specific levels
- relate new biological information to topics covered in previous coursework, including the five core concepts of biology (see link on webpage)
- discern the significance of new scientific research to the field and to society
- formulate questions and engage in professional discussions about new research

My teaching philosophy

I am here to help you to develop skills that will assist you in learning throughout your academic and professional careers. To that end, please feel free to ask questions inside or outside of class if there is something you don't understand. My goal is to provide a supportive community for your learning.

My office hours

It is best to schedule a Zoom with me during my scheduled office hours. I can give you my undivided attention and I will work with you one-on-one to solve problems and help you to better understand material or assignments. If you cannot make it during office hours, you may schedule an appointment in advance (although please note that my schedule is almost always full for the next 24hrs).

Assessment

There will be approximately ten departmental seminars throughout the semester, and for each, you will be required to submit a 1) journal entry and 2) questions beforehand, and then submit a 3) short post-seminar journal entry. You will also be assessed on 4) participation in the discussion and seminar. A description of these tasks can be found below.

All assignments should be in .docx format and be submitted through the class Google Drive and labeled: yourlastname.docx

1) Pre-seminar journal entries (30 points) are based on the papers each speaker submits. Journal entries should contain (1) an summary, written at the level of the general public, of the work described in the papers; (2) a justification of why you think the research is important or not; and (3) a description of connections between the research and your experiences in Biology coursework, including specific references to the five core concepts of biology.

2) Pre-seminar questions (20 points) are also based on the papers each speaker submits. You will be required to submit at least 5 “good” questions over topics such as (but not necessarily limited to) the procedures, results, and interpretation of the studies in the papers; the assumptions underlying the research; or the connections between the research and society. You may ask some of these questions to the speaker during our group discussion. Pre-seminar journal entries and questions due at midnight of the Sunday before the seminar.

3) Post-seminar journal entries (20 points) will be based on the discussion and seminar and should include (1) the main conclusions you drew from the discussion and seminar and (2) your opinion of why you think the work is important or not, along with a brief justification. Entries will be due at midnight on the Wednesday after the seminar.

4) Participation during discussion and seminar (30 points) includes your engaged presence and your asking good questions in discussion and seminar. It is important that we be courteous to the speakers and convey a good impression of Trinity and our students, because these visitors could someday be making decisions that affect you and your peers. You are NOT going to be required to give a detailed description of everything you hear in the seminar, so there is no need to take copious notes.

At several points throughout the semester, I will offer feedback on your work in this class, and let you know your current grade. You may also ask about the status of your grade at any time.

Cheating & plagiarism (an unfortunate addition)

I take fairness, honesty, and responsibility very seriously. Be advised that I have a variety of electronic methods at my disposal to detect cheating and plagiarism. Just don't do it—we will all be happier.

Remember that you are to follow the Academic Honor Code *“All students are covered by a policy that prohibits dishonesty in academic work. Under the Honor Code, a faculty member will (or a student may) report an alleged violation to the Academic Honor Council. It is the task of the Council to investigate, adjudicate, and assign a punishment within certain guidelines if a violation has been verified. Students who are under the Honor Code are required to pledge all written work that is submitted for a grade: It may be abbreviated “pledged” with a signature”*

Please note that you MUST cite ALL of the material in your submitted work that is not your own. This is especially relevant for your literature review paper. Also note that when you work in collaboration with a student during lab projects, you are required to specify the parts of your assignments which were done in-full or in-part by others.

Note to students with disabilities

If you have a documented disability and will need accommodations in this class, I expect that you will deliver your accommodation letter to me during my office hours early in the semester so we can discuss how I might prepare to meet your needs. Please make these arrangements with me as soon as possible once you have met with the SAS Coordinator and have picked up your accommodation letters. All discussions will remain confidential. If you have not already registered with Student Accessibility Services, contact the office at 999-7411 or SAS@trinity.edu. You must be registered with SAS before I can provide accommodations.

Courtesy

Please show common courtesy: (1) Be prepared for class and arrive on time, (2) Avoid conversations with others during class, (3) Limit food and beverages to those that can be consumed quietly, (4) Turn off cell phones before class.

Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Reporting

As a Responsible Employee who is committed to creating an environment where every member of our community can thrive, I want to let you know that I am a Mandatory Reporter. What that means is that I am required to report any instances of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual intercourse, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, stalking, and related retaliation that I am aware of to the Title IX Coordinator. So, if you share information with me about any incidents that implicate the Sexual Misconduct or Anti-Harassment Policies, I am required to report all information to the Title IX Coordinator to make sure you have information about support resources and complaint resolution options. My report does not initiate the complaint process, and you are in control over how you choose to engage with our Title IX Coordinator. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, I encourage you to share this information directly with the Title IX Coordinator or one of the individuals who has been designated as a confidential resource on campus. Information about reporting is available here: [Reporting](#).

Electronic Recordings of Classroom Instruction

The COVID-19 pandemic requires the delivery of online instruction. For this reason, please be aware that all classroom instruction, including student participation in classroom activities, is subject to recording and dissemination on the University's secure course management system (T-Learn). The recordings will be made available only to students enrolled in the course to facilitate online learning and review. Students are expressly prohibited from capturing or copying classroom recordings by any means; violations will be subject to disciplinary action. Instructors who wish to use a recording outside of class must obtain the written consent of any students who are personally identifiable in the recording.

As part of this course, you will be required to use Respondus Monitor or a similar tool on your computer while taking exams. This software allows for online proctoring by monitoring individuals on their computer webcam, as well as video analytics to identify potential cheating. Any recordings will be treated as an education record subject to FERPA protections.

Excused Absences from Class

The *Faculty and Contract Staff Handbook* specifies the circumstances that require instructors to recognize an excused absence. [Excused Absences from Class](#) (6[B]VII): "Students who are absent from class in order to observe a religious holiday, who are absent from class while participating in a University-sponsored dramatic production, or who are absent from the campus because they officially represent the University in such sponsored activities as intercollegiate athletics, debate tournaments, and tours will be excused from classes ..."

The University wishes to disincentivize class attendance when students may be sick. For the duration of the pandemic, students who are ill will be granted an excused absence. We will observe the following procedures:

- Students must adhere to University health and wellness procedures for self-evaluation, follow-up, and quarantine as necessary.
- Untruthful student claims about illness may be regarded as a violation of the Academic Honor Code, which prohibits "falsification of academic records."

Students who experience a family emergency that interferes with academic performance are encouraged to contact Dr. Michael Soto, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and David Tuttle, Dean of Students.

Excused Absences

For the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, the following exception to the Excused Absences from Class policy has been approved: Students who are ill will be excused from classes.

To protect community health, we urge students to request an excused absence by informing instructors of the illness via email. Students must adhere to University health and wellness procedures for self-evaluation, follow-up, and quarantine as necessary. Please note: Untruthful student claims about illness may be regarded as a violation of the Academic Honor Code, which prohibits "falsification of academic records."

Students who experience a family emergency that interferes with academic performance are encouraged to contact Dr. Michael Soto, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and David Tuttle, Dean of Students.

Policy Regarding the Disruption of Class

The *Faculty and Contract Staff Handbook* authorizes faculty to remove disruptive students from the class roster. [Policy Regarding Disruption of Class](#) (6[B]XII): “Students will not be permitted to behave in such a manner as to disrupt the orderly conduct of classroom activities. When such behavior occurs, it is the responsibility of the instructor to discuss the matter with the student involved, warning the student that continuation of such behavior may result in dismissal from the class. If the behavior continues, the faculty member may drop the student from the class. ...”

The University regards the safety of students, faculty, and staff as a paramount concern. To ensure that all members of the University community work in tandem to create a safe learning environment, students are required to observe University health protocols (including wearing masks and maintaining adequate social distance) during class and between class periods. Failure to observe University health protocols will be considered a disruption of orderly conduct. In accordance with the Policy Regarding Disruption of Class, the instructor will issue a warning to the student; if the student continues to disrupt the class by failing to observe University health protocols, the instructor may drop the student from the class roster.

University Health Protocols

To ensure that all members of the University community work in tandem to create a safe learning environment, the University [Policy on Protective Behavior](#) requires that the following health and safety protocols be observed on campus at all times:

- Six feet of social distancing must be maintained
- Students must wear an appropriate face covering in classrooms and in areas where other students, staff, or faculty may be present
- Personal hygiene and proper cough/sneeze etiquette must be followed

Failure to observe University health protocols will be considered a disruption of orderly conduct. In accordance with the Policy Regarding Disruption of Class, the instructor will issue a warning to the student; if the student continues to disrupt the class by failing to observe University health protocols, the instructor may drop the student from the class roster.