

Biology Capstone Seminar: Drug Biology

BIOL475, Section [Removed]
Spring 2019

Course Instructor:

Tricia Hardt Smith, Ph.D.
hardtta@vcu.edu
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Office Hours: [Removed]

Course Meeting Information: [Removed]

Course Description:

One semester course, 1 credit. Prerequisites: completion of Drug Biology (BIOL491) with minimum grades of C.

Course Objectives

Welcome to Advances in Drug Biology! This 1-credit course will explore the latest, exciting scientific advances in the world of pharmacology! The objective of this course is to teach how to critically analyze the latest in primary, peer-reviewed scientific research. This course will be 'student taught'; each day a student will give a detailed background and analysis of a peer-reviewed journal article in the field of pharmacology. During this presentation the student will field questions from the class and encourage critical discussion of the material. The final grade will be determined largely on this presentation as well as participation during all other classes. The Capstone experience will be fulfilled by the preparation and presentation of the history and critical analysis of the journal article. The presentation should reflect the student's ability to relate their biological background acquired through their courses at VCU. This assignment will reflect their ability to understand, critically analyze, communicate and synthesize ideas in a scientific manner. Let's explore the leading edge of drug research together!

VCU Syllabus Information

Students should visit <http://go.vcu.edu/syllabus> and review *all* syllabus statement information. The full university syllabus statement includes information on safety, registration, the VCU Honor Code, student conduct, withdrawal and more.

Attendance

Attendance will be mandatory. Because this is a presentation and discussion-based course, a portion of your grade will be based on attendance and participation in class. Unexcused absences will result in loss of participation points for that day. You must arrive on time for the class and stay the duration to be considered present during the class. Excused absences are at the discretion of Dr. Smith and are limited to medical illness, official VCU functions, etc. It is your

responsibility to provide proof of your illness (i.e. a doctor's note) or the reason for your excused absence within one week of your return. In the case of an excused absence, students can make up participation points by completing an additional critical analysis of the paper discussed on that day (1-2 pages, due prior to or at the beginning of the next class). ***MORE than TWO unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course!***

If you are deemed a distraction to others or behaving in a rude manner you will be asked to leave lecture and will not receive credit for attending that lecture. The use of electronics is not permitted during this lecture. Rude/distracting behavior includes, but is not limited to: answering your cell phone during class, leaving class to answer your cell phone, texting during class, listening to any music-playing device, watching videos/playing games on laptops, sleeping, and excessive talking.

Schedule:

First day of class, presentation by Dr. Smith

Remainder of semester: Presentation by individual student on peer-reviewed journal article. Schedule determined on the first day of class and posted to Blackboard.

Blackboard & Email

All documents and announcements will be posted on Blackboard (Bb), which can be found at <http://blackboard.vcu.edu>. You should check this and your VCU email prior to each class. It is important that you check both, as this is how Dr. Smith will contact you as well as post any announcements.

Dr. Smith will not respond to emails over the weekend or past 5 pm.

Grading

Class Presentation: 100 points total (80% of final grade)

Please thoroughly read all materials posted on Blackboard to help you out! This includes presentation guidelines, rubrics, etc. **READ THESE MATERIALS BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS SO THAT YOU CAN ASK QUESTIONS TO CLARIFY ANYTHING THAT IS CONFUSING TO YOU!** It is your responsibility to understand these documents, if you don't understand these materials, you will likely lose points during your presentation!

Please take notes during the first day of class where I will carefully explain further expectations. You are responsible for know what is expected of you for this hefty assignment, not knowing will cost you points and severely impact your grade!

Class Participation: 25 points (20% of final grade)

You will be responsible for reading all assigned papers prior to class (each class meeting will have one assigned paper)

You will need to be prepared to discuss the papers with your peers and debate your position/opinion

You will need to bring to class 2-3 questions and/or comments prepared for the discussion. You will be required to ask a certain number of questions over the course of the semester.

Total points in this course: 125 points

Grades will be determined by adding up all the points you have earned and dividing them by the total number of points assigned this semester.

Final Grade Scale

89.50-100% =A 79.50-89.49% =B 69.50-79.49% =C 59.50-69.49% =D Below 59.50% =F

I DO NOT BEND ON THESE GRADE BARRIERS. Sorry, the line has to be somewhere.

Letter grades will be assigned at the end of the course. A grade of Incomplete (I) will be not be assigned for this course unless the class presentation cannot be completed due to medical reasons.

Letters of Recommendation

Due to the high level of demand for letters of recommendation, this is my policy:

You must provide at least two weeks notice, preferably more, before you letter is due. I will not consider writing a letter that is due in less than two weeks!

Letter of recommendation to professional school (medical, dental, vet, nursing, pharmacy, etc.) and to the VCU Pre-Health Track Committees (or any other pre-professional school committee): I only write these letters for students who have served as my preceptors, completed two courses with me (A grade) or that I have worked with closely in some other manner. A successful letter of recommendation to a professional school must have detailed information about a student's personality, work ethic, scholastic performance, reliability, interpersonal relationships, etc. I can only get to know a student well enough to write this letter by working with them personally, as I do my preceptors. To become a preceptor, you must have an A in that course with me, and you must be able to attend lecture during that semester.

Letter of recommendation to undergraduate programs (travel abroad, summer research, etc.): You must complete a course with me with an A. Furthermore, you must be someone I am familiar with and meet on a regular basis (office hours, before/after class, etc.)

If I agree to write a letter for you, you must let me know at least two weeks, preferably more, before the letter is due. Please email me a CV or resume with a picture on it, and all the necessary paperwork to accompany the letter. Provide a list of all the classes you have taken with me, including the semester. Make sure to tell me when the letter is due, where to send the letter, and tell me about the program you are applying for and why you want to be in it. Also make sure you have filled out your section of the form and signed where needed. Please make sure that the document file format is a type that I can edit.

Lastly, please be advised that the better I know you, the better (and longer) your letter will be. If I have agreed to write a letter for you, but have not spent a lot of time with you, the letter will be short. *If this letter of recommendation is for something very competitive or important to you, your application may suffer considerably from a short letter.* You may want to ask someone who knows you better and can write more confidently about you.

Lastly, please note that letter of recommendation writing is completely voluntary; I am free to deny a letter to anyone for any reason.