



## BIOL475: Senior Capstone The Ecology of Disease Fall 2019

Instructor: Ching-Yu Huang

Email: [cyhuang@vcu.edu](mailto:cyhuang@vcu.edu)

Office: [Removed]

Office Hours: Student Hours: [Removed]

Classroom: [Removed]

Lecture hours: [Removed]

### Diversity and inclusion statement



Virginia Commonwealth University is one of the most diverse higher education institutions in Virginia. To embrace such diversity, it is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives are well-served in this course. I will ensure an inclusive, equitable learning environment that (1) addresses students' learning needs both in and out of class, (2) honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) and (3) supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives

and experiences that my students (that's you) bring to this class. I intend to present course materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. To help accomplish this, your suggestions (in person or electronically or anonymous feedback) are encouraged and appreciated. I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

### Course Description

BIOL 475 Senior Capstone seminar- The ecology of disease is a semester course with 2 lecture hours (2 credits).

During this course, student will identify, research and discuss selected emerging infectious diseases from all aspects of ecology, evolution, cell biology (pathology) and management (epidemiology). Students will learn to clearly articulate their selected topics in class debates, oral presentations and a summary report.

### Course Objectives

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of selected emerging infectious disease in aspects of ecology, evolution, cell biology and genetics
- critique, analyze and synthesize ideas and results in scientific peer-review articles
- articulate research ideas and results and communicate efficiently to a broad audience in a creative approach
- understand the relevance of multiple discipline collaboration to develop the management strategies and prevention

## General Expectation



Complete the assigned reading, writing up your thoughts and come to class and participate.

In this course, I encourage you to:

- (1) be creative and curious
- (2) be communicative and contribute to discussion
- (3) use critical thinking skill for problem solving
- (4) collaborate with your classmate to achieve your goals

If you are having trouble with the course, or just have general questions about the material we are discussing, please reach me using the “student hours” discussion forum on Blackboard. If you have some personal matter and would like to speak in person, the best way to reach me is through VCU email or use [removed] for an appointment. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE. Time is the essence if you want to resolve the issues in order to achieve the grade you want.

*There is no extra credit offered in this course.*

## Instruction methods and course assignments

### **(1) Weekly contribution to the selected topic before class (individual; 20 pts each week; 30%)**

For the selected topic we will discuss in the following week, each student is required to

- (a) Search and select one of the scientific article that focuses on one of four aspects of the selected disease (i.e., ecology, evolution, pathology and management and prevention)
- (b) Read and summarize the article in 1-2 paragraphs (Please use your own words.). In your original discussion posts on the designated discussion board, you are required including the pdf file of the selected journal article (You will receive point deduction, if you only include URL link), an image/figure or a short video with a brief description to presenting your summary. Students are required to post their the original posts during Wednesday-Saturday (10 pts) and followed by two responses to other students posts during Saturday – Tuesday (10 pts; see below) .
- (c) After viewing all discussion posts, you will select two other students’ posts to respond. When preparing your responses to your classmates, you will write up your thoughts (2-3 sentences) about the following questions and post them on the same discussion board (due midnight Tuesday; 10 pts):
  1. What is one thing you found your peer’s article interesting?
  2. What is one thing in your peer’s article that seems clearly true/correct?
  3. What is one thing you found in your peer’s article problematic or confusing?

You will bring your notes and your answers to class for discussion.

### **(2) Group effort for in-class discussion (group; 5 pts each week; 20%)**

During each class, students will bring their questions or discovery for their selected topic to share with the class and participate in the class discussion.

**(3) Personal reflection to the selected topic after class (individual; 5 pts each entry; 10%)**

(a) After each class, you should summarize your reflection or impression on the discussion and presentation of the selected topic or make connection to your personal or career path in an informal journal-style on Blackboard. The reflection essay is due the following day (midnight Thursday) of the class every week. Please DO NOT write a summary of the selected topic. The personal reflection should be focused on personal exploration, thoughts and inspiration. The personal reflection is strictly confidential between Dr. Huang and the individual student.

**(4) 6-slide presentation for the selected topic and lead class discussion (20%)**

Each student will select one topic at the beginning of the semester and prepare a 6-slide presentation for the topic based on individual efforts and weekly contribution from the class to provide an overall summary of the selected disease on all four aspects, including one slide presenting an out-of-the-box question, argument or discovery for discussion. Students will peer assess the presentation and provide feedback.

**(5) A summary report (20 %)**

Students will prepare an overview summary for their selected disease after his/her presentation. Students will prepare the summary report based on the weekly contribution, class presentation, and class discussion in a 2-3 page report. The summary report is due one week after the presentation. The report should include images and figures presenting our current understanding of the selected disease, as well as cited references.

**Evaluation and Grading System**

**Grades:**



Weekly contribution posts	30%
Group effort in class discussion	20%
Personal reflection (journal)	10%
Special topic presentation	20%
<u>Special topic summary report</u>	<u>20%</u>
<b>Total points</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Grading scale:**

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	<60%

**Blackboard** will calculate your grade automatically as I post grades.

Please do not ask me about what grade you have in the course —you can look under the “My Grades” tab to see your current grade.

### Instructional methods

A typical class will consist of

1. Pre-lecture reading assignments from the selected topic and required discussion posts (Weekly contribution original post due midnight, Saturday and your thoughts about three questions based on two other students' original posts due midnight, Tuesday)
2. Class and group discussion in class
3. The designated student presents the topic and leads/facilitates the discussion (Peer assessment)
4. Wrap up discussion
5. Personal reflection-Blackboard Journal entries (due next day)
6. The presenter submits the summary report draft by next Tuesday

### Attendance Policies

**KNOW THE RULES!**



**Class attendance** is important for this course. You are expected to attend each class and complete required assignments on time. Your attendance will be monitored throughout the semester and attendance records may be required by administration office for certain purposes, such as Financial Aid.

According to University's "[Student Attendance Regulations](#)", if the student who continues to miss more than 10% of the class (4 and more), Dr. Huang may withdraw the student and assigned with a grade of W for nonattendance before the end of the first 10 weeks of classes.

If you anticipate that you won't be able to make class or due date, you are responsible to communicate with Dr. Huang beforehand (at least 14 days), fill out a **Student Excused Absence & Course Work Rescheduled Form** with required official documents, and make sure to follow-up by emails. Please note that activities, assignments and assessments completed in class **cannot be made up**, if you miss the class.

### Blackboard and VCU Email:

Blackboard and VCU emails will be the main communication platforms for this class. Course announcements, assigned reading materials, assignments, assessments and your scores will be posted on Blackboard frequently. All the emails about this course **MUST** come through Blackboard and VCU emails. Make sure you are able to access Blackboard for checking messages and assignments at least twice a week.

**If this is an emergency, bring your Student Excused Absence & Course Work Rescheduled Form along with the official documents to secure the full credits of the missed assignments or assessments, if permitted. See below for the procedure.**

### Late assignments and missed classes:

#### **Late assignments and missed classes due to UNFORTUNATE events or EMERGENCY**

Students that miss deadline for assignments because of serious illness, emergency or personal hardship may be allowed for make-ups. However, students **MUST** report the incidents **IMMEDIATELY** and request the possibility of make-ups or reschedule **within 3 days** since the incident occurred.

When you request a late assignment or reschedule, you need to submit the following in your initial email to Dr. Huang:

- (1) A *Student Excused Absence & Course Work Reschedule Request form* (with required information completely filled out) **within 3 days** since the incident/sickness occurred. Please detail your legitimate excuse and reason in the email you send.
- (2) An *appropriate, official documentation to prove and document your absence or emergency must be provided within 7 days* since the date of the missed assignment or class in order for the student to have the opportunity to make it up.  
An official documentation (such as doctor's note, obituary, death certificate, etc.) has to include:
  - (a) the student's full name;
  - (b) the full name and contact information (phone number) of the witness (or the other involving party; i.e. clinic doctor, police report, mechanical receipt, etc.)
  - (c) a description/document that is sufficient and explanatory for the incident or the emergency.

#### **Add/Drop, Withdrawal dates and information**



This course BIOL 475 Senior Capstone seminar is a Spring semester full session course.

This course is a Fall semester full session course.

Course starts: **[Removed]**

Last day for Add/Drop: **[Removed]**

Last day to withdraw: **[Removed]**

Course end date: **[Removed]**

#### **Withdrawal Information:**

You will not be automatically withdrawn from this course after missing a certain number of classes. However, I reserve my right to withdraw a student who has missed more than 10 % of course meetings (4 and more missed lectures) by the end of the first 10 weeks of classes with a grade of **W**. A grade of **F** will be assigned to students who stop attending (participating) classes after midpoint. If you do not want to remain in this class, it's your responsibility to fill out an on-line or paper withdrawal form.

Students can withdraw from classes using [eServices](#). Failure to withdraw from classes by the end of the first 10 weeks of classes could result in failing grades. You may withdraw from the course through Banner for Fall 2019 before **[Removed]** with a grade of W. Any student who withdraws after the midpoint will be assigned a grade of F, according to the student handbook.

Before withdrawing from classes, students should consult their instructor as well as other appropriate university offices. Withdrawing from classes may negatively impact a student's financial aid award and his or her semester charges. To discuss financial aid and the student bill, visit the [Student Services Center](#) at 1015 Floyd Avenue (Harris Hall) and/or contact your financial aid counselor regarding the impact on your financial aid. Contact information for the [University Financial Aid Office](#) is available online.

#### **Class Evaluation:**

Class evaluations at VCU are conducted on-line through Banner. Evaluation of the class is considered a component of the course and students should access and complete the course evaluation prior to final exam. The evaluations will be accessible beginning one week prior to Final Exam week.

**Timeliness:**

While we inevitably will have some legitimate delays (power outages, networks being down, military duties), *you should still be prepared to deliver your work by the stated deadlines*. Because most assessments and assignments are available for multiple days, extensions and make-ups are very unlikely permitted by Dr. Huang. If you have a problem getting internet access or anticipate a delay, let me know as soon as possible.

**Please note that I do not accept power outages, networks being down, etc. that occurs on the day of the stated deadline (or a few hours before the deadline) as legitimate excuse for extension or make-ups.**

**To ensure timeliness:**

1. Make note of deadlines so you are always aware when assignments are due.
2. **Do not wait until the last minute to prepare or submit assignments.** Technical problems have a way of striking when you are close to a deadline.
3. Have a backup plan in case your computer crashes or you lose Internet connectivity. For example, most libraries, both academic and public, have free Internet access for patrons, with computers provided. Many businesses, such as coffee shops and fast food restaurants, have free Internet access via WiFi if you provide your own laptop computer.

If you have any technique issues on Blackboard or campus internet connection, please contact IT help desk!

The required syllabus statements originally included here are maintained by the Office of the Provost and are regularly updated. To prevent the dissemination of information which may no longer be accurate or complete, the full text of the required syllabus statements have been removed from this document.

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.

**VCU Technical Support**

- Instructional Technology Support Center (<https://ts.vcu.edu/it-support-center/>)

Through this page you will find the direct contact information for computer support. You may contact them either through email, live chat or phone. If you have issues of access or computer issues when trying to connect to campus this is your first level of support.

- For Blackboard support: you may find information on Blackboard: Student resources (<http://www.blackboard.com/student-resources.html>) or contact VCU IT support via their webpage listed above.

As Blackboard is your primary learning platform if you have issues please contact IT Support first to help with access issues or any other problems, which is available 24/7.

***\*Special details of this syllabus may be subject to change upon announcement by the instructors! You should expect some slight shifts in which chapters we cover each week. Attend classes and check Blackboard for announcements on such changes.***

## BIOL475-[Removed] FALL 2019 Tentative Course Schedule:

Weeks		Topics	Pre-lecture reading and assignments (Check Blackboard for updates)
1	[Removed]	Course introduction and course policies	
2	[Removed]	Introduction to “the ecology of disease” and Search and identify reliable sources	1. Reading: Schrag and Wiener. 1995, <i>TREE</i> and Cable et al. 2017, <i>Phi. Trans. R. Soc. B.</i> and one selected article. 2. Weekly contribution post and discussion 3. Journal reflection
3	[Removed]	Shared Topic:	1. Weekly contribution post and discussion 2. Journal reflection
4	[Removed]	Shared Topic:	1. Weekly contribution post and discussion 2. Journal reflection
5	[Removed]	Topic 1: Student:	1. Weekly contribution post and discussion 2. Journal reflection
6	[Removed]	Topic 2: Student:	1. Weekly contribution post and discussion 2. Journal reflection
7	[Removed]	Topic 3: Student:	1. Weekly contribution post and discussion 2. Journal reflection
8	[Removed]	Topic 4: Student:	1. Weekly contribution post and discussion 2. Journal reflection
9	[Removed]	Topic 5: Student:	1. Weekly contribution post and discussion 2. Journal reflection
10	[Removed]	Topic 6: Student:	1. Weekly contribution post and discussion 2. Journal reflection
11	[Removed]	Topic 7: Student: <i>[Removed]: last day to withdraw with a “W”</i>	1. Weekly contribution post and discussion 2. Journal reflection
12	[Removed]	Topic 8: Student:	1. Weekly contribution post and discussion 2. Journal reflection
13	[Removed]	Shared Topic:	1. Weekly contribution post and discussion 2. Journal reflection
14	[Removed]	Wrap Up	1. Weekly contribution post and discussion 2. Journal reflection
15	[Removed]	<i>Fall break! (No classes)</i>	1. Weekly contribution post and discussion 2. Journal reflection
16	[Removed]	No classes!	