

Senior Seminar, BSC 4931, Fall 2015

Sections **U03 (T 11:00-12:15) in PC 425** and **U04 (T 3:30-4:45) in Ziff 110**

Your instructor: John Cozza

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

Office: OE 216

Office hours: **Mon 5-6+; Tues 1-3:15, 5-6+; Most Weds** (but not 9/2, 10/7, 11/4) **5-6+; Other times by appointment**

DATE	WHAT'S HAPPENING	Check-in	WORK DUE
25 Aug	Introduction; choosing and researching a topic	Personal introductions	Read syllabus & project ideas <i>asap!</i>
1 Sept	Reading and discussing scientific papers	Biodiversity news item*	Read posted papers
8 Sept	Discussing and refining project topic; finding needed papers; form groups	Project topic & motivation	Tentative project topic and progress on references
15 Sept	Writing a science paper	Career plan B	Project title and annotated list of 5+ references
22 Sept	Preparing and presenting a science talk	Giving back	General outline (1 page)
29 Sept	How to critique a science talk; info on ETS exam	Idea for sustainability	Powerpoint intro or results slide for critique: Submit on Blackboard by Sun Sept 27
6 Oct	<i>Finish critique of slides;</i> Mini-presentations for non-scientists: Groups 1 & 2	*Post title on Google Docs by Sunday Aug 30	<i>You are encouraged to bring your slides or paper in progress to office hours!</i>
13 Oct	Mini-presentations for non-scientists: Groups 3, 4, & 5		Detailed outline (2 pages) with citations & 10+ refs (not annotated)
20 Oct	Presentations: Group 1		
27 Oct	Presentations: Group 2		
3 Nov	Presentations: Group 3		
10 Nov	Presentations: Group 4		
17 Nov	Presentations: Group 5 Editing a science paper		
24 Nov	Sustainability and our future		Read posted papers
1 Dec	Wrap-up: reflections & next steps + course evaluations		Project papers due; Reading TBA?
8 Dec	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 10+ 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 = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62, F = 0-59.

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. 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 a few 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, 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>