

BIOL 521- Introduction to Biology Research

Welcome to BIOL521! In this course, you will meet marine science, biology, and environmental sciences faculty members and learn about their research interests. This experience will provide you with motivation to conduct research, opportunities to interact with established scientists, information on potential committee members, and potential access to resources. At the same time, you will also have the opportunity to get to know and work collaboratively with your fellow graduate students. Finally, if you are in the MESP program, you will visit Shannon Point Marine Center (SPMC) and learn about its facilities and how to take advantage of them.

FORMAT

To carry out the goals of the course, you will interview science faculty at Western and meet every two weeks to discuss the interviews that everyone has conducted.

Interviews: The names and departmental affiliation of faculty members and scientists are available on the relevant websites (links are below). You need to contact them to schedule a group meeting as we will discuss the first day of class. In order to maximize your learning experience and prevent overburdening the faculty members, form teams with your classmates. (I recommend teams of three people.) Each student should meet with at least **seven** faculty members. If you are the only student who wants to meet with a particular faculty member, you should meet one on one.

<https://cse.wvu.edu/biology/faculty>

<https://huxley.wvu.edu/esci/esci-faculty-staff>

<http://www.wvu.edu/spmc/staff.shtml> (Wyane Landis is unavailable.)

One reason we ask you to meet with faculty members is that we would like you to take an active learning role. Hence, you will direct questions to faculty members and the meeting will lead in the direction that you decide. This is a great opportunity for you to ask all those questions that you have about science, teaching, the specific research that faculty members are conducting, the job market, and graduate school.

For faculty members and marine scientists at SPMC, those of you in MESP should make a trip together or in small groups to meet first with Gene McKeen (x7400) to talk as a group about logistics and, ideally, to meet with the faculty members and scientists there. Contact Gene to coordinate a day trip to SPMC.

Meetings. We will meet certain Mondays at 15:00 h for 50 min in BIOL415 to discuss the interviews that have been conducted, learning from each other's experiences. Dates: Sep30th, Oct 14th, Oct 28th and Nov 18th.

ASSESSMENT

Your performance and learning will be assessed based on a collection of 'reflection notes'. For **four** of your interviews, you will write a 400 to 700-word reflective paper on your experience. You should write the paper as though you are sharing your thoughts with a friend in a well-planned and well-written letter. The following questions are meant to elicit your critical thinking and help you write the paper, **NOT** to suggest that you answer them sequentially:

- a) What did you find most interesting or memorable from the conversation? That is, what would be worth sharing with a friend?
- b) What aspects of your academic experience relate to the experiences of the faculty member? That is, did you feel that academically you have a lot, something or nothing in common?
- c) How can this person be of help to you in your graduate work and professional career?
- d) If you had been the faculty member, what would you have done differently during the interview?
- e) In hindsight, what would you have done differently during the interview? What advice or comments would you give future graduate students?

For the last paper also include:

- f) How have your ideas regarding graduate school and science changed from your experience talking with faculty? What's different about you now compared to the beginning of the quarter?

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You will be evaluated based on your analysis of the interviews, your writing skills, and the incorporation in subsequent interviews of your learning from prior interviews (that is, the integration of your ideas).

Given that this is a 1-credit class, for which you are expected to spend 2-3 extra hours of work per week, and that there are a large number of professors and researchers to meet, you will receive a satisfactory if you fulfill **all** of the following requirements:

- write **four** reflection notes,
- attend and participate in **all** discussions, and
- meet with at least **seven** faculty members. However, I encourage you meeting with more

DUE DATES:

Given that one aim of the course is for you to meet faculty who could help as potential committee members and given the timeline to select a thesis committee, I encourage to conduct all or the majority of your interviews within the first six weeks of the quarter. Said that, you can send me papers at your leisure.

I will not receive papers beyond **Monday December 2nd at 5 pm**. Please e-mail the papers to Alejandro.Acevedo-Gutierrez@wwu.edu.

Inclusiveness and Respect

You are encouraged to speak up and participate during class. Because the class will represent a diversity of individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences, each one of us will respect, appreciate, and embrace every other member of this class.

I am firmly committed to diversity and equality in all areas of life. In this class, I will work to promote an inclusive environment where everyone feels safe and welcome. I recognize that discrimination can be direct or indirect and take place at both institutional and personal levels. I believe that such discrimination is unacceptable and I am committed to providing equality of opportunity for all by eliminating any and all discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimization. The success of this policy relies on the support and understanding of everyone in this class. We all have a responsibility not to be offensive to each other, or to participate in, or condone harassment or discrimination of any kind. Without failing to speak up, we also have the opportunity to think the best of everyone and give one another the benefit of the doubt.

Equal Opportunity Rights

You have the right to an educational experience that is free from illegal harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status or genetic information. If you believe you have experienced harassment or discrimination, inform me, an instructor you feel is an ally, one of the two Biology faculty members on the College's Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Committee (Ben Miner and José Serrano-Moreno), or using the anonymous form under the Equity and Inclusion tab on the Biology Department homepage: <https://cse.wwu.edu/biology/form/equity-and-inclusion-issues-biology#overlay-context=biology>

Intellectual Honesty

Science is based on trust. If a scientist states that she carried out a particular study and obtained certain results, the rest of us trust that she did such thing. This is one reason why there is no tolerance for people who are not intellectually honest, and this class will be no exception.

<https://wp.wwu.edu/academichonesty/>

From WWU: Plagiarism is presenting as one's own in whole or in part the argument, language, creations, conclusions, or scientific data of another without explicit acknowledgement. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Using another person's written or spoken words.

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- Using information from a World Wide Web site, CD-ROM or other electronic sources.
- Using statistics, graphs, charts and facts without acknowledging the source of the ideas.
- Paraphrasing, which is using someone else's argument without acknowledging the source by imitating the argument using other words.

[Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism](#)

Religious Accommodations

Western provides reasonable accommodation for students to take holidays for reasons of faith or conscience or for organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization. Students seeking such accommodation must provide written notice to their faculty within the first two weeks of the course, citing the specific dates for which they will be absent.

“Reasonable accommodation” means that faculty will coordinate with the student on scheduling examinations or other activities necessary for completion of the course or program and includes rescheduling examinations or activities or offering different times for examinations or activities.

Additional information about this accommodation can be found in [SB 5166](#):

[Providing religious accommodations for postsecondary students](#).

Resources

Do you have any concerns about your ability to learn in the classroom or your ability to take assessments in the classroom? Contact the Disability Access Center for advice, help, and to request accommodation (650-3844 or <https://disability.wwu.edu/>).

Do you feel unwell or have a health-related question? Contact the Health Center (650-3400) or visit the website of Student Health (http://www.wwu.edu/chw/student_health/).

Do you have an emotional or psychological concern or question? Contact the Counseling Center (650-3400) or visit the website of Counseling Services (<http://www.wwu.edu/counseling/>).

Do you have a safety concern? Contact the University Police (650-3555) or visit their website (<http://www.wwu.edu/ps/police/index.shtml>).

Do you have a family or personal crisis or emergency? Contact the Dean of Students (650-3450) or visit their website (<https://wp.wwu.edu/students/>).

Have you or someone you know experienced bias of any kind on campus? Contact the Equal Opportunity Office for advice and help. (<http://www.wwu.edu/eoo/bias-incident-response.shtml>).

Do you have concerns related to being an undocumented student? Contact Student Outreach Services. (<https://wp.wwu.edu/sos/undocumentedstudents/>).

Do you have financial difficulties? Go to the Financial Aid Services Center and schedule an appointment with a financial aid counselor (http://www.finaid.wwu.edu/client_services/pages/contact.php)

Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ Community? Learn about resources and support by emailing L. K. Langley (they/them/theirs) at L.K.langley@wwu.edu or by visiting <https://lgbtq.wwu.edu/>

Do you or someone you know need confidential support related to sexual violence? Contact CASAS (650-3700 or <https://pws.wwu.edu/consultation-and-sexual-assault-support-casas>), the Student Health Center, and/or the Counseling Center.

To report sexual violence, please contact University Police, Bellingham Police, and/or the Title IX Coordinator in Western’s Equal Opportunity Office (650-3307). Faculty are required to report sex discrimination, including sexual violence that they learn about to the Title IX Coordinator.

Are you or someone you know in distress? Help is available anytime, all the time.

<https://suicideprevention.wwu.edu/get-help/>

Feel free to email me, call me (x3653) or meet with me (BIOL309) with any questions you may have about the course.