

Biology 5305.001/W01 – Techniques of Scientific Research Syllabus
Fall 2020: TR 9:30 – 10:45 WSB 107

Instructor: Dr. Chris M. Ritzi

Office: Warnock Science Building - 217

Phone: 837- 8420

Email: critzi@sulross.edu

Office hours: MWF 11-12, R 2-5, or by appt.

Class Website: <http://sulross.blackboard.com> & <http://faculty.sulross.edu/critzi/>

Text: CBE Style Manual.

Course Description: In this course we will introduce you to the world of graduate school. Toward this goal, you will learn about the department and program that you belong to, the type of research being conducted, and what it means to be a graduate student. You will be expected to choose a Major advisor and develop your degree plan. You will also be encouraged to begin developing your thesis topic, with the goal of starting your proposal during this class. Toward this goal, one of your main semester projects will be to write a draft proposal, and make a practice presentation of your proposal presentation to the class. We will cover research design and other aspects on becoming a successful graduate student. Finally, we will use the proposal process as a way to become familiar with scientific writing and the traditional journal manuscript editing process.

Student Learning Outcomes

The biology student graduating with a MS in Biology should be able to:

- 1) Understanding and implementation of scientific methodology.
- 2) Utilization of field techniques toward addressing scientific questions.
- 3) Be able to utilize statistics toward the analysis of data within the discipline.
- 4) Be able to effectively disseminate scientific findings using both written and oral communication.

Course Learning Objectives:

- 1) Demonstrate scientific writing skills
- 2) Organize oneself during the entrance of graduate school by choosing an advisor and developing a degree plan.
- 3) Develop professional presentation skills.
- 4) Work toward planning organizing and developing a thesis topic.

Tests: There will not be any tests throughout the course, as such. Instead, the course will be graded on participation, preparedness, and the presentation of a class project toward the end of term. The project is to be a 15-20 minute presentation about your thesis topic. You will also draft a rough copy of your proposal during this course, to start you and your advisor toward getting your project up and off the ground.

Grading: You will be assessed 200 points based on your participation and preparedness for each week's class, as well as 100 points on your presentation. The presentation grade will be determined by myself and your peers (in part). Your written proposal will be also be worth 100 pts after original writing and revision. Finally, there are 100 points built into various assignments, such as a library assignment, degree plan, etc.

Attendance: Students missing 20% of lectures (6 class periods) shall be dropped from the class with an F per the SRSU catalog. Please notify your instructor BEFORE missing class for authorized activities, death in the family, or illness. If you are feeling ill, have a fever of 100 F, or am exhibiting any symptoms of the current COVID infection, please stay home and self-quarantine until you are either tested and cleared, or have been symptom free for over 10 days. As this class will be offered on-line as well as in person, attendance and participation online is the equivalent of in-class participation. Whether you are connecting to the class during the scheduled class time in zoom or viewing the recordings of class in Blackboard and posting in the discussion forums, activity each week is required.

Lecture courtesy: The general rules of classroom etiquette are below.

- 1) This is a graduate class, so feel free to talk about the material as a group. This doesn't mean you should talk about other things for the hour.
- 2) No eating, chewing, dipping, etc. (unless it is a brown bag session)
- 3) Please turn cell phones and pagers to silent while in class. They are disruptive to the entire class, and detract from learning.
- 4) For remote connections, please attend class as professionally as one would do in person (ie. Wearing clothes, not being disruptive or disrespectful to your peers, etc.)
- 5) If attending class in person, please wear you mask at all times and maintain social distancing. Failure to do so will result with being asked to leave the class and count as an absence for the day.

Students with disabilities will be provided reasonable accommodations. If you would like to request such accommodations because of physical, mental, or learning disability, please contact the ADA Coordinator for Program Accessibility at 837-8203, FH 112.

Tentative Lecture Outline

Date	Lecture topic
Aug 25	Introduction
Aug 27	Welcome to Graduate School, now what?
Sept 1	Your faculty and possible advisors
Sept 3	Research at Sul Ross
Sept 8	What are your degree options?
Sept 10	Resources as a grad student
Sept 15	Degree plans and Committees
Sept 17	Library resources
Sept 22	Scientific methodology
Sept 24	Discussion of sample field methods

Sept 29	Discussion of sample laboratory methods
Oct 1	Degree Plan Due
Oct 6	Statistics are not an option
Oct 8	Thesis time line
Oct 13	Preparing for Comps, they are not a rubber stamp...
Oct 15	Proposal Draft Due
Oct 20	Editorial Manuscript reviewing
Oct 22	Proofing and marks
Oct 27	CBE style manual
Oct 29	Punctuation and abbreviations
Nov 3	Scientific names, numbers, and measurements
Nov 5	Word usage: confusing and often misused and misspelled words
Nov 10	Grants
Nov 12	Curriculum Vitae
Nov 17	Professional Meetings
Nov 19	Proposal Presentations
Nov 24	Proposal Presentations
Nov 26	Nov 25-27 – Thanksgiving Holidays – No Class
Dec 1	What do I do after this? Life after grad school
Dec 3	Dead Day
Dec 7 – 8:00am	Final Exam for TR 9:30-10:45 – Proposal revision due

Note – This outline is subject to change for reasons of course interest, time constraint, or instructor whim. The exams will be administered on the dates given, unless material relevant for a given exam has not been covered. Under such cases, an exam may be moved a class period or two to aid in the clarity and understanding of the material.