

Biology 490 Section 1: *Cannabis*: History, Uses, and Controversies

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Office: CBB 302A (inside Biology Department main office)
Office Hours: Thursdays and Fridays 10:00-11:30. Other times by appointment.
Whatever the time, I prefer to meet via zoom.
Please email me with your preferred time(s) to schedule.



Course Description: This course focuses on the complex history, myriad uses, and social and legal controversies surrounding *Cannabis*. Meetings will primarily consist of critical evaluation and discussion of reading/video/writing assignments related to course content. Many meetings will be student-led. As a *Communication in the Major* course, emphasis will be placed on both written and oral communication as they pertain to the scientific field of biology and related disciplines.

Course Learning Outcomes: After taking this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Describe the basic biology, ecology, and taxonomy of *Cannabis*.
- 2) Evaluate and discuss the history and many uses of *Cannabis* in a broad context.
- 3) Evaluate and discuss the social and legal controversies related to *Cannabis* and its use.
- 4) Locate, interpret, and synthesize scientific and popular-press media to explore course-relevant topics, and share related information with others via both written and oral communication.
- 5) Critically evaluate and provide meaningful feedback on the written work and oral presentations of others.

Required course materials: All course materials will be made available to you on Canvas.

The structure of this course in a COVID-19 environment: I have done my best to revise this senior seminar in a way that accommodates the many complexities we all face in the new (but temporary!) reality of COVID-19. In particular, you will notice that many of our meetings will be conducted via zoom (links will be provided on Canvas). For those meetings that occur in-person, the class will be divided into two in-person “cohorts” of no greater than 9 students each (the maximum number of students allowed at one time in CBB 131), with “Cohort 1” meeting in-person on Thursdays and “Cohort 2” meeting in-person on Fridays. For days in which your cohort is not meeting in-person, you will engage with course material via discussion/learning modules on Canvas. For those of you who are unable/unwilling to attend any in-person meetings, you will be able to complete all activities and assignments online and asynchronously.

Written work: There are two distinct writing assignments in this class. One is the production/revision of your curriculum vitae/resume and a cover letter/personal statement to go along with it. These materials will be tailored specifically to a real job/position that you locate (I will help you if needed). Whether you actually apply for the job/position is up to you. The other writing assignment will represent the most substantial single investment of your time and energy in this course, namely the production of an ~8-page research paper focused on a course-relevant topic of your choice. You should start thinking about potential topics for this paper right away. More details about these assignments will be shared soon.

Peer evaluation: Each student in this course will be asked to evaluate and provide constructive feedback on the written work of a peer. To that end, later in the semester you will be given access to the rough draft of the research paper written by a classmate. You will then be asked to critically evaluate the paper and answer a number of associated questions. Authors will receive peer-evaluations (and evaluations from me) in time for them to be useful as they work on their final draft.

Student-led discussions: Each of you will be asked to work with another student and take responsibility for at least one of our meetings this semester. This means you will need to work together to choose an interesting course-relevant topic

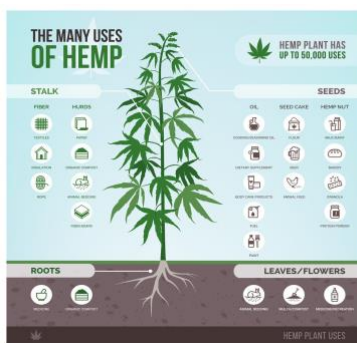
(different from either of your research papers!) along with associated media to provide background information for the class and inspiration for discussion. The two of you will then lead the class through the actual discussion. I will also need your help setting up the associated discussion module on Canvas. Details about this process will be shared soon.

Presentation: Toward the end of the semester you will be asked to share your research paper topic with the class in the form of an oral presentation accompanied by relevant slides. That presentation will be 10-12 minutes long with a few additional minutes for questions from the audience. All presentations will occur via zoom.

Participation: I expect that you read all course documents and watch all videos and that you are prepared to engage in thoughtful and informed discussions with me and each other about this material. Your final course grade will be influenced fairly heavily by your participation in these discussions.

Grading: Point values for assignments etc. are listed below. Values with an asterisk (*) refer to assignments that, if not completed, will result in the associated loss of points and a reduction of your letter grade to the next lowest full grade (e.g., B+ to a C+).

Activity	# Points possible
CV/res & cov lett/pers statement	30*
Research paper topic assignment	10*
Research paper rough draft	30*
Peer evaluation	20*
Research paper final draft	30*
Research paper presentation	40*
Leading class discussion	20*
Participation	60



Your final grade in this course will be based on the percentage of all possible points that you earn throughout the semester. To determine your final grade the following metric will be used:

≥ 94%	90-93%	87-89%	84-86%	80-83%	77-79%	74-76%	70-73%	67-69%	60-66%	≤ 59%
A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F

Biology comprehensive exam: Satisfactory completion of this course requires the completion of the Biology Department’s comprehensive exam. Scores are used to compare class averages among various populations of biology majors to assess general student learning as an outcome of completing our department’s biology curriculum. Scores will not be made available to you or your instructor and will have no bearing on grades in this or any other class. However, your 490 grade will be withheld until the exam is taken. More information (exam format, dates) will be provided soon.

Late policy: Assignments lose 20% of their value for each day they are late.

Students with disabilities: I will be happy to help you if you need special accommodations to succeed in this course. Please visit the UWSP Student Disability and Assistive Technology Center (located in LRC 609) to document your needs and then contact me so that appropriate arrangements can be made. More information can be found here: <http://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx>

Academic integrity: It is your responsibility to be aware of your rights and responsibilities as a UWSP student. Please take the time to read and understand the information found here (and let me know of any questions): <https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/UWS%2014-1.pdf>. It is also your responsibility to be aware of the definition(s) of the word plagiarism, and take care to avoid committing plagiarism in your work. Your work must reflect your own thoughts and ideas expressed in your own words. In addition, you must always cite your sources of information and

provide a bibliography for any written work you produce (including powerpoint slides). Please take the time to read and understand the information found here (and let me know of any questions): <https://libraryguides.uwsp.edu/plagiarism>.

Meeting schedule: Note that I reserve the right to change this schedule or add/remove/change content, with reasonable notice, as we progress through the semester. For each week you will find a corresponding module on Canvas. Everything you need for that week will appear inside that module.

A note about venues: if the venue is “Zoom”, that refers to a live, virtual meeting. Links will be provided on Canvas and the meeting will be recorded and shared on Canvas for those of you who cannot be there. If the venue is “Canvas”, that refers to a Canvas discussion/activity module that you will complete on your own. Finally, if the venue is “CBB 131”, that refers to in-person meetings. For those who cannot attend in-person meetings, alternatives will be found on Canvas.

Another note: if attendance at the in-person meetings is low, or if the situation with COVID-19 changes for the worse on our campus or in our community, I reserve the right to change the course modality to entirely virtual/online.

Week	Date	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
1	9/3	Venue: Zoom Topic: Course Introduction	Venue: Zoom Topic: Course Introduction
	9/4	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: Botany of Desire: Intoxication (video)	Canvas discussion Topic: Botany of Desire: Intoxication (video)
2	9/10	Venue: CBB 131 Topic: biology/ecology/taxonomy of <i>Cannabis I</i>	Venue: Canvas Topic: biology/ecology/taxonomy of <i>Cannabis II</i>
	9/11	Venue: Canvas Topic: biology/ecology/taxonomy of <i>Cannabis II</i>	Venue: CBB131 Topic: biology/ecology/taxonomy of <i>Cannabis I</i>
3	9/17	Venue: Zoom Topic: Hofmann 2013 Topic: guest speaker Sue Kissinger	Venue: Zoom Topic: Hofmann 2013 Topic: guest speaker Sue Kissinger
	9/18	Venue: Zoom Topic: CV/res & cov lett/pers statement assigned Topic: Research paper assigned Topic: Research paper peer evaluation assigned Topic: Research paper presentation assigned	Venue: Zoom Topic: CV/res & cov lett/pers statement assigned Topic: Research paper assigned Topic: Research paper peer evaluation assigned Topic: Research paper presentation assigned
4	9/24	Venue: CBB 131 Topic: uses of <i>Cannabis I</i>	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: uses of <i>Cannabis II</i>
	9/25	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: uses of <i>Cannabis II</i>	Venue: CBB131 Topic: uses of <i>Cannabis I</i>
5	10/1	Venue: CBB 131 Topic: social/legal controversies I	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: social/legal controversies II
	10/2	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: social/legal controversies II	Venue: CBB131 Topic: social/legal controversies I
6	10/8	Venue: CBB 131 Topic: Student-led discussion	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: Student-led discussion
	10/9	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: Student-led discussion	Venue: CBB131 Topic: Student-led discussion
7	10/15	Venue: CBB 131 Topic: Student-led discussion	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: Student-led discussion
	10/16	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: Student-led discussion	Venue: CBB131 Topic: Student-led discussion
8	10/22	Venue: CBB 131 Topic: Student-led discussion	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: Student-led discussion
	10/23	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: Student-led discussion	Venue: CBB131 Topic: Student-led discussion

Week	Date	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
9	10/29	Venue: CBB 131 Topic: Student-led discussion	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: Student-led discussion
	10/30	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: Student-led discussion	Venue: CBB131 Topic: Student-led discussion
10	11/5	Venue: CBB 131 Topic: Student-led discussion	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: Student-led discussion
	11/6	Venue: Canvas discussion Topic: Student-led discussion	Venue: CBB131 Topic: Student-led discussion
11	11/12	Venue: Zoom Topic: Student Presentations	Venue: Zoom Topic: Student Presentations
	11/13	Venue: Zoom Topic: Student Presentations	Venue: Zoom Topic: Student Presentations
12	11/19	Venue: Zoom Topic: Student Presentations	Venue: Zoom Topic: Student Presentations
	11/20	Venue: Zoom Topic: Student Presentations	Venue: Zoom Topic: Student Presentations
	11/26	No class	No class
	11/27	No class	No class
13	12/3	Venue: Zoom Topic: Student Presentations	Venue: Zoom Topic: Student Presentations
	12/4	Venue: Zoom Topic: Student Presentations	Venue: Zoom Topic: Student Presentations
14	12/10	Venue: Zoom Topic: Student Presentations	Venue: Zoom Topic: Student Presentations
	12/11	Venue: Zoom Topic: Course Epilogue	Venue: Zoom Topic: Course Epilogue

Week	Date	due dates
5	10/2	CV/res & cov lett/pers statement due
6	10/9	Research paper topic assignment due
10	11/6	Research paper rough draft due
12	11/20	Research paper peer evaluation due
14	12/11	Research paper final draft due



Cannabis (hemp) growing in the UWSP greenhouse, spring 2020 (image: B. Barringer)