

**BIOL 490 Sec. 11 Senior Seminar: History of Life on Earth**

Fall 2017

Wed 2:00-3:50 PM in TNR 461

Instructor: Justin T. Sipiorski

Office: TNR 403 (400a, 401, 412, 414)

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Office Hours: By appointment

**General Course Description.** “Reserved for senior year biology and biochemistry majors as a capstone experience that emphasizes written and oral communication. Oral communication includes discussion of a current area in biology (topics vary with instructor). Examine and critically review scientific literature in that area, write a paper on a subject in that area, and present a seminar to the class on your chosen subject. Written assignments will include peer and instructor evaluations and revisions.”

**Objectives.** The objective of this course is to provide experience with the communication of scientific information using various topics in the history of life on Earth as a vehicle for discussion.

*Learning Outcomes:*

You will be able to:

1. Locate, critically read, synthesize, and discuss the primary literature dealing with multiple aspects of the history of life on Earth.
2. Demonstrate the ability to write and orally present biological information that is articulate and grammatically correct with properly documented and organized ideas and data, appropriate to the specific audience.
3. Evaluate your own and others' written and oral communication skills by providing and applying useful feedback.

**Prerequisites.** Senior status. May not be repeated.

**Text. (available at text rental)** History of Life 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. Cowen, R. 2013. Wiley-Blackwell Publishing. Sussex, U.K. 302 pp.

**Grading.** Final will be based on the percentage of the total 180 points that you earned in the class rounded to ONE (tenths) decimal place based on the grading scheme in the UWSP student handbook

100-94% A  
93-89% A-  
88-87% B+  
86-83% B  
82-79% B-  
78-77% C+  
76-73% C  
72-69% C-  
68-67% D+  
66-63% D  
62-59% D-  
<58% F

**REQUESTS FOR EXTRA POINTS WILL NOT BE HONORED.**

**BIOL 490 points**

1-hour discussion	40pts
5-page review paper	
Peer Evaluations	30pts
Prospectus	10pts
Annotated Bibliography	10pts
Final Paper	50pts
In class participation	30pts

**TOTAL 200pts**

**Review Paper.** Each student will complete a review paper that will be evaluated in the following manner.

- Prospectus of Topic & Questions due on \_\_\_\_\_ (10 points).
- Annotated Bibliography due on \_\_\_\_\_ (10 points). Minimum of FIVE primary literature sources
- Complete Drafts for Peer Evaluation due on \_\_\_\_\_ (30 points each)
- Peer Review of Another's Draft due on \_\_\_\_\_ (30 points each)
- Term Paper due on 15 DEC 2017 5pm (50 points).

In addition to your instructor's office hours, the Writing Lab at the UWSP Tutoring-Learning Center is available to help you.

<http://www.uwsp.edu/tlc/Pages/writingReadingTutorials.aspx>

**Biology Comprehensive Exam.** Satisfactory completion of this course requires the completion of the Biology Department Comprehensive Exam. Test scores are used to compare class averages among various populations of biology majors to assess general student learning. Scores will not be made available to you nor your instructor and will have no bearing on grades. However, your BIOL 490 grade will be withheld until the exam is taken. The exam will be offered at the following times: Wednesday the 6th or Thursday the 7th December in TNR 120 @ 6 PM

**Attendance.** YOUR COMMITMENT TO YOUR CLASSES IS AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW. You are expected to attend all seminar sessions. Absences relating to a student's religious beliefs will be accommodated according to UWS 22.03 (URL below), providing the student notifies the instructor within the first 3 weeks of classes regarding the specific dates she/he will be absent.

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap22.pdf>

Our schedule is fairly rigid, with just enough sessions scheduled to accommodate everyone in the class. MAKE-UP PRESENTATIONS WILL BE ALLOWED IN CASES OF MEDICAL EMERGENCY, FOR WHICH YOU MUST PROVIDE WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION. It is your responsibility to contact Dr. Sipiorski to make any arrangements for a make-up presentation.

**Academic Integrity.** Any misrepresentation of your work, including plagiarism, or cheating on exams will result in a zero (0) being recorded for that activity. Students are encouraged to become familiar with the UWS/UWSP Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures governing student academic conduct. This is available for download at:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>

- Copying whole passages written by someone else is plagiarism. Even if you right-click in Word to use the thesaurus and replace some words.
- Cobbling together sentences from various sources and presenting them as your own is plagiarism.
- Quoting passages is not appropriate in this class. Use your own words.

**Classroom Conduct.** It is disruptive to come late to class, read extra-curricular media in class, or use cell phones (and other electronic devices) during class time. The expectation is that you come to each session ready to participate through discussion, asking questions, and offering helpful feedback to your peers.

**Disabilities.** Students with disabilities are welcome and encouraged in this class. Students with disabilities should contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center during the first two weeks of the semester if they wish to request specific accommodations.

<http://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx>