CHEM 615: 1 credit hour Fall 2015
Biochemistry Seminar
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Wednesdays, noon-1pm; FW 300

SYLLABUS

The purpose of the Biochemistry seminar course is to give the student the opportunity to: (1) organize a talk on a subject which is of general interest; (2) do a library search on this subject (to find what others have done in this field); (3) present the material in a way which will hold the attention of the attending group; (4) answer questions to the best of one's ability during the presentation; (5) participate in each seminar by asking questions; (6) be better prepared for future presentations at scientific meetings and job interviews. Students will give a research or literature talk each academic year (one semester literature/one semester research). The "research" talk may fulfill curriculum requirements, such as a candidacy exam, research update, and dissertation of thesis defense. Additionally, a component of the CHEM615 course is attendance at the Monday departmental colloquia or Friday CBBS seminars.

Course overview:

1. The date for each student's presentation is decided by the student, advisor and instructor at the first organizational meeting.
2. Each student past the 1st semester will participate in presenting (one presentation on a literature topic, the other on a thesis/dissertation research). First semester students participate only by observation and discussion. The literature topic must be original; you cannot reuse material which you presented elsewhere. The literature/research topics rotate on a semester basis. For the fall semester the student can choose one of the two; in the spring, the complement must be presented. The length of the literature topic presentation should not exceed 25 minutes, as we typically schedule two speakers for one day. This time must also allow for discussion. It is good to do a "dry run", to practice the presentation. Candidacy and thesis presentation will typically require more time and enough time should be allocated after consulting with the research advisor (for candidacy and defense, make sure the seminar room is reserved for you at least for another additional hour). If your presentation requires attendance of your committee members, make sure as a courtesy, that they are apprised of the date ahead of time.
3. The literature subject chosen by the student should be from the recent literature (i.e., within the last couple years). The seminar should not be based on a review article or a Wikipedia entry, but it must be based on a recent original article. However, a recent review article may be a good way to find an interesting paper and learn useful background information. In some cases a "classic" literature article from a particular field may be of interest (please feel free to consult with your research advisor). Additional references should be consulted in the seminar preparation to help give the audience a proper introduction to the topic. These references must be studied and understood by the student. To broaden the group's scientific knowledge, ***it is <u>strongly encouraged to find a literature topic outside of the student's research</u>. Please feel free to consult with the instructor.***
4. The research talks will be typically prepared in consultation with the research advisor.
5. The student is free to consult with the instructor or research advisor regarding the suitability of the topic and the chosen article for the literature presentation.
6. The Friday before the seminar, the student must post an abstract (in the Biochemistry section of the bulletin board outside the mail room) and <u>email the abstract to the Biochemistry Seminar group using Blackboard (Tools→Send Email→ all users)</u>. This abstract is to be written in your own words (i.e., not the article's abstract).

General breakdown of a talk
(Note: it does not have to be in this order, but these are the most common areas)

- Introduce the topic (the question(s) that was (were) addressed)
- Background and Significance
- Methods (remember certain methods may not be familiar to all, so give sufficient background)
- Results (typically the figures and tables from the paper)
- Discussion
- Conclusions

Grading: The seminar carries a letter grade evaluation (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F). Participation is essential to the seminar, presence of all is required. If for some reason you will be unable to attend a seminar, please notify the instructor in advance. Failure to attend more than two unexcused seminars will result in a decrease in the letter grade (A→A-). Each additional unexcused absence will result in an additional drop for each absence.

Presentation Rubric: To provide better feedback to presenters, the instructor will fill out a presentation rubric. While this does not factor in to your grade in the course, it will provide an opportunity for discussion with the instructor to improve presentation skills. Therefore, it is strongly encouraged to meet with the instructor to discuss your presentation. The presentation rubrics can be found at http://www.chembio.niu.edu/chembio/programs_graduate/forms/oralpresentation.shtml

Plagiarism: Presenting work of somebody else as your own qualifies as plagiarism. Clearly, in a literature review the work presented is not your own. Make sure it is stated at the beginning of the presentation. Properly cite any figures, diagrams, schemes that were not created by you.