

## CHEM 615-3 Spring 2018 Syllabus

**CHEM 615-3:** 1 credit hour, letter graded.

Biochemistry Seminar, Dr. J. Horn ([jrhorn@niu.edu](mailto:jrhorn@niu.edu)), Seminar Facilitator.

Wednesdays, noon-1pm; LaT 300

O365 615 website: <https://niuits.sharepoint.com/sites/chem615> (drag and drop your files to documents folder)

### Course Description.

An important goal of the seminar is to increase your ability to craft well-designed presentations on your personal research or a published biochemical/biophysical research problem. Students will conduct a literature search (ideally using a citation manager), collate and organize relevant information, present this information to the CHEM 615-3 audience using engaging strategies, formulate and respond to questions. Ideally, students will also become familiar with researchers and their institutions. Effective presentation skills are transferable to many different settings related to both academic and non-academic career paths. Striving to improve and refine these skills is an important graduate professional development goal.

### Course Format.

Graduate students in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, except M.S. Teacher Licensure students, are required to register for CHEM 615 each semester of their graduate program. Semester 1 students are not required to present but should use the experience to increase exposure to departmental research and published papers. To meet the requirements for Student Learning Outcome, SLO, 3a, semester 2 students will give a literature talk and semester 3 students will give a research talk (as outlined in the timeline documents for the [M.S. and Ph.D. Assessment Plans](#)). A rubric is available for SLO 3a and will be applied by the seminar coordinator to each M.S. or Ph.D. student giving a literature talk. Research talks will be evaluated by the appropriate committee of faculty members. Students in their fourth or later semester will be advised by their research advisor(s) to present a literature or research talk. The research talk may be part of the candidacy exam or a thesis/dissertation defense, or perhaps a research update.

CHEM 615-3 students should not only attend the student presentations, but also the Monday departmental seminars (at 4:00 p.m.) or the Friday CBBS seminars (at noon). The schedules are [here](#).

### The Literature Presentation:

- Consult with your research advisor(s) to select an appropriate paper published within the last two years that is focused on a biochemical or biophysical topic that, ideally, is not in your primary research area. Your talk should establish the precise research question or hypothesis being addressed and clearly explain its significance/importance. Include the most relevant data (you only have 20 or 25 minutes) and be sure that you understand it and can clearly express it to the audience. Identify the novel finding(s) of the research, and articulate how the data specifically address the research question or hypothesis posed by the authors. (This falls under the "Organization and Content" section of the CHEM 615 Seminar rubric).
- Target for your literature talk should be around 20 minutes, which leaves around 10 minutes for questions/discussion. Two literature talks may be scheduled on the same day. Presenting a "dry run" practice of your presentation is encouraged to make sure the timing is not too short or too long.
- **Post a pdf of the full paper, or a link to the full paper, to the CHEM 615 Outlook Group at least one week prior to the scheduled presentation.** Students are strongly encouraged to read each paper before the presentation to facilitate questions and discussion.  
**File Name Format: "Paper-Last Name" (e.g. Paper-Baker).**

### The Research Presentation:

- Several research presentations are graduate degree requirements. For candidacy exams or thesis/dissertation defenses, be sure to check the availability of your committee members. Also see Linda to make sure the room is reserved for the required time. Candidacy exams and defenses typically require more than one hour. The annual research updates (after passing the candidacy exam) can generally be completed within the one hour CHEM 615-time slot, but check with your research advisor(s) to be sure.

#### **Abstract.**

- All students must post an abstract of their literature or research talk to the Files section of the CHEM 615 Outlook Group at least one week prior to the scheduled presentation. The **“CHEM 615 - Writing Scientific Abstracts - OWL”** is provided as a resource (created by [Purdue University's OWL](#)). The PRDP section of the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) also has additional policies on abstracts for those students meeting a departmental degree requirement.  
**File Name format: “Abstract-Last Name” (e.g. Abstract-Baker)**

#### **Schedule.**

- Students will schedule their literature and research talks using the CHEM 615 Outlook Group Calendar. Students are also responsible for updating any changes.
- Students in CHEM 615-3 should also post their upcoming candidacy exam, defense, or annual research update schedules, even if they don't start at noon on a Wednesday.

#### **Course Assessment.**

The seminar is letter graded (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F). Adherence to all relevant bullet items in the **Course Format** section above will put you on track for an “A”.

- Students giving a literature talk must submit **two items** to the Outlook Group (e.g. **Abstract-Baker** and **Paper-Baker**).
- Students giving a research talk (Research Talk, Annual Research Update, Candidacy, Thesis or Dissertation Defense) must submit **one item** (abstract) to the Outlook Group (e.g. **Abstract-Baker**).
- It is not a CHEM 615 requirement to attend the research talk of a Candidacy Exam, Thesis or Dissertation Defense, or Annual Research Update that falls outside the scheduled Wednesday noon-1pm time slot. Your research advisor(s), however, may want you to attend, so be sure to check.
- Each occurrence of a required abstract or paper that is posted in the Outlook group Thursday or later of the week prior to the scheduled CHEM 615 presentation will decrease your letter grade (e.g. A to A-).
- CHEM 615 Seminar rubrics do not factor into the CHEM 615 grade.
- Attendance matters and can affect your CHEM 615 grade. If for some reason you will be unable to attend a seminar, then notify the seminar coordinator in advance. Medical emergencies are an exception. Two excused absences are allowed. Each unexcused absence will decrease your letter grade (e.g. A to A-). Four unexcused absences will result in “F”.

#### **Policies set by the University:**

- **Academic Integrity Statement:**  
From the undergraduate catalog under [Academic Regulations](#):  
“Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination, turn in a paper or an assignment written or generated, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university.”
- **Accessibility Statement:**  
Northern Illinois University is committed to providing an accessible educational environment in collaboration

with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Any student requiring an academic accommodation due to a disability should let his or her faculty member know as soon as possible. Students who need academic accommodations based on the impact of a disability will be encouraged to contact the DRC if they have not done so already. The DRC is located on the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 (V) or [drc@niu.edu](mailto:drc@niu.edu).

- *Preferred Gender Pronoun Statement:*

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, then let me know. Please also inform me and feel free to correct me and your classmates on your preferred gender pronouns. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak with me in person or to email me. The [Gender and Sexuality Resource Center](#) also has a webpage designed to help support people of all genders as they navigate NIU's system.

- *Multilingual Student Statement:*

I am committed to making course content accessible to all students. If English is not your first language and this causes you concern about the course, please speak with me.

- *Student Sexual Misconduct Policy:*

Title IX protects against sexual discrimination and sexual misconduct, including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Confidential support and advocacy is available at the [NIU Counseling & Consultation Service](#), Campus Life Building 200, or at 815 753-1206. Alleged violations can also be reported online using the [Title IX Complain Form](#). Additional assistance is [here](#). For more information on Title IX awareness and education, consult [this resource](#). As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. Please be aware that as part of Title IX's "responsible person" policy, I am required to share any information a student may have shared with me on sexual harassment or misconduct with NIU's Title IX coordinator.