

**CHEM 615, Physical/Analytical/Inorganic/Nanochemistry (PAIN) Seminar**  
**Spring, 2018**  
**Tuesdays, 4:00–4:50 PM LaT (FW) 300**

Coordinator: Prof. T. M. Gilbert, LaT (FW) 309

Contact Information: Office Phone: 815/753-6896; E-mail: [tgilbert@niu.edu](mailto:tgilbert@niu.edu)

Office hours: by appointment

**Pedagogy:** Seminar presentation is a very important skill of the chemistry profession. It will likely play a vital role in any job-seeking process, and in one's success as a professional chemist. Thus, the purpose of Chem 615 is for students to present their research progress and/or their knowledge of the chemical literature, and to develop good presentation and question-handling skills. Faculty members and fellow students will critique presentations and ask challenging questions. By experiencing and learning from this, students will be better prepared to enter the professional world after graduation.

Skills to be developed and assessed through presenting a seminar in Chem 615 include: (1) the ability to organize a presentation so as to succinctly communicate the background, worth, and accomplishments associated with the science discussed; (2) the ability to conduct a thorough literature search on the subject, to find and communicate what others have done in the field; (3) the ability to present material in a way that holds the audience's attention; (4) the ability to answer questions to the best of one's ability during the presentation; and (5) the ability to accept and learn from criticism of one's work. Skills to be developed (and assessed) through being an audience member in Chem 615 include: (1) the ability to participate by asking relevant and challenging questions; (2) the ability to critique another's work in a professional, helpful way; and (3) the ability to broaden one's knowledge by absorbing information on topics far from one's area of interest.

**Rules:**

(1) All students in Chem 615 must attend both the Tuesday seminars and the Monday Graduate Colloquia. Unexcused absences from these seminars will result in the lowering of the overall letter grade at the rate of 1 letter per 2 absences. Absences will be considered excused only if the Coordinator was informed beforehand, or if the absence was engendered by an emergency, after which the student gave the Coordinator appropriate documentation regarding the emergency.

(2) Students must inform the Coordinator at the prep meeting what type of seminar they will give, and on what day. Seminar types include thesis/dissertation defenses (45-60 minute presentations), candidacy exams (45-60 minute presentations), post-candidacy research updates (45-60 minute presentations), pre-candidacy research talks (20-25 minute presentations) and literature talks (20-25 minute presentations). Students needing to present before a committee are responsible for selecting a date amenable to all committee members.

Students giving literature talks must discuss the topic to be addressed with the Coordinator at least two weeks before the presentation. The Coordinator will evaluate whether the topic is appropriate, sufficiently broad, and interesting. If it is not, the student is required to find a new topic, and to clear that with the Coordinator. The Coordinator's decision is final on this issue. Students failing to get clearance and presenting anyway will earn a grade of D for Chem 615.

(3) Students must submit a title and an abstract for their presentation to the seminar coordinator at least one week in advance of their talk. The abstract should follow standard ACS guidelines. On the Wednesday prior to the talk, students should also post the abstract on the seminar information bulletin board across from the mailroom. Failure to submit and post the title and abstract will result in the student's overall course grade being lowered by at least one letter.

(4) The Coordinator will evaluate presentation quality, sometimes in consultation with other faculty members that attended the seminar. The Coordinator's decisions on quality are final. Points considered will be: clarity of the presentation, understanding of the presented subject, quality of visual aids, ability to answer questions, and demeanor and appearance.

(5) The student who gave the previous presentation shall introduce the subsequent presenter, and will conduct the question and answer session for the presenter. Students in the audience are expected to ask the speaker relevant and challenging questions during the question and answer session after the presentation. Such questions should be posed in a respectful manner, but should probe the strengths and weaknesses of the science presented. Questions asked largely for the opportunity to hear one's voice, or to bulk up one's grade as given below, will not impress the Coordinator.

**Grades:** Student grades will be based on three factors: quality of the presentation given, attendance at Monday and Tuesday seminars, and participation in question and answer sessions:

- A: Student gave a seminar of reasonable quality, had perfect attendance at Monday and Tuesday seminars, and regularly asked relevant and challenging questions of other presenters
- B: Student's performance was slightly poorer in one of the categories listed in the A grade. This could mean that the seminar was of inadequate quality, that the student missed more than a minimal number of seminars, or rarely participated in question and answer sessions
- C: Student's performance was significantly poorer (less than acceptable) in one of the categories listed in the A grade, or slightly poorer in two of the categories
- D: Student's performance was significantly poorer (less than acceptable) in two of the categories listed in the A grade, or slightly poorer in all three categories
- F: Student's performance was significantly poorer (less than acceptable) in all three categories listed in the A grade, or student defaulted on presenting a scheduled seminar.

Grades can be lowered further as noted in the Rules, or based on the Academic Integrity issues below. Plus/minus (+/-) augmentations of grades may be used for fine differentiation in the grading requirements listed.

#### **Academic Integrity:**

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.

In the context of Chem 615, plagiarism is the most likely offense. Students are considered to have committed plagiarism if they copy the work of another without attribution, or present a seminar, or materials within a seminar, created, in whole or in part, by someone else, without attribution. Students are considered to have committed plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, the Internet, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources, or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students responsible for, or assisting others in, plagiarism on a presentation may receive a grade of F for Chem 615, and may be suspended or dismissed from the university. By way of example, in a literature review presentation, the work presented is not your own. Make sure this is made clear throughout the presentation. In short, **PLAGIARISM IN ANY FORM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**

#### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

A student who believes that reasonable accommodations with respect to course work or other academic requirements may be appropriate in consideration of a disability must (1) provide the required verification of the disability to the Disabilities Resource Center (DRC, previously the Center for Access-Ability Resources, CAAR), (2) meet with the DRC to determine appropriate accommodations, and (3) inform the faculty member in charge of the academic activity of the need for accommodation. Students are encouraged to inform the faculty member of their requests for accommodations as early as possible in the semester, but must make the requests in a timely enough manner for accommodations to be appropriately considered and reviewed by the university. If contacted by the faculty member, the staff of the DRC will provide advice about accommodations that may be indicated in the particular case. Students who make requests for reasonable accommodations are expected to follow the policies and procedures of the DRC in this process, including but not limited to the Student Handbook.

Students with disabilities can obtain a wide range of services, including housing, transportation, adaptation of printed materials, and advocacy with faculty and staff. Students with disabilities who need such services or want more information should contact the DRC at 815/753-1303.