

**Seminar courses:** MCBI 7480, PHAR 7605, ANAT 7250, PHYS 7715, BIOC 7335

**For:** First year graduate students -- Departments of Microbiology and Immunology, Physiology, Anatomy and Cell Biology, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, and Pharmacology and Toxicology

**Directors:** Drs. Everett C. Pesci, Laxmansa Katwa, Karen Litwa, Srinivas Sriramula, and Morgan Milton

**When:** Wednesdays from 2:00 to 3:00

**Where:** Brody 2E-100

**Textbook:** none

### **Course Objective**

To provide a venue for first year students to develop their skills in presenting research findings in a standard seminar format. Students learn by preparing and delivering oral presentations of their own research and that of others, and by observing presentations given by other students and established investigators. In addition, they are encouraged to develop their skills in critically evaluating the research approach, findings, and conclusions presented by others and to participate in post-seminar discussions. We all benefit from sharing our work with colleagues and getting constructive feedback on our research and communication skills. Students who make the most of this experience will enjoy great success in giving well-received talks at meetings and job interviews. Learning how to give a good talk will make a difference in your future.

### **Course Description**

The course consists of a program of formal seminars on current topics and limited didactic lectures on subjects that will benefit students in future presentations. **Attendance at all seminars and lectures is mandatory for all first year students.** Students are required to give a formal seminar and to attend all presentations given in this course and their respective Departmental Seminar Series.

### **Grading**

Final grades will be based on the grades given on the evaluation and grading sheets by the faculty attending the individual presentations, and on the attendance record of each student. Each unexcused absence will lower the course grade by one level.

### **Scheduling**

The first year course will be held on Wednesdays from 2:00 to 3:00 in room 2E-100. Departmental seminars will vary by department but each student is expected to attend seminars for their respective department.

### **General Guidelines for Presentations**

1. You should present a well-respected journal article and some of the background information from prior articles. **You are NOT permitted to present an article published by your mentor.**
2. Provide enough background information to allow non-specialists to understand the objective and experimental approach of the study and to appreciate the significance of the findings to the field. You should also critically evaluate the results and suggest future studies that might clarify or advance

knowledge in the field.

3. Prepare visual aids that really “aid” your oral presentation. These should be clear and uncluttered. All data, figures, and text should be prepared to give it a “professional feel”. Students should also become familiar with and practice with the projector well in advance of a seminar.

**Things to avoid on slides:**

- colors that do not show up well
  - make sure that the letters contrast well with the background
  - test your slides in the seminar room to make sure that the lighting will not make them difficult to see
  - don't get cute with colors and background – KEEP IT SIMPLE!!!!
  
- small writing – try to read your slides from the back corner of the room
  
- too much information

4. Rehearse your talk! You should give a complete “preseminar” to your seminar advisor at least one week in advance of your seminar date. Use proper scientific language which is direct, clear, and efficient. It is always helpful to practice your talk with an audience of fellow students and your advisor to get feedback on your presentation and speaking style, and to practice answering questions. Attend other presentations and learn from them. Organize and rehearse your talk so that it takes 40 minutes to complete. Presentations must not be longer than 50 minutes. Do not go over that limit – you will look foolish. The emphasis is on the **quality** of your presentation, **not the quantity** of slides or data.

General timeline for preparing a presentation:

- 4 weeks in advance -- topic approved and outline discussed with advisor
- 3 weeks in advance -- rough draft of slides and seminar approved by advisor
- 1 week in advance -- formal practice with advisor
- Final week -- practice and fine tune

5. Students must turn in the seminar title and a PDF of the paper being presented to Dr. Pesci 1 week prior to the presentation.

**Seminar Presentation Format**

1. Presentations will begin promptly at 2:00 with an introduction of the speaker by another student. Faculty and students are reminded to make every effort to arrive before 2:00 to avoid interrupting the presentation.
2. The presentation should last about 40 minutes, **but no longer than 50 minutes**, and will be followed by a discussion period during which the student will answer questions from the general audience.
3. The faculty and students will then complete the evaluation sheets and address the student speaker with comments and suggestions regarding their presentation. Only faculty should provide a final grade on the sheets.
4. Departmental representative will collect evaluation sheets, determine a grade, and make a copy of the sheets for the student and advisor.

## **2024/2025 Academic Year Schedule**

In addition to these dates, you are also expected to attend all of your respective departmental seminars.

August	21	Eb Pesci – intro – seminar date draw
	28	Eb Pesci – short professional talk eval – seminar date picking
September	4	
	11	Marty Roop – Posters, Meetings, Networking and Jobs
	18	
	<b>Tuesday</b> 24 <sup>th</sup>	– NOON in 2E-100 – Attend and critique seminar by Catherine Brissette
	25	Eb Pesci – discussion of seminar critiques
October	2	
	9	
	16	Espen Spangenburg – elevator talk part 1
	23	Espen Spangenburg – elevator talk part 2
	30	
November	6	Pam Hopkins – Public Speaking part 1
	13	Pam Hopkins – Public Speaking – part 2
	20	
	27	Thanksgiving break
January	16	Student seminars begin
	22	
	29	
February	5	
	12	
	19	
	26	
March	5	
	12	spring break
	19	
	26	
April	2	
	9	
	16	
	23	
	30	