

BIOL692H – Senior Honors Thesis in Biology  
Fall 2019  
Tuesdays 3:30 – 5:30 pm  
1378 Genome Sciences Building

**Instructor:** Dr. Steve Matson  
[smatson@bio.unc.edu](mailto:smatson@bio.unc.edu)  
502 Fordham Hall

**GRC/TA:** Nisitha Sengottuvel  
[nisitha@med.unc.edu](mailto:nisitha@med.unc.edu)

Office hours: email for appointment

The classroom portion of BIOL692H has two main goals:

- to cultivate **professional and communication skills** that are applicable to the written honors thesis, honors symposium oral presentation and beyond
- to interact as a community of scholars, discussing active research and its significance in terms that will be understood and appreciated by **biologists from diverse fields**

**Course grade** will be based on attendance (which is mandatory), class participation (e.g., peer review and editing), written assignments, and the grading of your talk and thesis.

The designation of **Highest Honors/Honors/no honors** will be based on an evaluation of your overall research project including the presentation of your project and your findings in your talk and thesis. An evaluation committee of three or more faculty will perform the evaluation, with input from your research advisor and/or the biology faculty sponsor. Guidance from The College is as follows: "Highest honors should be awarded only to students who have met the most rigorous standards of scholarly excellence."

### **Class schedule**

Schedule is subject to minor modifications; during some class meeting times, students and instructor may meet by appointment away from the classroom, as noted below.

#### **(1) August 20**

Meet your classmates, discuss syllabus, review course guidelines, introduction to abstracts, create google doc, upload BIOL395 abstract, and create peer writing groups

To do: Make appointment for photo with Brian Nalley in 211 Wilson Hall. Email ([bnalley@bio.unc.edu](mailto:bnalley@bio.unc.edu)) him to schedule an appointment. His office hours are M-F 8:00-11:30 AM and 1:00-3:30 PM

**(2) August 27**

Work on abstracts, discuss/finalize symposium line-up, discuss scientific talk introductions, sketch out slides using BIOL395 report, choose representative image for display

To do: Turn in final abstract, head shot and image by end of week

**(3) September 3**

Review Writing a Paper, discuss anatomy of a thesis, formatting and content expectations, authorship and plagiarism, work on lay introductions; introduction to Materials and Methods

To do: Polish your methods section

**(4) September 10:** Thesis Intro, Talk Intro, Lay Intro, work on Methods section

**(5) September 17:** Thesis Methods, Talk Methods, Lay Intro, About Figures

**(6) September 24:** Thesis Figures, Talk Figures, Lay Intro, About Results

**(7) October 1:** Thesis Results, Talk Results, Lay Intro, About Discussions

**(8) October 8:** Thesis Discussions, Talk Discussions, Lay Intros

**(9) October 15:** Group editing, work on slides for talk, work on discussion for talk

**(10) October 22:**

- **Practice talks** (~15 minute talk + ~5 minutes for questions, peer and instructor comments on paper)

**(11) October 29:** Practice talks again; practice lay intros

- **Final thesis due TODAY by 9 pm for faculty evaluation**

**November 5:** Honors Symposium in 215 Coker Hall, in the afternoon. May be attended by honors students, advisors and mentors, thesis graders, family members, friends, and other members of the university community. Please invite your friends and family!

Thesis feedback provided by end of week.

**November 11: Designation due for Highest Honors / Honors / no honors**

**November 30: Deadline** for uploading the final thesis to the Carolina Digital Repository. (Submission Instructions here)

- [Senior Honors Thesis Guidelines for Academic Units, Faculty Advisors, and Students](#)
- [Sample Senior Honors Thesis title page](#)
- [Information for Faculty and Staff Advising Honors Theses](#)

**Diversity statement:** The Department of Biology values the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. We broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. We strive to make this classroom and this department an inclusive space for all students.

The professor reserves to right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.