Biology 6101: Biology Graduate Seminar

Spring 2018
Dr. Rupesh Kariyat
Phone: 956-665-2953
Email: rupesh.kariyat@utrgv.edu
Wednesdays 10:45 to 11:45 am, E MAGC 2.206
Office: SCNE 1.340, office hours: will be announced in first class

Course descriptions:

The primary goal of this course is to give students experience and practice to speak confidently to scientific and non-scientific audience as a part of their graduate training. The students will also have an opportunity to examine and explore topics outside their primary area of research and prepare and present talks based on those topics. Designing an interesting and engaging talk will also be part of the class. Any topic in biology pre-approved by the instructor can be used.

Student Outcome from the course:

Scientific: The primary outcome expected from the course will be an improvement in confidently speaking to both scientists and non-scientists audience about your research, and topics unrelated to your primary area of research. The students will also learn to evaluate others through reviewing their work and providing feedback. In addition to presenting in front of other students, we will also invite other faculty members from the department, and non-scientists to attend student talks.

Personal: One of the main learning objectives is to understand the details behind composing a good presentation, and to confidently speak in public. The course will also use traditional (Chalk talk) and current (PowerPoint, YouTube based videos) styles of presentations. These skills will be useful regardless of the career path chosen by students.

Book: Some of the materials used in the class will be derived from the book The Craft of Scientific Presentations: Critical Steps to Succeed and Critical Errors to Avoid 2nd ed. 2013 Edition by Michael Alley (Author). However, students are not required to buy the text. A copy will be available in the library.

Grading and student expectations: Attendance is mandatory. Students are also expected to attend 2 external seminars and submit a one page summary about those seminars describing (1) Topic and science covered in the seminar, and (2) Design and aesthetics of the seminar. We will also invite 1-2 guest speakers to give seminars in the class, and the students are expected to actively participate by asking questions of the speaker. The effort by students to meet these expectations will factor into your final grade. There are 5 main assignments in the class. These include (1) chalk talk, (2) research talk (ESA - Entomological Society of America style- 10 minutes), (3) YouTube video (<3 minutes) and (4) final presentation (research seminar style- > 20 minutes). Details regarding each assignment will be discussed in the first class. Your final grade will be based on the quality and content of your seminars, your improvement over
assignments, and in class participation- in addition at attendance and adhering to submission deadlines.

Grades Breakdown:

Chalk Talk (15%)
ESA style research talk (20%)
YouTube Video (15%)
Final research seminar (25%)
Attendance (10%)
Other assignments (Peer review, class participation, external seminar) (15%)

Letter grades: A = 90-100%, B= 80-89.9%, C= 70-79.9%, D = 60-69.9%, F= 59.9 or less

Exams: none

Students with Disabilities
If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor and contact Student Accessibility Services to schedule an appointment to initiate services. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with Student Accessibility Services before classes start. However, accommodations can be provided at any time.

Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu.

Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu.

Mandatory Course Evaluation Period
Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available:  Nov 18 – Dec 8 for full fall semester courses.

Attendance
Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV’s attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.

Scholastic Integrity
As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty
includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

**Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Violence**

In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at [www.utrgv.edu/equity](http://www.utrgv.edu/equity), including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

**Course Drops**

According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for.