Honors Seminar (Biol 470H) Fall 2012 Course Description & Policies

Instructor: Dr. S.M. Holt, Ph.D., Office Phone: 298-1484; E-mail: sm-holt@wiu.edu
Office & Hours: Waggoner Hall, RM 268, Office Hrs: T,W,TH @4-4:50; W@ 2-2:50, or by appt.
Text Book: No Textbook
Course Meeting: M @ 5-5:50, RM 202

Description and Objective: Honors Seminar 470H is a component of the Department of Biological Sciences Honors Program. The Department Honors Program is a research-based program that usually requires 2 academic years to complete. Honors Seminar (470H, 1hr) is usually taken in Fall and Spring semesters during junior year. Honors Research (477H, 3hrs) is usually taken as a senior in the Fall semester and Honors Thesis (478, 3hrs) is usually taken in the subsequent Spring semester (the semester the student will graduate). See the “Requirements for Departmental Honors” for more information.

Honors Seminar (470H, Fall semester) involves attending weekly seminars or presentations given by faculty members discussing research topics. The goal of Honors Seminar (470H, Fall semester) is to match an Honors student with a faculty research advisor and identify a potential research project.

Prerequisites: At least a junior standing with Honors in the Department of Biological Sciences.

Instruction: This course consists of a single one-hour session each week. The syllabus schedule is considered tentative and may be changed with adequate advanced notice to the students.

Attendance/Tardiness Policy. A portion of your grade will be based on attendance. One unexcused absence will result in a loss of 15 points for that day. Two unexcused absences will result in a reduction of one letter grade from your final course grade. Three unexcused absences will result in a reduction of two letter grades from your final course grade. Four total absences (excused or unexcused) from will result in an automatic F for the entire course. Tardiness to class is considered an absence. The instructor will decide if the reason that is provided for missing a class is considered an excused absence. Allowable excused absences are illness, death in family, sponsored university event with which your involved (athlete, club), military obligation, or emergency responder obligation. The student must provide documentation for any absence due to reasons mentioned.

Grading Policy. Grades will be based on attendance, maintaining a course notebook, and successful completion of at least three faculty member interviews. You do not get points for attending seminar; however, you will be deducted points if you miss class as described under the attendance policy. Each seminar you will complete a set of notes in a notebook that will be collected at the end of the semester. The notes should start with the name of the faculty member and the general area of interest. The notes do not have to cover every aspect or detail of the research presented. Each Honors Student must be interviewed by at least three faculty members on the seminar list. The interviews must occur after the faculty member’s seminar and not before. You must bring a resume containing basic academic and work information. Any information about previous research (field or lab), your interests in biology, and career plans should be included. Essentially, you are interviewing for a job in the biological sciences and this should be taken seriously. You must bring a checklist that is signed by the faculty member to indicate submission of a resume and successful completion of an interview.

Course Management Software. Aspects of Honors Seminar will be managed by D2L via WesternOnline. Grades will be posted on D2L.

Cell Phone & Electronic Devices Policy. Cell phone usage, sound recording, text messaging, and digital imaging are prohibited in this course during lecture and lab. Cell phone ringers must be turned off and cell
phones must be kept out of sight while in lecture and lab. Cell phones are a distraction and pose a safety threat, particularly during lab exercises. Only EMTs, WIU First Responders, or other designated emergency personnel are allowed to have an electronic devise on or activated during course hours. Laptop computers are allowed only for note-taking but should not pose a distraction. Failure to follow this policy will result in loss of course 10 points per violation or eviction from the class meeting or course as determined appropriate by the instructor.

Americans With Disabilities Act. In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. For the instructor to provide the proper accommodation(s) you must obtain documentation of the need for an accommodation through Disability Resource Center (DRC) and provide it to the instructor. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 298-2512 for additional services.

Departmental Plagiarism Policy. “Plagiarism is the theft of someone else’s words, work, or ideas. It includes such acts as (1) turning in a friend’s paper and saying it is yours; (2) using another person’s data or ideas without acknowledgement; (3) copying an author’s exact words and putting them in your paper without quotation marks; and (4) using wording that is very similar to that of the original source but passing it off as entirely your own even while acknowledging the source.” V.E. McMillan in Writing Papers in the Biological Sciences (Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, New York, p16)

This includes information in textbooks or laboratory manuals, theses, all writing assignments and images. The faculty of the department attempt to monitor students writing assignments (essay exams, papers, lab reports, and other writing assignments or exercises) for incidents of plagiarism. If plagiarism is found, the faculty will discuss the situation with the student and indicate to the student the penalty for this academic dishonesty. Potential penalties include those cited on the academic dishonesty section of the WIU web page.

Final Course Statement. By taking this course you the student agree to abide by any and all policies designated for the specific course of Honors Seminar, the Department of Biological Sciences, and Western Illinois University. Detailed descriptions of departmental and university policies can be found at the listed URL addresses. I highly recommend that each student visit each URL address and become familiar with the policies.

Department and University Policies
Department of Biological Sciences Policies. http://www.wiu.edu/biology/student/policies.php
Student’s Rights and Responsibilities. http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students/
Student Academic Integrity Policy. http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded Item Category</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Points Per Item</th>
<th>Total Points Per Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notebook</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Table 2. Undergraduate Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Point Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>≥108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>103-107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>100-102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>96-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>91-95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>88-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>84-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>79-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>76-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>72-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>≤70</td>
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Department of Biological Sciences Honors Program Overview

Requirements Departmental Honors
Students who complete the requirements for departmental honors in biological sciences will receive recognition on their official transcripts. To qualify for departmental honors:

- students must be accepted into the Centennial Honors College
- complete all the requirements for a biology major with an option in either botany, microbiology, or zoology
- satisfy requirements in the cognate areas (6 hours of General Honors Coursework, 1 hour GH299, maintain overall GPA of 3.5 and GPA of 3.5 for all honors courses)
- successfully complete the following course requirements: Biol 470H, Biol 477H, Biol 478H

1. Honors Seminar (Biol 470H, 2 semester hours total). Usually taken junior year.
   - Fall (1 semester hour, 1 weekly meeting)
     - Attend weekly research seminars presented by faculty members on various topics
     - Student identified three choices for faculty advisor
     - Honors coordinator matches student with a faculty advisor base on faculty openings (faculty advisor is consulted) available and student choices
   - Spring (1 semester hour, 1 weekly meeting)
     - Discuss literature search techniques
     - Research proposal preparation (Honors College and College of Arts and Sciences)
     - Presentation of research proposal (poster) at Undergraduate Research Day
     - Requires close supervision of Honors Coordinator and your faculty research advisor.

2. Honors Research (477H, 3 semester hours). Usually taken senior year fall semester.
   - Conduct research under direction of faculty research advisor using your research proposal as a guideline.
   - Student must arrange meeting times with faculty research advisor.

3. Honors Thesis (478, 3 semester hours). Usually taken senior year, spring semester.
   - Student prepares a thesis based on research performed.
   - Student must arrange meeting times with faculty advisor.
   - Student must also present completed research at Undergraduate Research Day
   - Student must defend thesis by oral examination involving three faculty members