

**Biology 397**  
**Biology Lab Instructor: Contemporary Biology**  
**Course Syllabus – Fall 2020**  
**Monday, 6:30 – 7:20 PM**

**Instructor:**

Dr. Harold Hoops, ISC- 353  
Telephone: (585) 245-5378  
Office Hours: M 9:30-10:30, T: 3:00-4:00, R 9:30-10:30, & F 9:30-10:30, or by appointment. Initially, at least, these will be virtual by zoom.  
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**Course description:**

Students enrolled in Biology 397, Biology Lab Instruction, will serve as the Undergraduate Laboratory Instructor (ULI) for one section of Biology 106, Contemporary Biology Laboratory. ULIs will take part in weekly instructional activities. Weekly class meetings (Monday, 6:30 PM) will emphasize preparation for lab and discussion of topical instructional strategies. In addition to teaching one lab section, Biol 397 students will be responsible for grading student assignments, maintaining a class gradebook, and holding a regularly scheduled office hour to provide additional assistance for students.

**Class Meeting Times and Requirements:**

It is expected that all student will attend a laboratory preparation meeting every week during the semester for which labs are in session. This meeting may be face to face or virtual. Additionally, Biol 397 students are expected to attend all class meeting of Biol 116 for which they have been assigned as Instructor, as well as one weekly office hour.

**Text and materials:**

Material will be available form Canvas or given to you during our weekly meeting.

**Evaluation:**

1.	Class participation (Monday night lab & seminar meetings)	15%
2.	Daily responsibilities (Grading, maintaining gradebooks, holding office hours, etc.)	20%
3.	Assessment of teaching quality	35%
4.	Review of lab and quiz	15%
5.	Self-reflective statement	15%

1. **Class participation** will be assessed by direct observation during the ULI meetings, and by short writing assignments done either in class or outside of class.
2. **Daily Responsibilities.** ULIs are responsible for grading lab reports and lab quizzes in a timely manner and maintaining an updated gradebook. ULIs must hold a weekly office

hour to help students with questions. Furthermore, ULIs must be accessible via email throughout the semester to address student questions. Assessment for this category will be made by monitoring online gradebooks and discussing grading and office hour issues.

3. **Assessment of teaching.** Your teaching quality will be assessed by observation of the coordinator, by talking to your students, and by the student evaluations given at the end of the semester. You are expected to be on time for your teaching and office hours responsibilities, to assess and evaluate your students fairly at all times, and to consider the suggestions and comments of the teaching team in the management of your classroom, and the presentation of important material to your students.
4. You will be asked to evaluate at least one laboratory write-up and one quiz. For each, you will evaluate both the pedagogy and writing and prepare a marked-up copy for the instructor. One goal is to learn to evaluate written labs and to continuously improve the laboratory exercises. A second is to help you learn about pedagogy in a laboratory setting.
5. You will submit a self-reflective statement discussing your semester-long experience. This should be between 1 and 5 pages long.

#### **Grading scheme:**

In order to receive an A, you must: (1) attend and participate enthusiastically in Monday night class meetings, (2) be consistently punctual and well-prepared for lab as well as class meetings, (3) turn in excellent assignments on time, (4) show evidence of reflective teaching practice, including efforts to improve based on your reflection and feedback from others, (5) show evidence of careful, fair and prompt assessment of students, (6) keep accurate records, maintain appropriate security and confidentiality, and provide readable summaries of grades to faculty supervisor or course coordinator when required, (6) maintain good communication with students throughout lab including initiating conversations with students, (7) work well with your faculty supervisor and lab assistant. You will receive a B if there are serious problems with one category or lesser problems in two categories. If you exhibit serious problems in two categories or minor problems across several categories you will receive a C. If you have serious problems in more than 2 categories, you will receive a D. If you are seriously negligent, or if you have problems in 3 or more categories you will fail.

#### **Schedule of topics:**

See the Biology 106 syllabus for additional information about the schedule of laboratories in Biology 106. That schedule will govern our Monday night meetings.

#### **Course Goals:**

This course has two major main objectives; the primary objective is to teach the Biol 106 curriculum to one section of Biol 106 via direct instruction, weekly office hours, and graded assignments, the second is to develop an understanding of leadership, teamwork, and management experience that will transferable to your future goals in Geneseo and after college.

### **Learning Outcomes for Biol397:**

Upon completion of this course, through the evaluation methods described above, students will:

1. Develop the skills needed to teach one section of Biol 106.
2. Understand the learning objectives of the Biology Lab course they teach.
3. Demonstrate a commitment to providing the best learning opportunities for their students.
4. Become more insightful about the scientific method and the role of data in scientific decision making.

### **Accommodations:**

SUNY Geneseo will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented physical, emotional, or cognitive disabilities. Accommodations will also be made for medical conditions related to pregnancy or parenting. Students should contact the Office of Disability Services ([https://www.geneseo.edu/dean\\_office/disability\\_services](https://www.geneseo.edu/dean_office/disability_services)) and their instructors to discuss needed accommodations as early as possible in the semester.

### **Illness:**

If you feel ill please **DO NOT COME TO LAB!** Please contact Harold Hoops, Tom Reho or another instructor *immediately*, so that we can find a substitute. I would ask that all ULIs make an effort to help if anyone cannot make class. We are all in this together.

### Appendix I

### **SUNY Geneseo Senate Policy, passed 7 April 2020: Undergraduate Teaching and Lab Assistants Policy**

Faculty or supervisors may offer undergraduate students the opportunity to serve as teaching or lab assistants (hereafter TAs) to the mutual benefit of both parties. All faculty/supervisors and TAs should adhere to the following policies regarding the TA experience:

- TAs should receive a syllabus, if working for credit, that includes expected tasks, criteria for evaluating the TA's work, and hours of work appropriate to the number of credits received (3 hours of work per week for 1 credit). TAs should receive a contract, if getting paid or volunteering, that stipulates the expected tasks, rate of pay or that a student is volunteering, time frame for employment and expected hours per week.
- TA training in matters of privacy and confidentiality is required.
- The faculty/supervisor in charge of the course must ensure that any grading done by TAs is fair and equitable, in keeping with the best practices referred to in this policy as they will be developed by the Office of the Provost.
- Questions or disputes over TA assigned grades should be handled by the faculty member or supervisor, who has ultimate responsibility for all grades.
- TA responsibilities must be limited to tasks directly related to the course
- TAs must report potential conflicts of interest, as defined in the Provost's office published guideline, to the faculty/supervisor and should not have oversight/grading of these students

- TAs should be graded S/U. Normal grading mode may be applied to TA experiences that include significant academic content as determined by the faculty member/supervisor. Examples include readings in pedagogy in content area, preparing and delivering a course lecture, and completing a major assignment.

The Office of the Provost will maintain published guidelines on best practices for faculty/supervisors on working with an undergraduate teaching assistant and for students on expectations as a teaching assistant.

## Appendix II

### **SUNY Geneseo Faculty Best Practices for Undergraduate Teaching Assistants (From the Provost's office. Spring 20219**

Employing an undergraduate teaching assistant (TA) can benefit faculty members and provide a transformative educational experience for the student. To ensure the best experience for both faculty and student TAs, the Office of the Provost recommends the following guidelines.

1. In selecting a teaching assistant, faculty should consider the following:

- The potential TA should have taken the course for which they will TA, or an equivalent, and received a grade significantly above average.
- The TA position should not have an adverse effect on the student's graduation or completion of graduation requirements.
- The potential TA should be made aware of departmental policies limiting use of TA credits toward the major or graduation.
- The TA opportunity is a high impact experience that should be offered to many qualified students; look for students who have not yet been a TA, with an awareness of diversity and equity in the selection.
- Recommend the student consult with Financial Aid if needed.

2. Faculty expectations of the teaching assistant should:

- be made clear in writing in a contract or syllabus, which will include:
  - The course in which a student will enroll or method of financial compensation; usually INTD 305 or a department course in pedagogy
  - A regular meeting time with the faculty Instructor of Record  
The work to be completed, including expectations in preparation, course attendance, office hours, lecturing, review sessions, grading & rubrics, training in ethics & safety
  - A self-reflective statement by the TA at the end of the course
  - Criteria for evaluation in an end of semester written evaluation. If taken for course credit, criteria to be used in grading the TA
  - An S/U grading mode, unless the student will do substantial academic work as a TA (eg prepare a lecture which will be turned in to the faculty member)

- be consistent with the time associated with the credits the student will receive: three hours per week per credit hour
- include ethical and responsible behavior in working with students, handling their work, and assigning grades
- include a report of any past or present dating relationship with a student in the course (the faculty member should ensure no TA works with a student with whom they have a past or present relationship) include open and timely communication about all aspects of the TA's work

### 3. Faculty responsibilities to the undergraduate TA should include

- requiring or recommending the available training modules on Canvas, and discussing the content with the TA. Modules address ethics, privacy, safety, working with peers, cultural competency, mental health awareness, and self-reflection
- providing supervision and mentorship in the tasks expected, including clear rubrics for any grading of students' work. Students should never grade work with subjective criteria, eg writing or open ended questions.
- handling all grade disputes
- having TA's grade assignments by G#, or with names otherwise removed, where possible
- discussing course content, pedagogy, assignments, and grading
- mentoring the student in current curriculum and pedagogy in the field
- not asking a TA to assist with tasks unrelated to the course for which they are TAing
- providing a written evaluation at the end of the semester, whether the student is taking the course for a grade or for financial compensation

SUNY's Guidelines: <https://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/faculty-senate/UndergraduateTAGuideFinalversion.pdf>