

Spring 2011
Biol. 380, Seminar in Endocrinology

Endocrinology is a sub-discipline of the broader field of physiology, and is concerned with the study of chemical messengers, hormones, substances secreted by cells of the endocrine glands (ductless glands) and tissues that regulate the activity of other cells in the body.

- A. **Course description** - The purpose of the seminar is to provide senior Biology majors with a capstone experience that includes the strengthening of communication skills in writing, presentation and discussion. In addition, it is designed to strengthen the skill of reading the primary literature and the ability to synthesize ideas from multiple sources in a particular topic of biology. This course may be repeated for up to 2 hours credit toward the major. Prerequisites: Senior standing in Biology. Credits: 1(1-0)

In this particular section students are required to research a particular area of Endocrinology, and present that information, both in oral form to their classmates and in written form to their instructor. In addition, students will be expected to choose an appropriate paper from the primary literature related to their area and lead the discussion of the paper a week after their formal presentation. When not presenting, students are required to read and actively participate in the discussion of the 114 other papers from the primary literature presented by their classmates. Keep in mind that a friendly environment that encourages constructive criticism and a lively discussion of presentations benefit all involved.

- B. **Learning Outcomes** - This course will help students improve the skills necessary for effective writing and public speaking. In addition, students will exercise and improve their analytical, organizational and communication skills, while advancing their knowledge of new and important developments within the current broad purview of Endocrinology.

Specifically, at the end of this class students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to recognize, read and explain articles from the primary scientific literature.
2. Effectively communicate complex scientific ideas in writing and through a formal and informal oral presentations.
3. Interpret scientific findings, and offer their own synthesis and critique of several related articles from the primary literature in the form of an 8-10 page paper on the hormone/gland for which they are assigned.

C. Evaluation Procedures:

Presentations (These activity will be worth 30% of your grade and the grade will be peer and instructor based using the oral discourse rubric attached to this syllabus).

Formal Presentation:

Each student will be responsible for presenting the background material on a given hormone or gland and the following week leading the discussion of a paper chosen from the primary literature that focuses on the scientific question being asked about that given hormone or endocrine gland; how the data in the paper answers the question and the significance of the questions and its answer. It is expected that most presentations will be Powerpoint-type presentations. However, the most important experience to be gained is in organizing the material, choosing what to show and how to show it, and telling a good story to a mixed audience of students. This does not require anything more sophisticated than an overhead projector, so the student is not expected to be an expert in using dynamic presentation features. The presenter must be prepared to answer questions on their hormone/gland and should provide some background for the paper they chose for discussion the following week.

Informal Presentation:

A week following the formal presentation the student presenter from the previous week will lead the discussion of a paper from the recent primary literature that that relates to their hormone/gland. This activity is worth 20% of you grade and will be peer and instructor graded.

Term paper

You will write an 8-10 page paper reviewing a topic in Endocrinology assigned to you. Your review must be centered on the paper you choose for class discussion but must also include other primary literature sources, although you may also consult secondary sources such as books or review articles. Your review of the topic must be focused and organized: identify a key objective that will serve as a theme throughout your review. Your paper should make clear how the studies you discuss relate to the central theme, and you should be analyzing and synthesizing the findings of these studies, not simply summarizing them. Carefully consider how to organize your paper: it should have a logical structure with transitions that allow the reader to easily extract your key points. The final section of your paper should look toward the future: identify gaps in the current knowledge of the research area and suggest *specific* future research directions, including the methods and/or study systems that could be used to achieve these objectives. This activity will be worth 30% of your grade and the grade will be instructor based using the written discourse rubric attached to this syllabus.

On March 24 two copies of a draft of your research paper is due which will be given to two members of the class to read and provide written comments. The drafts are due back on **April 7**. Two weeks later, **April 21**, one copy of the paper in its final form is due along with the two peer reviewed draft copies.

Peer review

You will receive copies of two classmates' paper drafts to edit and critique. You should read these papers carefully and offer constructive comments and thoughtful suggestions for improvement. You will be graded on the quality of your effort in this task. Two drafts will be given to you on March 24. All edited drafts must be returned to their authors for use in preparing their final papers by class on April 7, 2011. This activity will be worth 20% of your grade.

Discussion participation

Everyone should read the discussion papers carefully and critically in preparation for the discussion. On the day of the discussion at the beginning of class, you must hand in 4 substantial written questions or comments (typed) for *the* paper being discussed that day. These questions/comments must provide evidence of your careful reading and consideration of the paper and will be evaluated for their thoughtfulness and originality. Your participation in all class discussions is also expected and will comprise part of this grade. This activity will be worth 20% of your grade and will be instructor based.

D. Course policies

Your attendance and participation in class every week is expected. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your participation grade. Please let me know *as* soon as possible about anticipated excused absences and consult with me about how to make up for work missed if your absence is excused or due to a medical or other emergency.

Citing your references: I ask that you use the NLM style for referencing in your paper. Information on using this style is available at:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK7256/>

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Evidence of plagiarism is grounds for a score of zero on any assignment.

1. direct quotation without identifying punctuation and citation of source;
2. paraphrase of expression or thought without proper attribution;
3. unacknowledged dependence upon a source in plan, organization; or argument."

In SUNY Geneseo's policy, "plagiarism shall be considered to be deliberate representation of someone else's words or ideas as one's own or the deliberate arrangement of someone else's material(s) *as* one's own." Take care to properly cite sources of ideas, figures, data, etc. (including internet sources) in your writing and presentations. Even if you properly cite your source, when you borrow wording and sentence structure from the original source and pass it off as your own (i.e., by not using quotation marks), you are guilty of plagiarism. Learn how to paraphrase *in your own words* information from the original source. See the following web sites:

<http://library.geneseo.edu/research/plagiarism.shtml>

http://www.valdosta.edu/~cbarnbau/personal/teaching_MISC/plagiarism.htm

E. Accommodations

SUNY Geneseo will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented physical, emotional, or cognitive disabilities.

Students should contact the Director in the Office of Disability Services (Tabitha Buggie-Hunt, 106A Erwin, tbuggieh@geneseo.edu) and your instructor to discuss needed accommodations as early as possible in the semester.

F. Instructor:

Robert W. O'Donnell

Office: ISC 339 Telephone 245-5313

E-mail address odonnell@geneseo.edu

Office Hours: MWF, 10:30 to 11:20; R, 1:00-2:15, other times by appointment

G. Course materials:

Available in myCourses

H. Detailed Content Outline:

	Class Schedule	Topic/Tentative Primary Literature Paper (Subject to adjustment)
1.	January 20	Introduction The endocrine system: overview
2.	January 27,	Presentation by Bonnie Swoger of Milne Library Background for 1st reading: General mechanisms of hormone action: Jennifer Nortz
3	February 3,	1 st Reading and background for 2 nd reading: The endocrine hypothalamus: Megan Pogemiller
4.	February 10,	2 nd Reading and background for 3 rd reading: Hormones of the anterior pituitary : Tim Bozyczko
5	February 17,	3 rd Reading and background for 4 th reading: Hormones of posterior pituitary: Lindsey Jackson
6.	February 24,	4 th Reading and background for 5 th reading: Thyroid hormones that control metabolism: Devin Burke
7.	March 3,	5 th Reading and background for 6 th reading: Thyroid and parathyroid hormones that control calcium levels : Carl Moore
8.	March 10,	6 th Reading and background for 7 th reading: Pancreatic hormones that control glucose levels : Alyson Michener
9.	March 17,	Spring break
10.	March 24,	7th Reading and background for 8th reading: Hormones of the male reproductive tract: Hannah Dodge
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14.	April 21,	11th Reading and background for 12th reading: Hormones of the adrenal medulla: Robert E. Parker IV

15. April 28, 12th Reading
16. May 5, Final exam block, 8:00-11:00

	5	4	3	0
Writing -- Mechanics	Errors extremely rare and minor	Few errors; those present do not slow reading	Substantial errors, enough to slow reading	Writing contains enough errors to impede understanding
Writing -- Organization & arrangement of ideas	Paper has explicit and understandable organization	Paper is organized, though organization could be more explicit to reader	Effort to organize is visible, although the logic of organization is unclear	No discernible effort to organize contents of paper
Introduction: A thesis statement makes the research topic clear.	The thesis statement is clearly stated.	A thesis statement is provided but not very clear	A thesis statement is provided but is not supported by the rest of the document	No thesis statement is provided
Introduction: Background information is provided to establish the importance of the research topic	Relevant background information from primary literature sets up the thesis	Background information present, relationship to thesis is less obvious or indirect	Background information present, but not related to thesis	No background information missing or disorganized
Report of Research	Scientific terms and concepts are properly used. Research findings are presented in the student's words, not "cut and pasted". Transitions from one topic to the next are present	Most scientific terms and concepts are properly used. Most research findings are presented in the student's words. Transitions from one topic to the next are present but sometimes inconsistent	Scientific terms and concepts are poorly explained. Research findings are presented but lack of transitions making the paper hard to follow.	Terms are not defined, little to no synthesis of the current research. No transitions, paper jumps from topic to topic.
Conclusion	The most important research findings are restated and a good connection is made between the introduction and the research paper. Student's final thoughts about the research topic are stated.	The research findings are restated but only a weak connection is made between the introduction and the research paper. Student's final thoughts about the research topic are stated.	The conclusion is weak. The connection between the introduction and research paper is not clear.	No conclusion and no final thoughts are provided
Source Quality	All sources are primary and current (<5 years old)	All sources are primary, majority are current (<5 years old)	Majority of sources are primary, but at least one is inappropriate (e.g. website)	Majority of sources are inappropriate (e.g. websites)
Citations	Correct sentences cited in the text, bibliography format similar to research article	Correct sentences cited in text, bibliography format allows readers to find article	Correct sentences cited in text, bibliography format does not allow readers to find article	Correct sentences are not cited in the work
Creativity	Consistent and found throughout the paper	Evident in more than one place	Evident in a single place	Not evident

Oral Report Rubric

Score	Basic Organization and Content	Logical Development	Delivery and Presentation	Use of Appropriate Language and Terms	Appearance, Dress and Body Language
Excellent (4)	Highly organized, with a clear flow from beginning to end. The individual points of the presentation are very well developed. All content is factually accurate.	The presentation has a sophisticated and accurate logical structure. It clearly demonstrates the ability to use and weigh evidence.	The speaker was highly engaging and the presentation was smooth and well-practiced. Pleasant rhythm of speech and modulation of tone.	Very appropriate use of terms and language for the level of the audience, neither simplistic nor overloaded with jargon.	Appearance and dress are very appropriate for the occasion. Good stance and posture; free from annoying mannerisms.
Satisfactory (3)	The presentation had a clear beginning, middle and end. The overall point was clear. Individual points were moderately developed. Factually accurate with a few exceptions.	The degree of logical organization was generally good. Evidence was used effectively most of the time.	The speaker was moderately engaging and reasonably fluent. Delivery is smooth, with few halts or awkward pauses.	The use of terms and language was generally appropriate, with a few lapses.	Appearance and dress were generally appropriate for the occasion. Speaker usually maintained good visual contact and body language.
Almost satisfactory (2)	The organization was difficult to follow and the main point was somewhat obscure. Individual points often lacked development. Significant errors of factual content.	Logical organization was rudimentary but discernable. The use of evidence was often logically flawed.	The speaker was only somewhat engaging and the presentation was often halting. The speaker relied too much on reading from notes.	The use of terms and language was often inappropriate, either too simple or too jargony. Speaker had only a loose grip on the meaning of terms.	Appearance and dress moderately inappropriate for the occasion. Posture and stance often conflicted with presentation.
Unsatisfactory (1)	Seemingly aimless; it is difficult to discern any organization. The individual points lack development. Little attention to factual accuracy.	The logical structure of the presentation is primitive or lacking altogether. Use of evidence is very weak or absent.	The speaker was not at all engaging. The presentation was halting, unpracticed, with a flat monotone or highly sing-song voice.	The speaker did not show evidence of understanding or use of appropriate terms and language.	Very inappropriate dress, or with highly distracting and annoying mannerisms. Rarely addressed the audience directly.

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2. paraphrase of expression or thought without proper attribution;
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F. Instructor:

Robert W. O'Donnell

Office: ISC 339 Telephone 245-5313

E-mail address odonnell@geneseo.edu

Office Hours: MWF, 10:30 to 11:20; R, 1:00-2:15, other times by appointment

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Writing -- Mechanics	Errors extremely rare and minor	Few errors; those present do not slow reading	Substantial errors, enough to slow reading	Writing contains enough errors to impede understanding
Writing -- Organization & arrangement of ideas	Paper has explicit and understandable organization	Paper is organized, though organization could be more explicit to reader	Effort to organize is visible, although the logic of organization is unclear	No discernible effort to organize contents of paper
Introduction: A thesis statement makes the research topic clear.	The thesis statement is clearly stated.	A thesis statement is provided but not very clear	A thesis statement is provided but is not supported by the rest of the document	No thesis statement is provided
Introduction: Background information is provided to establish the importance of the research topic	Relevant background information from primary literature sets up the thesis	Background information present, relationship to thesis is less obvious or indirect	Background information present, but not related to thesis	No background information missing or disorganized
Report of Research	Scientific terms and concepts are properly used. Research findings are presented in the student's words, not "cut and pasted". Transitions from one topic to the next are present	Most scientific terms and concepts are properly used. Most research findings are presented in the student's words. Transitions from one topic to the next are present but sometimes inconsistent	Scientific terms and concepts are poorly explained. Research findings are presented but lack of transitions making the paper hard to follow.	Terms are not defined, little to no synthesis of the current research. No transitions, paper jumps from topic to topic.
Conclusion	The most important research findings are restated and a good connection is made between the introduction and the research paper. Student's final thoughts about the research topic are stated.	The research findings are restated but only a weak connection is made between the introduction and the research paper. Student's final thoughts about the research topic are stated.	The conclusion is weak. The connection between the introduction and research paper is not clear.	No conclusion and no final thoughts are provided
Source Quality	All sources are primary and current (<5 years old)	All sources are primary, majority are current (<5 years old)	Majority of sources are primary, but at least one is inappropriate (e.g. website)	Majority of sources are inappropriate (e.g. websites)
Citations	Correct sentences cited in the text, bibliography format similar to research article	Correct sentences cited in text, bibliography format allows readers to find article	Correct sentences cited in text, bibliography format does not allow readers to find article	Correct sentences are not cited in the work
Creativity	Consistent and found throughout the paper	Evident in more than one place	Evident in a single place	Not evident

Oral Report Rubric

Score	Basic Organization and Content	Logical Development	Delivery and Presentation	Use of Appropriate Language and Terms	Appearance, Dress and Body Language
Excellent (4)	Highly organized, with a clear flow from beginning to end. The individual points of the presentation are very well developed. All content is factually accurate.	The presentation has a sophisticated and accurate logical structure. It clearly demonstrates the ability to use and weigh evidence.	The speaker was highly engaging and the presentation was smooth and well-practiced. Pleasant rhythm of speech and modulation of tone.	Very appropriate use of terms and language for the level of the audience, neither simplistic nor overloaded with jargon.	Appearance and dress are very appropriate for the occasion. Good stance and posture; free from annoying mannerisms.
Satisfactory (3)	The presentation had a clear beginning, middle and end. The overall point was clear. Individual points were moderately developed. Factually accurate with a few exceptions.	The degree of logical organization was generally good. Evidence was used effectively most of the time.	The speaker was moderately engaging and reasonably fluent. Delivery is smooth, with few halts or awkward pauses.	The use of terms and language was generally appropriate, with a few lapses.	Appearance and dress were generally appropriate for the occasion. Speaker usually maintained good visual contact and body language.
Almost satisfactory (2)	The organization was difficult to follow and the main point was somewhat obscure. Individual points often lacked development. Significant errors of factual content.	Logical organization was rudimentary but discernable. The use of evidence was often logically flawed.	The speaker was only somewhat engaging and the presentation was often halting. The speaker relied too much on reading from notes.	The use of terms and language was often inappropriate, either too simple or too jargony. Speaker had only a loose grip on the meaning of terms.	Appearance and dress moderately inappropriate for the occasion. Posture and stance often conflicted with presentation.
Unsatisfactory (1)	Seemingly aimless; it is difficult to discern any organization. The individual points lack development. Little attention to factual accuracy.	The logical structure of the presentation is primitive or lacking altogether. Use of evidence is very weak or absent.	The speaker was not at all engaging. The presentation was halting, unpracticed, with a flat monotone or highly sing-song voice.	The speaker did not show evidence of understanding or use of appropriate terms and language.	Very inappropriate dress, or with highly distracting and annoying mannerisms. Rarely addressed the audience directly.