

Department: MCB

Course No.: 241W

Title: Research Literature in Molecular and Cell Biology

Credits: 3

Contact: Kenneth M. Noll

WQ: W

Catalog Copy: MCB241W Research Literature in Molecular and Cell Biology. Second semester. 3 credits. Open only with consent of instructor.

Discussion of current research in molecular and cell biology. Staff. Enrollment Requirement Group; ENGL 105 or 110 or 111 or 250; open to juniors or higher. Recommended preparation: One 200 level course in MCB. With change in content, may be repeated for credit.

W Criteria: The format of this course can vary somewhat depending upon the instructor's intentions. Following is an example that was used in the Fall 2003 offering.

MCB241W is a literature based writing course designed for upper division undergraduates. The course is writing- and speaking-intensive; you will be called upon to write several short papers plus present an article in class.

The format of the course this year is as follows: An article will be posted on the web-site noted below prior to each meeting time. You will be responsible for reading the article, and answering any questions attached thereto. During class we will go over the questions and discuss, critically, the paper being read.

Reading and understanding the research literature occurs at several levels:

1. Understand the rationale for the work.
2. Understand the terminology being used.
3. Familiarize yourself with the experimental approaches
4. Read the paper with appropriate criticism.

If you have not read primary literature before, the literature will seem quite obtuse, especially early on, but with the convenience of the internet, most of these questions can be answered by querying Google or other search engines.

Grading in this course is based on participation, preparation and on your writing efforts. Participation means talking in class and asking questions that lead to understanding. Preparation includes going beyond the article at hand and trying to get at the

broader context in which the work is being done. The writing component will consist of a series (10-15) of short critiques that can be no longer than one page single-spaced in length. These generally begin with a short review of the article and a critical discussion of the data or conclusions, or a discussion of the implications of the work.

You all begin the semester with an "A" in this course. If you keep up with the reading and writing and participation, you will keep the grade. I understand that sometimes circumstances intervene that might prevent you from reading an article prior to class. If that happens, let me know. After the first few weeks, I will be giving you the opportunity to run a session.