

**Faculty of Science Course Syllabus Fall 2020** (revised June 2020)**Department of Biology***BIOL/MARI 4901 & 4902 (online)**Honours Research and Thesis I & II**Fall and Winter 2020-21***Instructor:** Margi Cooper (Chair of Honours Program and Course Coordinator)[mhcooper@dal.ca](mailto:mhcooper@dal.ca) Office Hours: By appointment**Additional Course Evaluators:** Paul Bentzen | [paul.bentzen@dal.ca](mailto:paul.bentzen@dal.ca)  
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Daniel Ruzzante | [daniel.ruzzante@dal.ca](mailto:daniel.ruzzante@dal.ca)  
Hal Whitehead | [hal.whitehead@dal.ca](mailto:hal.whitehead@dal.ca)**Lectures:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 1135-1255 – All sessions will be synchronous using Collaborate Ultra

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**Course Description**

This course is required of, and restricted to, all Biology/Marine Biology Honours programs in which Biology/Marine Biology is the major area of study. Students conduct a research project supervised by a research scientist and attend weekly meetings of the class. The classes ([BIOL 4901.03](#) and [BIOL 4902.03](#)) are taken in the students' final year. NOTES: [BIOL 4901.03](#) and [BIOL 4902.03](#) must be taken in consecutive fall/winter terms, or winter/fall terms (co-op only). Grades will not be recorded for either course until both have been completed, and the final Honours Thesis has been evaluated.

**Course Prerequisites**

Permission of Honours Coordinator

**Course Exclusion**

BIOL 4900.06 or MARI 4900.06

**A Special (strange?) Year Ahead**

Running this course online will be new for all of us, and we are aware that it may pose challenges for everyone. We will work to provide the best possible experience for you and recognize that open communication is an important part of that. We will be communicating with you regularly, and hope that you will feel comfortable asking for help, whether project related or with challenges you are experiencing with the online aspect of the class, when you need it.

We normally really enjoy our interactions with students during class and recognize that your interaction with fellow Honours students is one of the major benefits of class time. A strong sense of community typically develops each year. We are disappointed to not be able to interact with you in-person, but will look forward to getting to know you online this year. Opportunities to meet and interact with your peers will continue to be an important part of the class.

### **Course Details**

- With your supervisor's guidance, you are responsible for pursuing all aspects of your research project. You should be learning how to formulate hypotheses and predictions and how to prepare a thesis proposal. **[Note: Proposals must be submitted to Dr. Cooper by September 14, 2020.]** You will also learn how to collect and analyse data, and how to write a thesis manuscript. These skills are all learned directly from your research experience, which means that your supervisor is responsible for mentoring you. You are expected to take command of your research experience and seek out answers, but of course under the wing of a supervising professor. The faculty running the Honours course are also available to advise you, or they can suggest additional or alternate avenues that you might explore to find answers. The reason that the Biology Honours program is structured this way is because many of you will eventually enrol in graduate programs, and we believe that this kind of **independent but supervised** approach to research is the best way to prepare you for graduate research.
- You will give an oral presentation of your on-going thesis research in class. This will be done through Collaborate Ultra within our Brightspace site. Although we would love to see your face (as well as your PowerPoint) during your presentation, we will never mandate that you use video during this course. Presentations should be prepared with the assistance of your thesis supervisor. We encourage your supervisor(s) to attend the class the day of your presentation. To request guest access to our Brightspace site for specific dates, please contact Margi Cooper at [mhcooper@dal.ca](mailto:mhcooper@dal.ca).
- Students who performed well during the class presentations will be offered an **oral presentation** spot at the Cameron Conference. All other students will present a **poster presentation** at the Cameron Conference. Your supervisor(s) should also help you prepare your abstract and presentation. The 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Cameron Conference will be held on **February 13, 2021**. In light of Dalhousie's policy regarding in-person instruction for Winter 2021, this year's Cameron Conference will be held remotely. Details will be provided as soon as possible.
- In addition to a grade in BIOL/MARI 4901 & 4902, a grade in BIOL/MARI 8880: Honours Qualifying Exam will appear on your transcript when all the requirements for the Honours

program have been satisfied. The Biology Department grades this “exam” on a pass/fail basis. To pass, you must:

- Satisfy the Honours program requirements (required courses and minimum cGPA).
- Attend all classes. **ATTENDANCE WILL BE RECORDED** and participation noted. If a synchronous session is missed, you must contact Margi Cooper as soon as possible (or beforehand if you know you will miss a session), and submit an SDA form to the appropriate Assignment drop box on our Brightspace site. A maximum of three SDA may be used in this course throughout the term.
- Participate and present at the Cameron Conference.

### Course Assessment

Thesis	85%	April 8, 2021 (Co-ops submit December 8, 2020)
Class Presentation	5%	Done in fall term
Cameron Conference Presentation	10%	February 13, 2021

### Conversion of numerical grades to Final Letter Grades follows the Dalhousie Common Grade Scale

A+ (90-100)	B+ (77-79)	C+ (65-69)	D	(50-54)
A (85-89)	B (73-76)	C (60-64)	F	(<50)
A- (80-84)	B- (70-72)	C- (55-59)		

### Course Policies

Extensions for submitting theses will be considered on the basis of:

- a documented medical issue
- a letter from the supervisor stating the reasons for an extension and approving the request

Thesis extensions are granted only in very extenuating circumstances, such as a health crisis or in cases where a student’s experiments fail due to circumstances outside of his/her control and where such a failure prevents the student from completing a thesis. Each of these cases are reviewed by the Honours Committee before an extension is granted. Requests for extensions so that a student can expand a thesis into a manuscript for submission are not granted. Creating a publishable manuscript is indeed encouraged, but the thesis must be submitted at the end of the Honours course in April (or December option for Co-ops)

Requests for extensions must be submitted in writing to the Honours Committee two weeks BEFORE the thesis submission date in April. The student will then have until August 1 to complete and submit the thesis.

Those receiving an extension will not graduate in May, but will do so the following October. The student will receive an "INC" on their record (BIOL/MARI 4901 & 4902). When the final grade has been determined in August, the INC will be removed and the appropriate grade inserted. If students intend to graduate in May, then a thesis extension is not possible.

### Course Content

Date		Session Topic	Notes
Sept	8	Welcome Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr. Cooper will go over the syllabus and answer any questions you have about what to expect this year.</li> </ul>
	10	Dr. Sophia Stone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Biology's Graduate Coordinator</li> </ul>
	15	Dr. Daniel Ruzzante	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Biology's Graduate Admissions Coordinator</li> </ul>
	17	Gwen MacNairn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biology Liaison Librarian</li> </ul>
	22	Student Introductions I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Everyone will introduce themselves (not their research) to the class with a short, one slide presentation. This has the dual role of helping us all get to know each other and making sure that everyone is familiar with presenting in Collaborate before the research talks start.</li> </ul>
	24	Student Introductions II	
	29	Anti-Racism Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational Program facilitated by Human Rights and Equity Services</li> </ul>
Oct	1	Dr. Arunika Gunawardena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"A Day in the Life of a Professor"</li> </ul>
	6-29	Student Research Presentations	
Nov	3-5	Student Research Presentations	
	9-13	Fall Reading Break	
	17-26	Student Research Presentations	
Dec	1-3	Student Research Presentations	