

Faculty of Science Course Syllabus**Department of Biology***BIOL/MARI 4901 & 4902**Honours Research and Thesis I & II**Fall and Winter 2021-2022*

Instructor: Margi Cooper (Chair of Honours Committee and Course Coordinator)

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I do not have set office hours but am available to meet with you throughout the week by appointment. My preference will be to meet via Teams but I will be happy to meet in-person if you prefer. Masks must be worn for in-person meetings.

Additional Course Evaluators: Patrice Côté | patrice.cote@dal.ca
Julie Laroche | julie.laroch@dal.ca
Daniel Ruzzante | daniel.ruzzante@dal.ca
Sophia Stone | sophia.stone@dal.ca
Hal Whitehead | hal.whitehead@dal.ca

Lectures: Tues. & Thurs. 1135-1255 (Fall: LSC C206, Winter: LSC P4260, via Teams when needed)

Mask Policy:

- Masks must be worn during all in-person learning activities as well as in-person meetings through September. Dalhousie's mask policy will be updated again after September 30th. As someone with an unvaccinated child at home, and in recognition of other members of the course with comparable circumstances, I will ask and encourage everyone to continue wearing masks throughout the term.

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

Flexibility in the Year Ahead

After a year online, we are very excited to be able to get back to teaching and learning on campus. We 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, and we are happy that the normal, face-to-face opportunities for this will again be possible. Despite the improved public health conditions, we recognize that there may be times throughout the year during which our individual or collective ability to gather in person may be affected by COVID-19. We will make every effort to be flexible and to have online alternatives when necessary.

Course Details

- Your thesis proposal should be submitted to the Honours Committee, by emailing it to Margi Cooper, as soon as it can be ready, particularly if you are conducting research over the summer prior to starting BIOL/MARI 4901. **Proposals not already approved during the summer should be submitted to the appropriate Assignment drop box on Brightspace by September 10, 2021.**
- The Introduction and Methods sections of your thesis are due **December 7, 2021**, and will be formally evaluated by your supervisor. This evaluation will constitute *25% of your overall thesis grade*. Submit these sections as a PDF to the appropriate Assignment drop box on Brightspace.
- Your Final Thesis is due on **April 6, 2022** (or **December 7, 2021 for Co-op students**). Your thesis will be formally evaluated by three readers. The *median* of the grades assigned by these readers will constitute *75% of your overall thesis grade*. Submit your thesis as a PDF to the appropriate Assignment drop box on Brightspace.
- The Biology Department runs a seminar series most Thursdays from 11:30am-12:30pm. This year, it will be a mix of in-person seminars, held in the 5th Floor Lounge, and seminars delivered via Teams. All seminars will be recorded and made available to the department. Throughout the year, you will need to attend/watch 3 seminars and for each, complete an assignment in which you will critique and/or reflect on the speakers communication skills. The assignment document will be available via Brightspace. You are welcome to submit each reflection as you complete them, or all three together when you have completed them all. **All three reflections are due no later than April 1st, 2022.** Submit your reflections to the appropriate Assignment drop box on Brightspace.

- You will give two presentations about your on-going thesis research in class. One will be a conference-style presentation (*worth 4% of your overall mark*) and one will be an “elevator pitch”, a 1-minute, high-level explanation of your project (*worth 1% of your overall mark*). These will be done face-to-face whenever possible, but may need to be done via Teams if public health restrictions require it. Presentations should be prepared with the assistance of your thesis supervisor. We encourage your supervisor(s) to attend the class the day of your conference-style presentation.
- 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. Abstracts will be due by **January 21, 2022**. The 36th Annual Cameron Conference will be held on **February 12, 2022**. It is our hope that this year’s conference will be held in person, but a final decision will be made toward the end of Fall term, based on the public health situation at that time.
- 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 class 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 two SDA may be used each term.
 - Participate and present at the Cameron Conference.

Course Assessment

Class Presentations	5%	Fall or Winter Term
Seminar Reflections	5%	Fall and Winter Term
Cameron Conference Presentation	10%	February 12, 2022
Thesis	80%	Introduction and Methods due Dec. 7, 2021; Final Thesis due April 6, 2022 (Co-ops submit Dec. 7, 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.

Tentative Course Schedule

Date		Session Topic
Sept	7	Welcome to Honours
	9	Gwen MacNairn - Biology Liaison Librarian with strategies for library research
	14	Career Panel - Panelists from Academia, Government, NGO, and Industry
	16	Department of Biology's Graduate Coordinator (Dr. Daniel Ruzzante) and Graduate Admissions Coordinator (Dr. Alastair Simpson)
	21	Boris Worm - Science Communication for Societal Impact
	23	- Preparing a Scientific Presentation - Evaluator Tips (Margi) - Jennifer Van Dommelen - Zotero Citation Management System
	28	TBD

	30	National Day for Truth and Reconciliation - University Closed
Oct	5	Student Presentations
	7	Student Presentations
	12&14	Tuesday - Student Presentations/Thursday - Departmental Seminar
	19&21	Tuesday - Student Presentations/Thursday - Departmental Seminar
	26&28	Tuesday - Student Presentations/Thursday - Departmental Seminar
Nov	2	Student Presentations
	4	NSERC and Graduate School Applications - Optional/Departmental Seminar
	8-12	Reading Week
	16&18	Tuesday - Student Presentations/Thursday - Departmental Seminar
	23&25	Tuesday - Student Presentations/Thursday - Departmental Seminar
	30	Student Presentations
Dec	2	Departmental Seminar
Jan	6	Student Presentations
	11&13	Tuesday - Student Presentations/Thursday - Departmental Seminar
	18&20	Tuesday - Student Presentations/Thursday - Departmental Seminar
	25&27	Tuesday - Student Presentations/Thursday - Departmental Seminar
Feb	1	Preparing for the Cameron Conference
	3	Departmental Seminar
	8&10	Tuesday - No Class/Thursday - Departmental Seminar
	12	CAMERON CONFERENCE - All Day
	15&17	Tuesday - No Class/Thursday - Departmental Seminar
	21-25	Reading Week
arch	1&3	Tuesday - No Class/Thursday - Departmental Seminar
	8&10	Tuesday - No Class/Thursday - Departmental Seminar
	15&17	Tuesday - No Class/Thursday - Departmental Seminar
	22	Thesis Formatting
	24	Departmental Seminar
	29&31	Tuesday - No Class/Thursday - Departmental Seminar
April	5	No Class
	6	Final Thesis Submissions Due