

**Faculty of Science Course Syllabus****Department of Biology**

BIOL 4806.03, BIOL 4807.03, BIOL 4809.03  
MARI 4806.03, MARI 807.03, MARI 4809.03

**Special Topics – Independent Studies**

*Fall, Winter or Summer semesters 2017-2018*

Course Coordinator & Chair of the Biology Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

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**Course Description**

Independent study intended for students who wish to study an area of Biology or Marine Biology not covered in other courses. Students should first consult with a faculty member to arrange the topic of study. An outline of the course content must be approved by the Chair of the Biology Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

NOTE: Registration in Special Topics can only be approved by the Chair of the Biology Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (or another designated member of the Biology Undergraduate Curriculum Committee). These are the only individuals who can sign a student into a Special Topics Course.

**Information**

Special Topics courses provide unique opportunities outside the regular classroom for upper level students to engage in independent research. The student should do some initial exploration of a subject and prepare a draft proposal of the project to discuss with a prospective supervisor. Supervisors are usually professors at Dalhousie who conduct research in an area related to the topic. A professor may or may not agree to supervise such a course. The finalized proposal and the completed registration form (signed by both the supervisor and the student) are then submitted to the Chair of the Biology Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. The proposal is then reviewed and approved or not, or approved after modification.

Common Formats of the course; (i) a research project, comparable to that involved in Honours research (ii) directed reading and writing of a review paper (iii) a group of students get together and organize a course, asking one or more professors to participate and (iv) other formats may be considered.

**Regulations**

- The student(s) should normally be in their 4th year of study or equivalent and have a minimum of 75 Earned Credit Hours including at least 48 credit hours in Biology courses.
- The supervisor for a Special Topics course is usually a faculty member at Dalhousie University and holds a PhD in a Biological discipline.
- Material prepared for a Special Topics course cannot be used in an Honours thesis.
- Material covered or prepared for a Special Topics course cannot be derived from work performed as a routine expectation of employment.
- The content of the course should not overlap significantly with that of a regular course that is offered in the current academic year.
- At the end of the term, for reading and literature review assignments or group projects submit a copy of the report, for laboratory projects submit a 500-1000-word summary of your project

to the Chair of the Biology Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

**Application Deadline:**

The proposal and registration form signed and dated by both the student and the supervising Professor must be received by the Chair of the Biology Undergraduate Curriculum Committee not later than one week after the start of classes for the term in which the Special Topics course is to begin. The student is responsible for ensuring that these materials reach the Chair of the Curriculum Committee by the appropriate deadline. Once the proposal is approved, the Curriculum Committee Chair will set up through the Banner system, permission to register in the course and notify the student that he or she may now register in the course.

**Completion Deadline:**

A 500-1000-word summary of the project submitted by the student and the final letter grade for the student submitted by the supervisor must be sent to the Chair of the Biology Undergraduate Curriculum Committee no later than two weeks after the end of classes for the term in which the student is enrolled.

An Incomplete Grade (INC) will be assigned to students for whom no grade is received by the deadline specified in the Academic Regulations. "Students are expected to complete course work by the prescribed deadlines. Only in special circumstances (e.g., the death of a close relative) may an instructor extend such deadlines." (University Academic Regulation 16.4, of the 2015-2016 Undergraduate Calendar.)

**The Course Numbers:**

BIOL/MARI 4806.03 - the first special topics course taken (any semester)

BIOL/MARI 4807.03 - the second special topics course taken (any semester)

BIOL/MARI 4809.03 - the third special topics course taken (any semester)

**How to apply for a Special Topics Courses -Independent Studies course in the Biology Department:**

The student, with approval from their supervisor must submit the following separate documents.

**1. Completed registration form.**

**2. Proposal** – this should be approximately two pages long and include the (i) title of your project (ii) background information about the subject, including in text citations and end references (iii) objective(s) of your research project (iv) methods used (v) and why this research is significant.

**3. Assessment** – this is a detailed description of how the student will be evaluated, including deadlines for submission of course assignments and the value for each part being assessed. At least one deadline should be met by mid-term. Note that since the final grade is due no later than two weeks after classes end, any final reports should be submitted in time for the supervisor to have an appropriate time to evaluate them and decide on a final grade. The assessment page should also include a statement of how the student and professor will interact, (e.g. one or two-hour meetings held biweekly).

**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)		

## **University Policies and Statements** *(from FoS July 2017)*

**This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the University Calendar and by Senate**

### **Academic Integrity**

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect (The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999). As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity.

**Information:** [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/academic-integrity.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html)

### **Accessibility**

The Advising and Access Services Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students who request accommodation as a result of a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (Canada and Nova Scotia).

**Information:** [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/accessibility.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.html)

### **Student Code of Conduct**

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution.

**Code:** [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/student-life/code-of-student-conduct.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/student-life/code-of-student-conduct.html)

### **Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect**

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness

**Statement:** <http://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect.html>

### **Recognition of Mi'kmaq Territory**

Dalhousie University would like to acknowledge that the University is on Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office (Rm 3037, McCain Building), e-mail ([elders@dal.ca](mailto:elders@dal.ca)) or leave message (902-494-6803).

**Information:** [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/communities/native.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/native.html)

### **Important Dates** in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates)

[https://www.dal.ca/academics/important\\_dates.html](https://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html)

### **University Grading Practices**

[https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html)

## Student Resources and Support

### Advising

**General Advising** [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/advising.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html)

**Science Program Advisors:** <https://www.dal.ca/faculty/science/current-students/academic-advising.html>

**Aboriginal Student Centre:** [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/communities/native.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/native.html)

**Black Advising Centre:** [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/communities/black-student-advising.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html)

**International Centre:** [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/international-centre/current-students.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/international-centre/current-students.html)

### Academic supports

**Library:** <https://libraries.dal.ca/>

**Writing Centre:** [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html)

**Studying for Success:** [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html)

**Copyright Office:** <https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office.html>

**Fair Dealing Guidelines** <https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office/fair-dealing.html>

### Other supports and services

**Student Health Services:** [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/health-and-wellness/health-services/services.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness/health-services/services.html)

**Counselling:** [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/health-and-wellness/counselling.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness/counselling.html)

**Student Advocacy:** <https://www.dsu.ca/services/community-student-services/student-advocacy-service>

**Ombudsperson:** [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html)

### Safety

#### Research Lab Safety

[https://www.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/dept/safety/lab\\_policy\\_manual\\_2007.pdf](https://www.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/dept/safety/lab_policy_manual_2007.pdf)

**Biosafety:** <https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/biosafety.html>

**Chemical Safety:** <https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/chemical-safety.html>

**Radiation Safety:** <https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/radiation-safety.html>

**Scent-Free Program:** <https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html>

## REGISTRATION FORM

### For the student:

- I have read the information and regulations for Special Topics courses.
- I agree to abide by the regulations for Special Topics courses including the requirement that I submit a summary of the work to the Chair of the Biology Undergraduate Curriculum Committee by the end of classes, and that my work will be assessed not later than two weeks after cessation of classes.
- I understand that failure to follow the regulations will result in an INC grade being awarded for the Special Topics course, and that such grades are assigned a grade point value of 0.0.

Student Name and Banner Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

### For the Supervisor:

- I have read the information and regulations for Special Topics courses.
- I agree to submit a letter grade to the Chair of the Biology Undergraduate Curriculum Committee no later than two weeks after the end of classes.

Please register the student in:

Semester:       Fall               Winter               Summer (section: \_\_\_\_\_)

- BIOL 4806.03 (first special topics course)       MARI 4806.03 (first special topics course)
- BIOL 4807.03 (second special topics course)       MARI 4807.03 (second special topics course)
- BIOL 4809.03 (third special topics course)       MARI 4809.03 (third special topics course)

Supervisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

University: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Biology Department Signature (Curriculum Chair): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_