

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry
Department of Medical Biophysics

BIOPHYS 9513: Scientific Communications (1.0)
Fall 2023 – Winter 2024 Course Syllabus

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

The primary objective of this course is to provide students with a practical introduction to undertaking scientific research and provide experience with presenting science information in written and oral form. Emphasis will be placed on presentation to a scientifically educated, but non-specialist audience. Students will be introduced to the principles of peer review. Feedback will be provided from both experienced speakers as well as graduate student peers.

Learning outcomes and expectations for learners who complete this course include:

- Understand the components of high impact written, oral, and visual scientific communications and apply them in presentations and writing of varying length to different audiences
- Understand the principles of scientific peer review and apply them to provide constructive feedback to others
- Understand the concept of the scientific method and the need for ethical research and conduct

Attendance, Participation and Other Policies:

The course is designed to be interactive and having peer feedback in improving presentation skills is vital for the class. Communication is the transfer of information between two people. Part of the skills being learned is that of asking questions; as such we encourage active participation in the lectures and feedback sessions for the presentations. If for some legitimate reason you cannot attend a particular lecture, please email the course coordinator in advance of that class.

Attendance Policy:

All classes are mandatory, unless otherwise stated. Any student who, in the opinion of the course coordinator is absent too frequently from class periods will receive a failing grade after due warning has been given in writing from the course coordinator and Graduate Chair.

Cheating and Plagiarism Policy:

Students are encouraged to work together, but each student must take total responsibility for his/her submitted work. Students must write their laboratory reports and final projects in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. University policy states that cheating, including plagiarism, is a scholastic offence. The commission of a scholastic offence is attended by academic penalties which might include expulsion from the program. If a student is caught cheating, there will be no second warning.

All written reports and projects may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All reports will be included as source documents on the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

See the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Scholastic Offence Policy:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Use of Electronic Devices Policy:

No electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, MP3 players) may be used during lectures or examinations. The use of non-programmable calculators is permitted during examinations; programmable calculators are prohibited during examinations.

OWL Internet/Bulletin Board Policy:

It is the student's responsibility to read the course website posted on Western's on-line learning management system, OWL (<https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>). This includes the course bulletin board and all information and/or assignments posted about the course. If the student fails to act on information that has been posted on the course site and does so without a legitimate explanation (i.e., those covered under the illness/compassionate form), then there are NO grounds for an appeal.

Request for Assignments Extensions:

Students are advised to inform the course co-ordinator as soon as possible regarding an extension for assignment submissions due to medical reasons or other compassionate reasons. Extensions will only be granted by the course co-ordinators at their discretion.

Absence Due to Medical Illness:

Students must familiarize themselves with the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious or compassionate circumstances, you must provide valid medical or other supporting documentation to the course co-ordinator immediately. It is the student's responsibility to make alternative arrangements with the co-ordinator to complete missing course requirements.

A student requiring academic accommodation due to illness, should use the Student Medical Certificate: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf when visiting an off-campus medical facility or request a Record's Release Form for visits to Student Health Services. The form is available at: <http://www.health.uwo.ca/services/students/policies.html>. The release form will allow the course co-ordinator to confirm with Student Health Services that a student's absence from regular attendance or inability to meet scheduled course commitments is due to medical reasons. The nature of the illness will not be divulged by Student Health Services.

Graduate Students' Mental Health and Physical Wellness:

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, students are encouraged to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre: http://www.uwo.ca/campus_life/athletics.html

All facets of extracurricular campus life in which graduate students can participate are available on this URL: http://www.uwo.ca/campus_life/arts_culture.html

Information regarding health and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca>. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone in whom they feel comfortable confiding, such as their graduate supervisor, their program director (Graduate Chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at: http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html

Accessibility to the Course and Course Materials:

Please contact the course co-ordinator if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

Evaluation:

All listed deadlines are tentative and will be confirmed in class.

Fall Semester Assignments	Value
CCV & Reference Request	5%
3 Minute Thesis Introduction	10%
Scholarship Proposal	5%
Scholarship Proposal Peer Reviews	5%
Literature Review Table	5%
Journal Article Objective/Hypothesis	5%
Journal Article Authorship & Journal	5%
3 Minute Lay Audience Study Pitch	10%

Winter Semester Assignments	Value
Seminar Abstract	5%
Seminar Abstract Peer Reviews	5%
Poster Presentation	10%
10 Minute Seminar	20%
Thesis Introduction Chapter Outline	5%
Thesis Introduction Chapter Paragraph	5%