

Instructor

Nature of Life Program Director, Frances Wood – fkwood@umn.edu

Moos Tower 5-220 (Department of Biology Teaching and Learning) – office hours by appointment

Course Basics

- **Course Website:** University of Minnesota (U of M) Canvas (<https://canvas.umn.edu>)
- **Course Meeting Time:** Online, with occasional in-person workshops and events.
- **Course Meeting Locations:** Not applicable because on-line
- **Course Questions:** If you have general questions about the course that are not answered by reading the syllabus or Canvas, please email them to nol@umn.edu

Learning Objectives

The Nature of Life course series is designed to promote the success of each student who enters CBS. Personal self-awareness and the ability to adapt and course-correct based on experience and knowledge equips you to overcome challenges during college and beyond; these are desirable characteristics sought by professional schools and employers alike. Your work in the Nature of Life course series helps you to build and hone these skills.

Throughout this four-semester course series, you will:

- Engage with questions of identity, motivation and aspirations (e.g. What matters to me? Who do I want to become? How will I get there?);
- Develop skills in critical reflection and metacognition;
- Develop social and professional networks at the U of M;
- Explore and enrich your undergraduate experience using resources and experiencing events that interest you.

During BIOL 2905, you will:

- Refine your personal picture of success through metacognition and access resources strategically in support of your goals;
- Expand your understanding of the scientific community at the U of M and what it means to communicate scientific information effectively;
- Build connections and enrich your career exploration process through the practice of informational interviewing.

Required Materials

- BIOL 2905 Canvas Site: <https://canvas.umn.edu/courses/127677>
- The BIOL 2905 Canvas site contains all important and current information about the course. In the first week of the semester, you should review it thoroughly and refer back to it regularly as the semester progresses.

Course Workload

Nature of Life is a two-year course series (BIOL 1805/1806 and BIOL 2905/2906) awarding 2 credits total. You will earn 0.5 credits upon passing each course in the series. Each course is graded on a Satisfactory/Non-Satisfactory (S/N) basis (also known as Pass/Fail).

This course has been designed to align with the University of Minnesota's workload formula of 2 hours of outside-class work for every hour in lecture. **To earn an 'S' in this 0.5 credit class, you should expect to spend a total of 25 hours (an average of ~1.5 hours/week) on course activities throughout the semester.** Always, the amount of time you spend on the course will be proportional to its impact. In other words, **you will get out of Nature of Life what you put into it.**

Course Components

BIOL 2905 combines two Individual-Choice Modules, which provide freedom to focus on your own individual goals and skill development, with the Science Identity Series, a set of five assignments that encourage you to reflect on your own emerging postgraduate plans and identity as a scientist and build connections that further your aims in both areas.

As the architect of your BIOL 2905/2906 experience, you will select the content that you want to cover during the semesters within this structure:

- **Complete two Individual-Choice Modules:** one focused on Academic and Personal Well-Being and one focused on Career and Engagement. Each module should take you 3-4 hours to complete across its two deadlines and the components of each module must be completed by the specified deadlines.
- **Complete the Science Identity Series:** a set of five assignments that ask you to think purposefully about who you are and where you are headed and then make connections both here on campus and in the larger community that further develop your goals and postgraduate plans.
- **Complete the Course Integration Semester-End Metacognition:** to reflect on your efforts in the course and make meaning of your BIOL 2905 experience.

How to earn an “S” in BIOL 2905

Each time you complete a required course element with a good faith effort (e.g. the tasks specified for each Individual-Choice Module or Science Identity Series deadline), you will earn 20 points, signifying successful completion of that assignment. It is possible to earn 200 points during BIOL 2905; to pass the course ***you must earn at least 160/200 available points***. While you should plan to complete all elements of BIOL 2905, this means that you may miss up to two deadlines and still earn an S in the course. It is your responsibility to monitor your progress in the course and ensure that you are on track to earn an S.

Points Structure

Course Element	Assignment	Points Possible
Science Identity Series	Personal Path Statement	20
	Informational Interview Preparation	20
	Informational Interview Completion and Reflection	20
	Scientific Seminar Preparation	20
	Scientific Seminar Attendance and Reflection	20
Individual-Choice Module: Academic and Personal Well-Being	Week One: EffectiveU Tutorial & Discussion Post	20
	Week Two: Review and Two Discussion Replies	20
Individual-Choice Module: Career and Engagement	Week One: Module Work & Discussion Post	20
	Week Two: Revision and Two Discussion Replies	20
Course Integration	Semester-End Metacognition	20
Total Points Possible		200

How to earn full credit, i.e. 20 points, on an assignment

When you complete an Individual-Choice Module step, a Science Identity Series component or the final Semester-End Course Integration assignment through Canvas, the CBS Grader who is grading your work in the course will review it, add their comments and assign it points according to the rubric below.

In the context of BIOL 2905, a good faith effort is defined as thoughtful and complete work (e.g. answering all prompts in a given assignment, writing a response that observes the recommended word limit, etc.) which has been submitted by the deadline (10:00 pm on the specified date).

No matter which Individual-Choice Modules you select or which seminar or informational interview contact you make through the Science Identity Series, **remember that the benefit you will realize from the Nature of Life courses will be directly related to the amount of effort you invest in your work.**

Completed	Quality of Submission	Points
By posted due date	Submitted work represents a “good faith effort” if it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses all reflection prompts in an assignment and demonstrates thoughtful engagement with the topic by adhering to the recommended word count. • Shows evidence that all tasks specified in the assignment have been completed, e.g. Individual-Choice Module pre-work + discussion post; Scientific Seminar attendance + reflection, etc. 	20
By posted due date	Submitted work does not represent a “good faith effort” if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It fails to address all questions in the reflection prompt and/or falls significantly below the recommended word count; writing seems rushed and not carefully thought through. • Certain tasks in the assignment have not been completed, e.g. Individual-Choice Module pre-work is completed, but no discussion post is made; Scientific Seminar is attended, but no reflection is submitted, etc. 	10
Nothing entered	Part of completing BIOL 2905 in good faith means managing the course deadlines. Work submitted after the 10:00 pm posted deadline will receive 0 points.	0

Course and University Policies

Academic Integrity in the Nature of Life courses

As in all your academic courses at the University of Minnesota, your work in BIOL 2905/2906 is governed by the Student Conduct Code. Much of the work in this course relies on you to self-report your completion of specified tasks, e.g. meeting with a campus resource, attending a particular workshop, etc. Your honesty and academic integrity is expected and subject to the terms of the Scholastic Dishonesty policy stated here:

Code Subd. 1. Scholastic Dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarism; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, misrepresenting, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Student Conduct Code:

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University of Minnesota you are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code. Please see here to review the full Student Conduct Code:

http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf.

Disability Accommodations:

The University of Minnesota views disability as an important aspect of diversity and is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities (seen and unseen, permanent and temporary) to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- **If you are registered with the DRC and have a disability accommodation letter dated for this semester or this year, please notify the Nature of Life Program Director, Frances Wood, early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in this course.**
- If you have, or think you have, a disability in any area such as mental health, attention, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical, please contact the DRC office on your campus (U of M Twin Cities - 612.626.1333) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
- Students with short-term disabilities, such as a broken arm, can often work with instructors to minimize classroom barriers. In situations where additional assistance is needed, students should contact the DRC as noted above.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have questions or concerns about your accommodations please contact your access consultant/disability specialist.

Mental Health and Stress Management:

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu>.