

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:** CBS Common Time (Fridays, 12:20 – 1:10 pm)
- **Course Meeting Locations:** Guild Meeting and Choice Week workshop locations are posted on Canvas
- **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 Goals

Nature of Life is designed to aid the success of each student entering CBS. Throughout this four-semester course series, you will:

- Engage with questions of your 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;
- Build social and professional networks at the U of M;
- Explore and enrich your undergraduate experience using resources and experiencing events that interest you.

Required Materials

- BIOL 1806 Canvas Site: <https://canvas.umn.edu/courses/151771>
- Your individual BIOL 1806 GoogleDoc (will be shared to your Google Drive by course administrators)

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).

Each course in the NOL series has been designed to align with the University of Minnesota's workload formula of 2 hours of outside-class work for every 1 hour in lecture (e.g. a 3 credit class = 9 hours total spent in lecture and studying per week to earn a passing grade; students who earn higher-than-average grades typically spend more time on task than that).

Because BIOL 1806 is a 0.5 credit course, you should expect to spend an average of 1.5 hours per week on the course, including attending Guild Meetings, which are held for 50 minutes on Fridays from 12:20 – 1:10 pm. Some weeks you may spend a bit more time on the course; some weeks you will spend a little less. 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.**

BIOL 1806 Canvas Site

The BIOL 1806 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. In particular, please note these sections:

- **Course Schedule:** A week-by-week course calendar with deadlines for all written work is posted on the Course Schedule section of Canvas.
- Further information you need to complete the course is organized into its components including: **Writing Deadlines, Guild Meetings, Biology Saves the World Project and Choice Weeks.**

Course Components

Category	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">ASSIGNMENT WRITING DEADLINES</p> <p>Expectation: Meet all four Writing Deadlines during the semester.</p> <p>Each Writing Deadline consists of two parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Assigned Writing • A BSW Benchmark (1/26, 3/1, 3/29) or Choice Points Reflection (4/26) <p>Full details and reflection prompts for each Writing Deadline are located in your BIOL 1806 GoogleDoc.</p>	<p>Your written work in BIOL 1806 provides an opportunity to focus on your personal development and individual experiences as you further adjust to life at and establish your place at the U of M and in CBS. Each assignment is read and responded to by your Sophomore Guild Leader, providing you with additional perspective on your experiences and thoughts and offering suggestions of resources that might be useful.</p> <p>1. Fall Back, Spring Ahead + BSW Benchmark #1 Due Sunday, January 26 by 10:00 pm</p> <p><i>Assigned Writing:</i> As second semester gets underway, prepare yourself to succeed by taking some time to reflect on your first semester at the University. What went well? What needs improvement? What resources can help you? Complete the Fall Back, Spring Ahead Snapshot (link in your BIOL 1806 GoogleDoc) to prompt your reflection and then write a brief metacognitive essay focused on your experiences last Fall 2019 and your goals for this Spring 2020.</p> <p><i>BSW Benchmark #1:</i> Your BSW team’s Focus Scientist match will be located on the Biology Saves the World link on the BIOL 1806 Canvas site. For this benchmark, enter some basic information about your Focus Scientist and their lab so that you’re ready to start the project in earnest at the February 7th first Individual-Guild meeting.</p> <p>2. Major Inspiration + BSW Benchmark #2 Due Sunday, March 1 by 10:00 pm</p> <p><i>Assigned Writing:</i> When you make decisions, like declaring your major, aligning your choice with your interests, values and goals means you are more likely to make good decisions for you. In this assigned writing, think about an aspect of science that fascinates you. Describe what it is and why it interests you and you will then have taken a ‘snapshot’ of or reviewed at least one ‘signpost’ or item along your road to declaring or concluding a major.</p> <p><i>BSW Benchmark #2:</i> By now, your BSW team will have met twice with your Focus Scientist. For this benchmark, write a brief reflection on the experience of those meetings.</p> <p>3. Conversation with a Professor + BSW Benchmark #3 Due Sunday, March 29 by 10:00 pm</p> <p><i>Assigned Writing:</i> Forming connections with your professors helps you take advantage of one of your primary resources here at the University: your faculty and instructors. Use this assignment to have and reflect on a conversation with one of your current professors or instructors.</p> <p><i>BSW Benchmark #3:</i> BSW helps you get involved in the kind of teamwork that will be a big part of your academic life in CBS and beyond. What have you learned as a result? This BSW Benchmark will help you reflect on your areas of strength and opportunities for growth in a team situation.</p> <p>4. And My Major Is... + Choice Week Reflection Due Sunday, April 26 by 10:00 pm</p> <p><i>Assigned Writing:</i> Throughout the first year of NOL you have reflected on your goals, your interests and your strengths and you have learned about the majors that CBS offers. This assignment gives you the opportunity to review, declare or confirm your intended major.</p> <p><i>Final Choice Points Reflection:</i> Conclude your BIOL 1806 experience with one of NOL’s most popular assignments: a final Choice Points Reflection.</p>

Course Components Continued

Category	Description
<p>GUILD MEETINGS</p> <p>Expectation: Attend each Individual-Guild and All-Guild meeting during the semester.</p>	<p>The CBS Guilds help you navigate your path in CBS by building connections within the CBS community. Throughout the semester, Individual-Guild meetings and All-Guild meetings will take place on Fridays from 12:20 - 1:10 pm during CBS Common Time.</p> <p>You are expected to attend each of the 11 Guild meetings (we meet 11 of the 15 weeks in the semester and the meeting calendar is available on the BIOL 1806 Canvas site). For more information on the course attendance requirements and how course attendance relates to grading, see page 4 of this syllabus.</p>
<p>BIOLOGY SAVES THE WORLD PROJECT</p> <p>Expectation: Attend both Focus Scientist (FS) meetings (FS meetings count as Individual-Guild meetings) and work collaboratively with your team to create and deliver your Biology Saves the World presentation.</p> <p>Full information and instructions for the BSW Project are located on the BIOL 1806 Canvas.</p>	<p>Throughout BIOL 1806, you will work with your SGL group to complete the Biology Saves the World project. You and your fellow guild group members will be matched with a Focus Scientist to learn about their scientific work and professional path, ultimately helping you to create a presentation to communicate this information to your entire Guild. BSW Focus Scientists are PIs (Principal Investigators, who are the head of a research lab), Postdocs (professional researchers who have earned their PhD) or PhD candidates (graduate students pursuing their PhD) who have volunteered their time to participate in this project.</p> <p>By completing the Biology Saves the World project, you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create connections with your fellow Guild members while building your teamwork skills and expanding your self-awareness about your role in a team; • Gain experience with the thought and project development process you'll use throughout your coursework and lab experiences in CBS; • Exercise and expand your curiosity about the life-changing possibilities inherent in studying biology and how they might be of interest to you in future; • Form a greater awareness of CBS and related research that happens at the U of M; • Build a career exploration mindset and practice the techniques used to conduct informational interviews. <p>The project will launch at the first Individual-Guild meeting at the start of February, when you'll explore your Focus Scientist match and begin researching their work, continue through February when you will meet with your Focus Scientist twice and create your presentation and conclude at the end of March, when you deliver your BSW presentation to your Guild. During the first three Writing Deadlines in the BIOL 1806 course, you will complete BSW Benchmarks to cement learning, reflect on knowledge gained and earn credit for your work on the BSW project.</p>
<p>CHOICE WEEKS</p> <p>Expectation: Attend NOL provided events or create your own option during Choice Weeks as per your interest.</p>	<p>Choice Weeks in BIOL 1806 are a way for you to continue establishing a strong foundation for yourself in CBS and at the U of M by helping you to enhance your community, make connections and learn about campus resources. During each of the Choice Weeks during the semester, NOL will work with campus partners to offer topical and skill-based events. Students can either attend one of these events, or create, or attend their own found Choice Activity from a list of approved options detailed on the BIOL 1806 Canvas site.</p> <p>As with Choice Weeks in BIOL 1805, you will receive an email at the start of a Choice Week announcing the workshop titles and providing a link to RSVP. If you have an idea for a Choice Week event you would like NOL to offer, please send your idea to nol@umn.edu.</p>

Course Completion Requirements

To earn an “S” in BIOL 1806 you must earn the minimum number of points in each of the two coursework categories (Writing Deadlines and Guild and BSW Focus Scientist Meetings) listed in the chart below. It is your responsibility to monitor your progress in the course and ensure that you are on track to earn an S.

Coursework Category	Number of Items and Points Value	Maximum Points Possible	Minimum Points Required to Earn an “S”
Writing Deadlines	Each Writing Deadline is worth 20 points and includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assigned Writing - 10 points/submission BSW Benchmark or Choice Week Reflection - 10 points/submission 	80	70
Guild and BSW Focus Scientist Meetings	11 meetings @ 10 points/meeting	110	100 (+ a completed BSW project from your team)

Writing Deadline Grading Rubric

Each time you complete an Assigned Writing and a BSW Benchmark or Choice Week Reflection in your BIOL 1806 GoogleDoc, your SGL will read it and give you written feedback in your GoogleDoc. Your SGL will also enter a point-value grade for each writing submission in the Canvas gradebook, based on the following criteria:

Completion and Quality of Submission	Points
Work is completed by posted deadline and submission represents a “good faith effort” by adhering to the word count recommendation, answering all questions in the reflection prompt and demonstrating thoughtful engagement with the topic. Writing aligns with the process of metacognition: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What? (What happened? What did I do? What did I expect and what was different?) So what? (Why does it matter to me? Why does it matter to others involved? What is the significance?) Now what? (What am I going to do as a result of what happened? What did I learn and how will I apply it?) 	10
Work is completed by posted deadline, but response does not represent a “good faith effort” because it does not address all questions in the reflection prompt, answers seem rushed and not carefully thought through, or responses are short, incomplete or lack obvious effort. OR Work is late but completed within 24 hours of the posted assignment deadline. Please note: in order to earn half-credit for late work, late work must meet the “good faith effort” standards listed above.	5
If no work is submitted, you have earned zero points for that writing deadline component.	0

Guild Meeting and Focus Scientist Meeting Attendance Requirements

Guild and Focus Scientist meeting points are attendance-based. **You are expected to attend every meeting held during the semester and work collaboratively with your guild group to complete the Biology Saves the World project.** When you attend a meeting and participate in the duration of the Guild/Focus Scientist meeting you earn 10 points (you need to swipe in with your U-Card at All-Guild meetings). If you must miss a Guild or Focus Scientist meeting, regardless of the reason, you receive 0 points for that meeting. If you are more than 10 minutes late to a Guild meeting or leave more than 10 minutes early, you will also receive 0 points for the meeting (please contact nol@umn.edu with related queries as needed). Because circumstances outside students’ control sometimes arise (e.g. serious illness, family crisis or death, etc.), course attendance requirements permit you to miss one meeting and still be able to earn the number of Guild/Focus Scientist meeting points required to pass the course.

Course and University Policies**Academic Integrity in Nature of Life Courses:**

As in all your academic courses at the University, your work in BIOL 1806 is governed by the Student Conduct Code. Your honesty and academic integrity is expected and is subject to the terms of the Scholastic Dishonesty policy stated here (Section IV, Subd. 1):

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 to 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 (or when accommodations are assessed and provided) to review how 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 Participating in University-Sponsored Activities and Events:

If you must exceed the number of allowable Guild meeting absences because you are participating in a University-sponsored activity (e.g. intercollegiate athletic events, University system governance such as the Student Senate, student group competitions such as the Varsity Debate Team or Mock Trial), you must provide written notice of conflicts (e.g. athletics travel letter, activity participation verification) to Nature of Life Program Director, Frances Wood, as soon as possible plus complete make-up work for meetings missed beyond the single allowable absence.

Well-being, Mental Health and Stress Management:

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning such as increased anxiety, strained relationships, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. Such mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. U of M 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/>. Please also find a 'Useful Resources' link on the front page of the BIOL 1806 Canvas website: <https://canvas.umn.edu/courses/151771/pages/useful-resources>. Please know that the U of M has legal requirements to help protect and support students, satisfy title IX requirements and report sexual misconduct as per policy: <https://policy.umn.edu/hr/sexharassassault>.