

Instructor

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Course Questions

General questions about the course should be submitted to the Course Questions Forum on the Moodle site.

Course Website: University of Minnesota Moodle 3.0 (<https://ay17.moodle.umn.edu/>)

Course Meeting Time: Online, with occasional in-person events as selected by individual students

Learning Objectives

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

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 identity, motivation, and aspiration (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; and
- Explore your interests by utilizing resources and experiencing events at the U that intrigue you.

During BIOL 2905, you will:

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

Course Workload

This course has been designed to align with the University's workload formula of 2 hours of outside-class work for every hour in lecture. **To earn an 'S' in this .5 credit class, you should expect to spend a total of 25 hours (and average of ~1.5 hours/week) on course activities throughout the semester.**

Academic Integrity in the Nature of Life courses

As in all your academic courses at the University, 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 code below (full conduct code available [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.

Course Components and Structure

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.

You are the architect of your BIOL 2905/2906 experience – you will select the content that you want to cover during the semester within this structure:

- You will complete two Individual-Choice Modules of your choosing. Each module should take you 3-4 hours to complete and each step of the module must be completed by the specified deadlines.
- You will also 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.

Grading Criteria

How is my grade calculated in this class, i.e. how do I pass BIOL 2905?

Each time you complete a required course element, e.g. an Individual-Choice Module step or Science Identity Series assignment (and earn a Satisfactory mark), you will earn a corresponding **badge** signifying successful completion of that item. You can earn up to 11 badges during BIOL 2905 (three for each Individual-Choice Module totals six, plus five for your Science Identity Series assignments).

To pass BIOL 2905, you must earn at least nine (9) out of the eleven (11) badges.

How do I earn a badge?

When you submit a module step assignment or Science Identity Series assignment through Moodle, the NOL Peer Mentor who is grading your work in the course will review it and add their comments. If your grader determines that you have completed the work fully and with a good faith effort, you will be awarded the badge that corresponds to that particular course element, e.g. Individual Choice Module Step 1: Select, Science Identity Series #3, etc.

Regarding late work: Part of completing BIOL 2905 in good faith means managing the course deadlines. Work submitted after the 11:59pm posted deadline will be considered "Not Satisfactory" and unable to earn a badge.

What constitutes a "good faith effort?"

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 (11:59pm 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.

Individual-Choice Modules

You will choose and complete two modules from the options listed on the Moodle (Individual-Choice Modules tab). All modules are available during fall semester (BIOL 2905) and during spring semester (BIOL 2906), to give you maximum flexibility to design your experience in Nature of Life, year two the way that will best benefit you.

- Each module will take 3-4 hours in total to complete. Some modules require you to meet with campus resources or complete tasks that might not be entirely on your schedule. Plan appropriately and budget your time to ensure that you are able to complete each set of tasks before deadlines.
- Each module includes three steps. Completing each step earns a badge for that corresponding step.
 - Step 1: Select - work that will help you build a strong foundation for your module experience through reflection and writing
 - Step 2: Connect - the expectation to connect with a relevant campus or community resource
 - Step 3: Reflect - prompts to help you make meaning of your experience and solidify your learning

How should I choose my modules?

Your curriculum in BIOL 2905/2906 is tailored to your specific interests, goals, and needs, because you are the driver of your experience. You can think of the module-selection process like preparing to attend a professional conference: review the conference offerings, and craft a session schedule that meets your goals.

If you have specific goals in mind, we encourage you to adopt a strategic approach to module selection. At the beginning of each semester, spend some time thinking about what you want to accomplish during the term and choose modules related to those goals. When you approach the courses in this way, BIOL 2905/2906 will consist of work you would already otherwise be completing as you pursue your goals.

If you feel more open, you could use an exploratory approach and choose modules on topics you haven't really yet considered. One strength of this approach is that your work in BIOL 2905/2906 could expand your horizons and challenge you to think of new possibilities for your experiences at the U and beyond.

Science Identity Series

Now in your second year in CBS, you have a set of experiences already under your belt and are poised to take intentional action toward further understanding who you are as a scientist and what you plan to do after you earn your undergraduate degree. The Science Identity Series is a set of five assignments that ask you to think with purpose 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.

There are each of the five Science Identity Series badges, follow the instructions on the corresponding tabs on Moodle. As with all work in BIOL 2905, Science Identity Series assignments completed on time and with a good faith effort will earn a badge.

- **Personal Path Statement** - Articulate your current career goals and reconnect with your motivation for pursuing your path.
- **Scientific Seminar Preparation, Attendance and Reflection** - Expand your experiences within the scientific community at the U by identifying and attending a scientific seminar that piques your interest. You will prepare to attend by researching the speaker and reading a relevant paper, attend the seminar itself, and reflect on the experience, glean insights into your own evolving interests and professional path.
- **Informational Interview Preparation, Completion and Reflection** - Practice the critical skill of informational interviewing and build connections relevant to your evolving career path. You will develop a personal Connections Map, prepare for and conduct an informational interview with one of your personal contacts, and reflect on what you have learned from the experience.

Course and University Policies

Academic Integrity in Nature of Life Courses:

As in all your academic courses at the University, your work in BIOL 2905 is governed by the Student Conduct Code. Your honesty and academic integrity is expected and subject to the terms of the Scholastic Dishonesty code below.

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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 you are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code. To review the full Student Conduct Code, please see: 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 to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- 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 (UM Twin Cities - 612.626.1333) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
- **If you are registered with the DRC and have a disability accommodation letter dated for this semester or this year, please contact your instructor early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in this course.**
- 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>.