Instructors

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Course Questions

If you have general questions about the course that are not answered by reading the syllabus or Moodle, please submit them to the Course Questions Forum on the Moodle so that questions and responses can be read by all students.

Course Website: University of Minnesota Moodle 3.0 (http://ay16.moodle.umn.edu)
Course Meeting Time: CBS Common Time (Fridays, 12:20 – 1:10pm)
Course Meeting Location: Guild meeting locations are posted on Moodle

Learning Goals

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

- Engage with questions of identity, motivation, and aspiration (e.g. 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 and expand your interests by using resources and experiencing events at the U that intrigue you.

Required Materials

- BIOL 1806 Moodle Site: http://ay16.moodle.umn.edu
- Your individual BIOL 1806 GoogleDoc (will be shared with you)

Course Grading Criteria and Workload

Nature of Life is a two-year course sequence (BIOL 1805/1806 & BIOL 2905/2906) awarding 2 credits total. You will earn .5 credit after passing each semester. Each course is graded on a Satisfactory/No Credit (S/N) basis.

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

Because BIOL 1806 is .5 credits, you should expect to spend an average of 1.5 hours per week on the course, including Guild Meetings, which are held for 50 minutes on Fridays from 12:20-1:10pm. 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 Moodle

The BIOL 1806 course Moodle is where you will find all important and current information about the course. In the first week of the semester, you should review it thoroughly and refer to it regularly as the semester progresses. You should note these sections:

- Guild Meeting Dates and Locations - The dates and locations for the nine required Guild meetings are posted on the Moodle under the “Guild Meetings” tab, sub-tab “Guild Meeting Dates and Locations.”
- Course Calendar and Deadlines - A week-by-week course calendar with deadlines for all written work is posted on the Moodle under the “Course Information” tab, sub-tab “Course Calendar and Deadlines.”
Course Components

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet all four Writing Deadlines during the semester.</td>
<td>1. <strong>Fall Back, Spring Ahead + BSW Benchmark #1 – Due Sunday, January 29 by 11:59pm</strong>  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Assigned Writing:</strong> 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? Write a reflective essay focused on your experiences last fall and your goals for this spring.  &lt;br&gt;<strong>BSW Benchmark #1:</strong> Your BSW team will receive your Focus Scientist match on 1/27. For this benchmark, enter your scientist’s name, position in the lab (e.g. PI, Postdoc, grad student) and a brief description of their lab.</td>
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<td>2. <strong>Major Inspiration + BSW Benchmark #2 – Due Sunday, February 26 by 11:59pm</strong>  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Assigned Writing:</strong> When you make decisions, like declaring your major, aligning your choice with your interests, values, and goals means that you can’t make a wrong move! In this assigned writing, think about an aspect of science that fascinates you. Describe what it is and why it interests you, and you’ll have taken a snapshot of least one signpost along your road to declaring a major.  &lt;br&gt;<strong>BSW Benchmark #2:</strong> By now, your BSW team should have held your first meeting with your Focus Scientist. For this benchmark, write a brief reflection on the experience of that meeting.</td>
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<td>3. <strong>Conversation with a Professor + BSW Benchmark #3 – Due Sunday, March 26 by 11:59pm</strong>  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Assigned Writing:</strong> 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.  &lt;br&gt;<strong>BSW Benchmark #3:</strong> You have jumped right in to the 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.</td>
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<td>4. <strong>And My Major Is... + BSW Benchmark #4 – Due Sunday, April 23 by 11:59pm</strong>  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Assigned Writing:</strong> 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. If you haven’t already declared your major, now is the time!  &lt;br&gt;<strong>BSW Benchmark #4:</strong> You have completed the BSW project – congratulations! In this BSW Benchmark, assess your own achievement of the project’s learning objectives.</td>
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<td>Attend Individual-Guild and All-Guild meetings and help your team complete the Biology Saves the World project.</td>
<td>The CBS Guilds help you chart your path in CBS by building connections with the CBS community. Throughout the semester, Individual-Guild meetings and All-Guild meetings will take place during Common Time (Fridays from 12:20-1:10pm).  &lt;br&gt;It is expected that you will attend each Guild meeting and work collaboratively with your Project Team to complete the Biology Saves the World project.</td>
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Biology Saves the World
The CBS Mission is: “to improve human welfare and global conditions by advancing knowledge of the mechanisms of life through breakthrough discoveries and to prepare today's students to create the biology of tomorrow.” You will create the biology of tomorrow, and you’ve chosen to attend a Research I institution where the biology of tomorrow is being discovered today.

Throughout BIOL 1806, you will be working with your SGL team to complete the Biology Saves the World project challenge. You and your fellow team members will be matched with a Focus Scientist to learn about her/his scientific work and professional path, and create a presentation to communicate this information to your entire Guild. The BSW Focus Scientists are PIs (Principal Investigators, who are the head of a research lab), Postdocs (professional researchers who have earned their PhD) and PhD candidates (graduate students pursuing their PhD) who have volunteered their time to participate in this project.

BSW Project Learning Objectives (i.e., by completing the BSW project, you will):

- Learn about the scientific work being conducted by one particular scientist and understand what he or she does, why it matters, and how it might impact or change the world;
- Build your communication skills by developing and delivering a presentation that explains the value of your Focus Scientist's work to your peers and other CBS community members;
- By listening to the presentations of your fellow Guild members, gain exposure to research in biology at the U and learn why it is important, how it happens, and how to get involved;
- 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 time in CBS;
- Exercise and expand your curiosity about the life-changing possibilities inherent in studying biology.

The project will launch at the first Individual-Guild meeting at the end of January, when you’ll receive your Focus Scientist match and begin researching her/his work, continue through February and early March when you will meet with your Focus Scientist twice, and conclude at the end of March, when you deliver your presentation to your Guild. At each of the four Writing Deadlines in the course, you will complete BSW Benchmarks to earn credit for your work on the project.

Full information and instructions for the BSW Project are located on the BIOL 1806 Moodle.

Opportunity Weeks
Opportunity Weeks in BIOL 1806 are an optional way for you to continue establishing a strong foundation for yourself in CBS and at the U. During each of three Opportunity Weeks during the semester, NOL will work with campus partners to offer topical and skill-based workshops.

Similar to Choice Weeks in BIOL 1805, you will receive an email at the start of an Opportunity Week announcing the workshop titles and providing a link to RSVP.

If you have an idea for an Opportunity Week workshop you’d like us to offer, please send your idea to nol@umn.edu.
How to earn an “S” in BIOL 1806 (i.e. how to pass this course)

Earning an “S” in BIOL 1806 is straightforward: you must earn the minimum number of points in each of the two coursework categories (Writing Deadlines and Guild 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coursework Category</th>
<th>Number of Items and Points Value</th>
<th>Maximum Points Possible</th>
<th>Minimum Points Required to Pass Course</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Deadlines</td>
<td>Each Writing Deadline is worth 20 points</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assigned Writing - 10 points/submission</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• BSW Benchmark - 10 points/submission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guild Meetings (+ Biology Saves the World)</td>
<td>11 meetings @ 10 points/meeting</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100 (+ a completed BSW project from your team)</td>
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In other words: To pass BIOL 1806, you must come to all but one Guild meeting and submit work on time for all four deadlines. If you miss more than one meeting or any of the writing deadlines, you will be at risk of failing BIOL 1806.

How are points for Writing Deadlines (Assigned Writings + BSW Benchmarks) determined?

Each time you enter a writing submission in your 1806 GoogleDoc, you will receive written feedback from your SGL. Your SGL will also enter a point-value grade for the writing in Moodle based on the criteria below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed...</th>
<th>Quality of Submission</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By posted due date</td>
<td>Submission represents a “good faith effort” by answering all questions in the reflection prompt and demonstrating thoughtful engagement with the topic. Writing incorporates or responds to the three questions of metacognition: 1. What? (What happened?) 2. Now what? (What am I going to do as a result of what happened?) 3. So what? (Why does it matter? What am I going to do now that I’ve done this?)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By posted due date</td>
<td>Response does not address all questions in the reflection prompt; answers seem rushed and not carefully thought through; responses are short, incomplete, or lack obvious effort.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing entered</td>
<td>If nothing is entered by the due date, you will receive zero points for that writing deadline.</td>
<td>0</td>
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How are points for Guild Meetings determined?

Guild points are attendance-based and you are expected to attend every meeting held during the semester. When you swipe in for attendance and stay for the duration of the Guild meeting, you earn 10 points. If you must miss a Guild meeting, regardless of the reason, you receive 0 points for that meeting.
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 subject to the terms of the Scholastic Dishonesty code below.

*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.*

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

Disability Accommodations:
The University is committed to providing quality education to all students regardless of ability. Determining appropriate disability accommodations is a collaborative process. You as a student must register with the Disability Resource Center and provide documentation of your disability. The course instructor must provide information regarding a course's content, methods, and essential components. The combination of this information will be used by the Disability Resource Center to determine appropriate accommodations for a particular student in a particular course. For more information, please reference the Disability Resource Center: [https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/](https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/).

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](http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu).

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.