Seminal Research in Evolutionary Biology,
Biology BIOL-5317-002, Fall 2023

Instructor: Dr. Brent Burt  Class meeting time: TR 9:30-10:45
Class meeting place: Miller 228
Department: Biology Office: Science 222  E-mail: dbburt@sfasu.edu
Office hours: TR 11:00-12:30, W 11:00-1:00, and by appointment
Text: NA
Additional Reading: Papers from primary literature
Course online resources: see D2L

Course Description:
BIOL 5317 - Special Topics in Biology
Credit(s): 3. 3 hours lecture per week for 14 weeks. Special studies in the biological sciences.
Repeated: Yes. Non-Course Prerequisite(s): 12 hours of Biology

Course Contact Hours and Study Hours
Students have 2 primary literature papers to read each week. Papers will be discussed in each
75 min class meeting. Students are expected to spend approximately 2-3 hours to prepare
detailed notes associated with each paper. All activities average approximately 8-9 hours of work
each week.

Student Learning Outcomes (Course Competencies):
Students are evaluated based on performance on required assignments and examinations.
1. Improve scientific literature analysis skills.
2. Understand the key individuals and the associated conceptual and technical
advances in the development of the field of evolutionary biology.

Program Learning Outcomes:
Biology MS -
PLO #1. The student will demonstrate a good knowledge base in biological concepts.
PLO #2. The student will clearly articulate scientific information in written and oral forms.

Course Requirements and Grading Policy:
Each week students will be required to participate in a discussion of a seminal paper in
evolutionary biology and then lead discussion of a more recent paper on a related topic.
For each paper students should prepare detailed notes that will have specific discussion points
and questions that will encourage group discussion. These notes must be prepared and provided
to the instructor prior to each class discussion. Preparation and participation in each class
discussion will be graded as Pass or Fail for each class meeting.

Class evaluation:
It is now departmental policy to require students to fill out online class evaluations at the
semester’s end (instructions will be provided at a later date).

Attendance Policy
Students must be present and actively participate in each discussion.

Academic Integrity (4.1)
The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct
by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty,
staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity
outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating,
plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1)
Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or
use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using,
obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (5.5)

Please copy and paste the following information regarding Withheld Grades into your syllabus. Add additional information as needed to meet your departmental or course needs.

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the coursework because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf.

Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Student Wellness and Well-Being

SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:

The Dean of Students Office (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)
www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents
936.468.7249. dos@sfasu.edu
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 29</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 21, 23</td>
<td>Thanksgiving</td>
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