



Thesis Research – BIOL 5307

M-F: SciTech 342, 352

Meeting Times: Variable

Instructor: Chris Mares

Course Description and Prerequisites:

This course enables dedicated hours for thesis writing and research activities, including written and oral communication, research design, field and/or lab work and data analyses, that will lead to a written thesis.

Prerequisites: BIOL 5306-A.

Required: Instructor Approval.

Learning Objectives

- Conduct research projects that demonstrate critical thinking and use of knowledge and skills for biological data analysis, interpretation, and communication.
- Develop and enhance written and oral communication skills through abstract writing, research posters, or PowerPoint presentations.
- Draft and develop the thesis document in preparation for future Thesis Defense.

Required Textbook and Course Material:

There are no required textbooks. Materials and guidelines will be posted on the learning management system Blackboard for course administration and assessment.

Attendance Policy:

Weekly or bi-weekly meetings will be held to discuss progress and review submitted documents with Faculty Mentor.

COURSE POLICIES

Expectations: Personal and academic integrity, to be open to new ideas, and to share in a community where individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures help one another grow intellectually, socially, and personally is always expected throughout the course. TAMUSA faculty are here to help; however, students must take responsibility for their own learning. Students should strive for a high level of academic performance and to be responsible, respectful, contributing citizens within the university and in outside communities. Above all, students should develop a love of learning that will last a lifetime, along with a life-long interest in maintaining emotional and physical wellness.

Active Participation: Students are expected to work with a high level of self-motivation. Successful students exercise initiatives and exhibit strong communication skills in working with their advisors and committee members. This course requires individual effort that is overseen by the Faculty Mentor/Committee Chair. The thesis document should be written and revised iteratively between the student and thesis advisor until the document(s) is/are ready for submission to the Thesis Committee, usually while enrolled in BIOL 5308 – Thesis III: Defense. The course should culminate with a complete draft of the thesis including a completed Introduction, Materials and Methods, an Abstract and formatted Reference List.

Assessment: There are no formal assignments in this course. In consultation with Faculty Mentor, students develop a personal work schedule with specified deliverables. Weekly or bi-weekly individual meetings will be held to discuss submitted deliverables and revise the work plan if needed. Completion of this course is determined when the Faculty Mentor approves thesis draft.

Grading:

A passing grade in this course presents as *Credit*, *No Credit*, or *In Progress*.

- *Credit* indicates that all course requirements were met, including completion of thesis draft.
- *No Credit* indicates that course requirements were not met, including failing to complete any of the course requirements.
- *In Progress* indicates that one or more of the thesis draft requirements were not met, but a completion plan is in place for the following semester. An *In Progress* designation indicates that the course can be repeated for a maximum of two additional semesters.

Blackboard and Course Communication:

Students must login regularly to both the Blackboard site and to their TAMUSA email account to keep updated on information or changes related to the class. Each student MUST have an active TAMUSA e-mail account. This will be the e-mail address that is used for any communication between you and your instructor. Students who e-mail the instructor Monday-Thursday ordinarily can expect a response within 24 hours. Students who e-mail Friday-Sunday ordinarily can expect a response by Monday morning. The preferred method of communication will always be e-mail or making an appointment (in person or virtually).

Course Schedule:

In consultation with the Faculty Mentor, the student will develop a work schedule for the course. There are three timeline options to follow in this course.

Date	Tasks
Week 1	Meet with advisor and prepare a writing and research schedule.
Week 2–12	Begin/continue research activities. Prepare the thesis draft via iterative sections for submission to the Faculty Mentor for review.
Week 15–16	Finalize Thesis draft (Introduction, Materials and Methods, Abstract, Reference List (initiated) Results (if applicable), Discussion (if applicable).