Online Course Information

Instructor:

Prof. Mark E. Hauber, Dept. of Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior, School of Integrative Biology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Email: mhauber@illinois.edu
Office Hours: By appointment only through ZOOM (please send me an email 3-4 days in advance of wanting to talk).

Catalogue Description: The biological study of sexual reproduction, through the survey of molecular and physiological processes and with reference to the function, ecology, behavior, and evolution of sexual and asexual reproduction in human societies and other organisms. Using student-driven library-research, and written and verbal team presentations on primary data papers, the course also explores scientific methods of originating, analyzing, interpreting, and writing up sex-focused scientific data.
Credit: 3 hours.
Letter grade only.

Expanded Description: Cloning and other mechanisms of asexual reproduction are extremely efficient evolutionary—they generate a perfect genetic copy of the parental genome. Yet, sexual reproduction is the norm of breeding in most biological lineages, including the human species. This course will try to answer the so-called “conundrum of the ubiquity of sexual reproduction”, through lectures, readings, research projects, and discussions on the molecular and physiological processes, and the function, ecology, behavior, and evolution of sexual (and asexual) reproduction in human societies, animals, plants, and other uni- and multicellular lineages. We will introduce you to the scientific method and its presentation, the structure of a scientific paper, use a dedicated text book, readings from the primary data-driven scientific literature, an essay-writing exercise, and a team-based library research presentation project to provide our own biological conclusions on whether and why so many questions remain about sexual reproduction.

This course is not required for the IB major. This is an approved General Education course.

Course Structure: A weekly basis of 2 × 1.5 hrs of asynchronous lectures, plus optional ZOOM discussions, office hours, student readings and quizzes (for bonus points).

Prerequisite: Organismal and Evolutionary Biology (IB 150, 4 cr hr).

Learning outcomes include (1) classifying the proximate and ultimate patterns and causes of biological diversity, form, and function in sexual reproduction, (2) analyzing the healthy biology and pathology of sexual processes in humans, (3) solving quantitative questions using an instructor-provided data set, and (4) comprehending, synthesizing, and evaluating readings from the primary scientific data literature within peer reviewed papers on sex-research and reproductive biology.

Course Type and Schedule: Online, 2nd half of Spring semester.
Syllabus for IB 210: The Biology of Sex: From Molecules to Societies


**Course Web Site:** Materials and quizzes & exams for the course will be posted on the course Moodle site: [https://learn.illinois.edu](https://learn.illinois.edu)

**Exams and Grading**

**Course Grading Philosophy**

1) The standard 90, 80, 70, 60% scores are used as starting cutoff points for A, B, C, and D grades, respectively, with options for plus letter grades (e.g., A+, B+), but not minus letter grades.

2) Reading assignments for the course are provided on the course schedule. **The expectation is that you will have read this material before each week of the course.** Material from the text will be covered quickly and used as a starting point to explore topics in more detail in the online lectures.

3) There will be two non-cumulative exams, one writing assignment to summarize an original data paper from the peer-reviewed literature, and one team-based oral research presentation accompanying a powerpoint or Zoom slide show (25% each). As per University of Illinois requirement, we are obliged to check your identity as part of online courses. Exams can be made up only with proper excuse and documentation. If you are ill, you need a doctor's or McKinley or other health-provider letter – a note from the Emergency Dean does not substitute for a doctor’s excuse. You must contact Dr. Hauber before the exam or as soon as possible after the exam to ensure that your absence is excused and that a makeup exam or other accommodation can be arranged.

**Grading and Point Allocation**

**2 Exams** – 50% (each 25%), non-cumulative based on multiple-choice, fill-in the gap, annotate-the-graph, and short-answer questions (30 min duration each) on comprehending major themes in sexual reproductive biology. Please contact Dr. Hauber via email if you need time-accommodation.

**1 Synopsis Writing Exercise** – 25%, a synopsis-and-critique style assignment to evaluate one of three brief primary, peer-reviewed, data papers related to the topic of Darwinian sexual selection theory, selected by each student, 2 pages in length. This is an original writing project based on a short and generally accessible primary data paper published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. The three alternative articles include these publications:


**1 Oral and Slide Presentation** – 25%, a project to generate a 10-slide long and narrated presentation from synthesizing and analyzing primary, hypothesis-and-prediction driven data papers identified as the result of your own conduct of library and literature research on one of 10 topics assigned by the instructor, on healthy or pathological human sexual biology. Your topics might include the following: Are men more talkative than women or vice versa: assessing the experimental evidence from the published literature. Assortative mating by HLA haplotypes in
humans: is there a western-science bias? Asexual reproduction is the norm of reproduction only in rotifers: alternative explanations.

Contesting Grades
Students who have questions regarding a grade in the course should confer directly with the instructor within one week of receiving the graded assignment. To contest a specific grade, you must submit a written statement (preferably via email) of what you believe was graded incorrectly and why the grade should be altered. No oral contesting of grades will be considered, nor will the instructor consider any contest of grades submitted after one week of posting.

Students who also believe the grade awarded is demonstrably improper by reason of capricious or arbitrary grading should confer with the Associate Director of Academic Affairs in the School of Integrative Biology. Students who are unable through such discussion to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution may file a written appeal with the Capricious Grading Committee of the School of Integrative Biology, in accordance with the Student Code. Prompt attention to these concerns is important. The appeal must be filed within six working weeks after the start of the next semester. Students may obtain the name of the committee chairperson from the school office.

For further information, refer to §3-107 of the Student Code: https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article3/part1/3-107/

Disabilities Statement
If you require special accommodations, please contact Dr. Hauber via email as soon as possible. All accommodations will follow the procedures as stated in Article 1-110 of the Student Code (http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part1_1-110.html). To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603 (V/TTY), or e-mail a message to disability@illinois.edu.

Code of Civil Class Conduct:
Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the campus Student Code: https://studentcode.illinois.edu. This class will explore numerous sensitive topics and gender-based experiences outside of what your personal experiences may be. Because of this it is important to remember to discuss these subjects with the civility and respect. Any behavior determined not to comply with the Student Code will result in dismissal from the synchronous discussion group and further infractions may result in dismissal from the course. As a reminder, the Campus Integrity Statement states: “The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign expects its faculty, staff, students and guests to conduct themselves in accordance with the community values of civility, respect, and honesty; to maintain the highest level of integrity and exercise critical judgment in all dealings, decisions and encounters; and to maintain and strengthen the public’s trust and confidence in our institution.” You will receive three warnings if your language and comments are divisive or offensive. After these warnings you will receive a 0 on assignments in which your comments are deemed inappropriate. What does it mean to be divisive or offensive? The list includes: personal attacks, false statements with no basis in fact, demeaning someone's experience, belittling language, broad generalizations and stereotyping, amongst others. If you could not find a credible source to support something you are trying to state as a scientific finding, it is likely in this category.
**Academic Integrity** is essential to maintaining a learning environment that promotes excellence. We expect that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. We adhere to the academic misconduct guidelines outlined by the Student Code of Conduct and will report any suspected academic misconduct using the FAIR system. Please see [http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part4_1-402.html](http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part4_1-402.html) for additional details. If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact Dr. Hauber.

### Tentative Course Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of 2021</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Topic and Weekly Discussion (participate in 1 of 4 weekly synchronous Discussion times posted)</th>
<th>Optional Text Book Readings (Mills 2018).</th>
<th>Compulsory readings (articles will be available on Moodle website); complete before weekly discussion session and fortnightly quiz</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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