

IB 492: Career and Skill Development in IB

Spring 2022 Syllabus

Course Overview

- 2 credit hours
- 3:00-4:50 pm Thursday, 2090 Natural History Building
- Prerequisite: IB 203 or IB 271, or consent of instructor. Junior and senior Integrative Biology (IB) majors only or graduate students within IB.
- Our Learning Management System (LMS) for IB 492 will be Moodle and our course site can be found by visiting learn.illinois.edu.
- Instructors:
 - Allison O'Dwyer (she/her), Instructor, School of Integrative Biology
 - Office: Natural History Bldg. Room 2012
 - Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom
 - aodwyer@illinois.edu
 - Christina Swanson (she/her), Career Connections, School of Integrative Biology
 - Office: Natural History Bldg. Room 2002D
 - Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom
 - sillima2@illinois.edu

Course Description

A successful career in the sciences requires tools and skills for communicating research, such as how to master the scientific literature and how to write scientifically as informed scientists to broad audiences. IB 492 helps to build these skills while also developing professional skills to better compete for positions in professional school, jobs in industry, non-profit, or government. Students will also explore career options available with an IB degree. This course is designed to teach students these skills with targeted in and out of class exercises. This course can count toward graduate credit with a required online project component.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- construct informed decisions about the next steps in career development and the requirements necessary for a variety of career opportunities in integrative biology.
- develop scholarship tools and techniques for critical reading and effective communication of scientific literature to a variety of audiences.
- apply strategies for effective applications for grants, job positions, and professional schools.
- critically evaluate peers on their construction of career milestone activities such as draft application materials.

Textbooks

There are no formal textbooks for this course. Rather, please refer to the required weekly readings and optional books of interest, websites, and e-Reserve information all listed and linked in the overview of each weekly module on Moodle.

Grading

Grade Distributions

Category	Undergraduate credit	Graduate credit
Pre-Class Lessons	25%	15%
Community Participation	25%	25%
Assignments	30%	30%
SciComm Presentations	20%	10%
Portfolio Project (graduate credit only)	N/A	20%

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage
A+, A, A-	97-100, 94-96.5, 90-93.5
B+, B, B-	87-89.5, 84-86.5, 80-83.5
C+, C, C-	77-79.5, 74-76.5, 70-73.5,
D+, D, D-	67-69.5, 64-66.5, 60-63.5
F	Below 59.5

Course Components

This is a **2 credit hour** course. You should plan to spend between **6-8 hours** on this course each week. Graduate credit is awarded for this course upon completion of the Portfolio Project as described below.

Each week will begin with a weekly overview on Moodle, which will explain what the weekly module is about, what learning goals you are expected to achieve, and in what activities you will participate. Due dates of specific assignments appear on each week's Moodle overview page. All components are worth 100 points (unless otherwise noted), with their respective weights shown in the "Grading" section of the syllabus. Course instructional activities are explained in greater detail below:

Pre-Class Lessons: Each module will contain a list of assigned readings/resources. Questions to complete before class will accompany these readings/resources and will be graded in the Pre-Class Lessons category. Expectations for student work in the lessons include evidence of critical thinking on the reading/resource content--a good faith effort to reflect on the questions. This space in the weekly module is mainly for students to think critically and creatively about the content--be prepared to write here! Feel free to post out in the Moodle Q & A Forum for further clarification.

Community Participation: Community participation in any learning environment is essential to your commitment to engagement with a course. Each week on Thursdays from 3pm-4:50pm there will be an in-person class meeting. These sessions will typically involve a series of group activities/discussions, based on the weekly Pre-Class Lessons. Thus it is essential that students complete the weekly reading/resources before coming to our weekly meetings. These meetings will sometimes bring in a guest lecturer from UIUC, industry, or governmental organizations. You are required to attend and meaningfully participate in all of these sessions (the lowest score will be dropped). Active participation includes being prepared with required pre-reading content, providing feedback to peers, speaking and listening in groups, and asking questions of peers and speakers.

Assignments: All assignments will be submitted via Moodle--be sure to see each week's instructional activity schedule for due dates. Categories of assignments due:

1. Orientation Activities (due Week 1)
2. Career Prep Milestones (Job Requirements Report, CV, Personal Statement, Email to Mentor, Mock Interview)
3. In-class Activities (short answer discussion questions, group activities, etc.)

SciComm Presentations: The ability for clear, effective science writing and communications in general is paramount to the field of science. In most weekly meetings we will have 5-min SciComm mini-presentations from students to hone skills on how to effectively communicate so that the audience is better informed and engaged. Students will be responsible for 3-4 presentations per semester and will be peer-reviewed using the SciComm Presentation Rubric which is collaboratively created by students. Students will use Moodle to select their preferred presentation dates and topics.

Graduate Portfolio Project: All students taking IB 492 for graduate credit are required to complete a semester-long Portfolio Project showcasing deeper research into their individualized next career steps. Using instructor and peer feedback, this project will include expansions of weekly course assignments toward the creation of a portfolio showcasing the next steps in a student’s career development. This project is scaffolded for students weekly within our course Moodle page and all required project components can be completed online, typically taking 1-2 hours per week for completion. For the final Portfolio Project, students will submit a 5 min presentation video via Illinois Media Space which is then peer-assessed via Moodle using the Portfolio Project Rubric. Instructors will meet with students to check progress at predetermined times as listed in the course schedule.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week (Date)	Topic	Major Assignments Due
1 (Jan 20)	Introductions; Guest Lecture: Biosciences Librarian Kelli Trei, <i>“Mastering the Scientific Literature”</i>	-Orientation Activities
2 (Jan 27)	Digesting Scientific Literature	-Week 2 Lesson
3 (Feb 3)	Effective Science Communication; Guest Content: AAAS Award-Winning Entomology Professor, Esther Ngmubi, <i>“Scientists Need to Talk to the Public”</i>	-Week 3 Lesson -Create a SciComm Presentation Rubric
4 (Feb 10)	Career Opportunities; Guest Lecture: SIB Career Connections Guest Lecture: “What Can You Do with a BS/MS Degree Besides Grad/Med School?”	-Week 4 Lesson -SciComm Presentations -Grad Credit Only: Portfolio Project Meeting 1 (complete all required components before meeting)
5 (Feb 17)	Next Steps Career Research and Report	-Week 5 Lesson -SciComm Presentations -Next Step Requirements Report
6 (Feb 24)	Job Applications; Mastering the Cover Letter and CV	-Week 6 Lesson -SciComm Presentations -CV Draft
7 (Mar 3)	Job Applications; Mastering the Cover Letter and CV (con’t)	-Week 7 Lesson -SciComm Presentations -CV Final
8 (Mar 10)	TBD (based on student need and interest)	-SciComm Presentations -Grad Credit Only: Portfolio Project Meeting 2
9 (Mar 24)	Characteristics of Scientific Writing	-Week 9 Lesson -SciComm Presentations

10 (Mar 31)	Personal Statement Writing Workshop	-Week 10 Lesson -SciComm Presentations -Personal Statement/Job Letter Draft
11 (Apr 7)	Personal Statement Writing Workshop	-Week 11 Lesson -SciComm Presentations -Personal Statement/Job Letter Final
12 (Apr 14)	Career Development Skills: Connecting with Mentors	-Week 12 Lesson -Email Draft to Mentor -Grad Credit Only: Portfolio Project Meeting 3
13 (Apr 21)	Successful Interview Strategies	-Week 13 Lesson -SciComm Presentations
14 (Apr 28)	Mock Interviews	-Mock Interviews -Grad Credit Only: Portfolio Project
15 (May 5)	Mock Interviews	-Mock Interviews
16 (May 12)	Finals Week (no class)	-Grad Credit Only: Portfolio Project Peer-Review

Accommodations

To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students should contact both the instructors and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible (<https://www.disability.illinois.edu>). You can contact DRES at 1207 S. Oak Street, Champaign, (217) 333-1970, or via email at disability@illinois.edu.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

In forming an inclusive course, we mean a course that values and creates space for all identities such as those based on ethnicity, culture, sexual identity, gender identity, religious identity and beyond. Research shows that inclusive courses allow for better learning outcomes, a more positive learning experience, better community, and better leadership training in engaging humanity.

In order to create an inclusive space in this course, we must all work to collaboratively create a safe and respected space that supports and encourages everyone to share their views and concerns. We must value multiple perspectives and experiences, while also reducing student experiences of marginalization. We must treat each other as individuals.

Students are encouraged to share any feedback on how instructors, TAs, or fellow students could work to better create this inclusive space. Feedback can be given to the instructors at any time, anonymously using our Inclusivity Feedback Form on Moodle (you may need to access this form via your [Illinois Google Apps account](#), but know that the form is still anonymous).

Attendance

We realize that you have a life beyond the scope of this course. However, if you are unable to complete an assignment/attend class because of other obligations, you should notify the instructors ahead of time. It is good practice to prepare/post any assignments early before a planned absence.

Regular class attendance is expected of all students, but the lowest participation score for class attendance will be dropped to allow for extenuating circumstances. Again, students should inform instructors in advance of

missing class and generally adhere to the guidelines specified in the UIUC Student Code (http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part5_1-501.html).

Instructor Responses and Office Hours

Grades will be posted within 3 business days after the due date.

Questions posted via email or to the Course Q & A forum generally will be answered within 48 hours. If possible, students are encouraged to answer questions posted by other students to the Course Q & A forum, rather than waiting for an instructor's response.

Another way to communicate with the instructors is to make use of the virtual office hours. The instructors will be available for office hours via Zoom by scheduled appointment. Email your instructors to set up a time.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Examples of academic dishonesty include the following:

- Cheating
- Fabrication
- Facilitating infractions of academic integrity
- Plagiarism
- Bribes, favors, and threats
- Academic interference
- Examination by proxy
- Grade tampering
- Non-original works

Should an incident arise in which a student is thought to have violated academic integrity, the student will be processed under the disciplinary policy set forth in the [Illinois Academic Integrity Policy, using the FAIR system](#). If you do not understand relevant definitions of academic infractions, contact your instructors for an explanation within the first week of class.