

## **BIOL 4389-120, SPECIAL TOPICS in BIOLOGY**

Fall 2017 rev. 08.11.2017

Texas A&M University-Central Texas

### **INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Instructor:** Dr. Linh Pham, Assistant Professor of Chemistry

**Office:** TAMUCT WH 406

**Phone:** 254-519-8012 (office)

**Email:** [linhpham@tamuct.edu](mailto:linhpham@tamuct.edu)

**Time/Day:** TR 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

**Where:** Warrior Hall 413

#### **Office Hours:**

MW 2:30 pm – 5:30 pm or by appointment

Please e-mail me to set up a time in advance.

#### **Mode of instruction and course access:**

This course meets face-to-face, (with supplemental materials made available online).

This course uses the A&M-Central Texas Canvas Learning Management System

[<https://tamuct.instructure.com>].

#### **Student-instructor interaction:**

*I encourage my students to go to my office hours whenever you have questions. If students cannot make it to my office hours, don't hesitate to contact me by email [linhpham@tamuct.edu](mailto:linhpham@tamuct.edu) for an appointment. I will reply within 24 hours, usually within couples of hours on weekdays. Response time may vary in weekends and holidays.*

#### **911 Cellular:**

Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University – Central Texas

911Cellular is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in 911 Cellular through their myCT email account.

Connect at [911Cellular](https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management) [<https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management>] to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in 911Cellular, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

## COURSE INFORMATION

### Course Overview and description:

Extensive study and research on a particular topic of student interest under the supervision of a faculty member. The student is required to submit a written proposal which includes a description of the project, its duration, educational goals, method of evaluation, and number of credits to be earned.

Prerequisite: Matriculated students only, permission of instructor.

### Course Objective:

### Student Learning Outcomes:

#### *Students will:*

1. Understand the procedures of scientific research
2. Be able to formulate a question based on observation
3. Design and implement an experiment to test a hypothesis
4. Be able to disseminate research data orally and through a written report
5. Master basic laboratory techniques for future endeavors

### Required Reading and Textbook(s):

- Reading materials will be distributed by instructor

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Requirements: (include point values for each- not just a percentage)

Requirements	Percentage	Points
Assignments	20%	200
Oral presentation	20%	200
Written thesis report	60%	600
Total	100%	1000

### Grading Criteria Rubric and Conversion

**A 4.00 (90 +)** Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.

**B 3.00 (80-89%)** Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.

**C 2.00 (70–79%)** Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.

**D 1.00 (60–69%)** Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully course requirements.

**F 0.00 (<60%)** Represents failure and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an “I” (incomplete).

**I (Incomplete)** The “I” shall be assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances, the student was prevented from completing the work of the course on time. The assignment of an “I” requires a written agreement between the instructor

and student specifying the time and manner in which the student will complete the course requirements. In no event may any such written agreement allow a period of longer than one year to complete the course requirements. For graduate and professional students, an “I” is to remain on the transcript until changed by the instructor or department. For all other students, work to make up an I must be submitted within one year of the last day of final examinations of the term in which the “I” was given; if not submitted by that time, then the “I” will automatically change to an F. *To obtain an incomplete you must have been doing passing work in the course*

### **Posting of Grades**

- Student grades will be posted on the Canvas Grade book.
- The turn-around time for grades is as follows:  
For short assignments such as discussions, lab notebook reports and homework: 5-7 days.  
For thesis report: 7-10 days.

### **COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR**

The following schedule gives the chapters and problems covered. Modification and corrections may be made during the course of the semester.

#### **Complete Course Calendar**

##### **Import University Dates:**

August 28, Add/Drop/Late Registration begins  
August 30, Add/Drop/Late Registration ends, 16-week and 1st 8-week classes  
September 1, Priority Deadline to Submit Graduation Application  
September 4, Labor Day, CAMPUS CLOSED  
September 5, Last day to drop 1st 8-week classes with no record  
September 13, Last day to drop 16-week classes with no record  
September 22, Last day to drop a 1st 8-week class with a Q or withdraw with a W  
October 6, Deadline to submit graduation  
October 20, Last day to withdraw from the University (1st 8-week classes WF)  
October 23, Add/Drop/Late Registration begins, 2nd 8-week classes  
October 26, Add/Drop/Late Registration ends, 2nd 8-week classes  
October 30, Last day to drop 2nd 8-week classes with no record  
November 10, Veteran’s Day  
November 10, Last day to drop with a Q or withdraw with a W (16-week classes)  
November 17, Last day to drop a 2nd 8-week class with a Q or withdraw with a W  
November 23-24, Thanksgiving, CAMPUS CLOSED  
December 15, Last day to withdraw from the University (16-week and 2nd 8-week classes)  
December 15, Last day to file for Degree Conferral (Registrar’s Office)  
December 15, Commencement  
December 25-January 1, WINTER BREAK

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT**

### **Technology Requirements.**

This course will use the A&M-Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system. Logon to A&M-Central Texas Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>].

Username: Your MyCT username (xx123 or everything before the "@" in your MyCT e-mail address)

Password: Your MyCT password

### **Technology Support.**

For log-in problems, students should contact Help Desk Central.

24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

Email: [helpdesk@tamu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamu.edu)

Phone: (254) 519-5466

[Web Chat](http://hdc.tamu.edu): [<http://hdc.tamu.edu>]

*Please let the support technician know you are an A&M-Central Texas student.*

For issues with **Canvas**, select "chat with Canvas support," submit a support request to Canvas Tier 1, or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953, links to all are found inside of Canvas using the "Help" link.

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

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## **UNIVERSITY RESOURCES, PROCEDURES, AND GUIDELINES**

### **Drop Policy.**

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a [Drop Request Form](https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf) [[https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop\\_Request\\_Form.pdf](https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf)].

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the University Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

### **Academic Integrity.**

Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic

misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

### **Academic Accommodations.**

At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information please visit our [Access & Inclusion](https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/access-inclusion) webpage [https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/access-inclusion].

Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. For more information, please visit <https://www.tamuct.departments/index.php>. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these [requirements and guidelines online](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf), please visit the website [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf].

### **Tutoring.**

Tutoring is available to all A&M-Central Texas students, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111. If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Larry Davis at [lmDavis@tamuct.edu](mailto:lmDavis@tamuct.edu).

Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables A&M-Central Texas students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over forty subject areas. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.

### **The University Writing Center.**

Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10am-5pm Monday-Thursday with satellite hours in the University Library on Mondays from 6:00-9:00pm. Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the

UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available) or by making an appointment via [WCOOnline](https://tamuct.mywconline.com/) [https://tamuct.mywconline.com/]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at [bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu](mailto:bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu) to schedule an online tutoring session. Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is here to help!

If you have any questions about the University Writing Center, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at [bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu](mailto:bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu).

### **University Library.**

The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at A&M-Central Texas are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the A&M-Central Texas main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our [Library website](https://tamuct.libguides.com/) [https://tamuct.libguides.com/].

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### **OPTIONAL POLICY STATEMENTS:**

#### **A Note about Sexual Violence at A&M-Central Texas**

Sexual violence is a serious safety, social justice, and public health issue. The university offers support for anyone struggling with these issues. University faculty are mandated reporters, so if someone discloses that they were sexually assaulted (or a victim of Domestic/Dating Violence

or Stalking) while a student at A&M-Central Texas, faculty members are required to inform the Title IX Office. If you want to discuss any of these issues confidentially, you can do so through Counseling Services (254-501-5956) located on the second floor of Warrior Hall.

Sexual violence can occur on our campus because predators often feel emboldened, and victims often feel silenced or shamed. It is incumbent on ALL of us to find ways to actively create environments that tell predators we don't agree with their behaviors and tell survivors we will support them. Your actions matter. Don't be a bystander; be an agent of change. For additional information on campus policy and resources visit the [Title IX webpage](https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/compliance/titleix.php) [https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/compliance/titleix.php].

### **INSTRUCTOR POLICIES.**

**Read these carefully as I am strict with my policies.**

**Grading Policy and Point Breakdown.** Grades in this course will be criteria-based on a number of activities including exams, assignments, lab reports, and attendance. This means that grades will not be curved and anyone achieving a 90% or above will receive an A in this course.

**Grade Dispute Policy.** Grading disputes must be put in writing (with justification such as supporting statements from the text or another credible source) and given to me no earlier than 24 hours after the assignment has been returned. I will consider your request carefully, but reserve the right to adjust your grade up or down.

**Late Assignments.** I expect all assignments to be turned in on time. Late assignments interfere with my ability to provide timely, detailed feedback, as well as with your ability to learn and process new material. Accordingly, any unauthorized late assignment will receive a 5% reduction in grade for each day it is late. No assignments will be accepted after it has been graded and returned.

**Exams.** The exams will be a mixture of multiple choices and short answers, designed to provoke reflection, critical thought, and application of knowledge. You will receive a list of several samples or real exam questions ahead of time. You are encouraged to prepare for the exam by reviewing reading materials, outlining a draft of a response, and discussing these thoughts with your peers. You will then demonstrate your individual, integrated thoughts on the topic in a closed-book exam during the class period.

**Missed exams.** If you know you will miss an exam, please contact me BEFORE the exam. I will gladly give make-up exams if the student has an unavoidable reason for missing the exam (i.e. death in the family, severe illness). Keep in mind that I will expect documentation of your reason for missing the exam (e.g. doctor's note, obituary notice). Exams must be made up within a week of the original scheduled date, no exceptions regardless of excuse.

**What I expect of you.** To get the most out of this class, you are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner, which includes contributing to class discussions, being punctual, and notifying me of absences in advance.

**Class Attendance.** I expect that you attend each class session and arrive on time. If an unavoidable situation arises that prevents you from attending class, I expect that you also promptly contact me to discuss the missed material and get the notes from a classmate. I will

not distribute my notes to students as they are often abbreviated and do not contain the detail needed to sufficiently understand the material.

**What you can expect of me.** You can expect me to start and end class on time, be available through office hours, e-mail, and by appointment, be responsive to student suggestions for course improvement, answer questions to the fullest extent possible and/or direct you to appropriate resources, return graded assignments and exams within a reasonable time frame, and treat you with respect as future colleagues.

**Discussion.** The topics in this class encompass a diversity of issues that merit in-depth thought and discussion. Since individuals will be expressing their opinions, I expect that will you respect others' contributions, as you would want them to do for you.

**Credits and Workload expectations.** For undergraduate courses, one credit is defined as equivalent to an average of two hours of learning effort per week (over a full semester) necessary for an average student to receive an average grade for the course. A student taking a four-credit class that meets for four hours a week should expect to spend an additional eight hours a week outside the classroom in order to earn an average grade.

**Class Structure.** Classes will involve a balance of active lecture and engaging learning activities. I believe that students learn the theories and concepts much better when they have an active role. I know that this may be new to some of you, but please keep an open mind and I know that you will get more out of this class because of it.

**Copyright Notice.**

Students should assume that all course material is copyrighted by the respective author(s). Reproduction of course material is prohibited without consent by the author and/or course instructor. Violation of copyright is against the law and Texas A&M University-Central Texas' Code of Academic Honesty. All alleged violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

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