Basic Course Information

Instructor: Dr. Sam Donovan  
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Course Description: Teaching biology is a complex and multi-faceted challenge. It requires the integration of deep disciplinary knowledge with a functional understanding of learning theory and the development of practical skills for working with students. Teaching Biological Sciences is designed to help you explore multiple strategies for effective teaching and learning and refine your own understanding of biology through efforts to become a better science communicator. The course has both seminar and project based components. You are encouraged to coordinate your work in this course with existing teaching opportunities but this is not required.

Class Meetings: 4:00 - 5:50 PM Thursdays in room A214 Langley Hall.

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 1-2PM in 358 Langley Bridge  
I am also available by appointment. Just send me an email suggesting several possible meeting times.

Course Materials: We will be working with a combination of papers, book chapters and curriculum resources this semester. The materials will either be handed out, posted to course web, or available online.

The majority of this course will involve group projects driven by student interests and we will use the QUBESHub collaborative environment to organize ourselves. [https://qubeshub.org/groups/pittunitygroup]

The attached schedule describes the background work that we will do in the first three weeks of class to get started. Our first project will be done in collaboration with students at Unity College. For a second project you will each pursue a focused product that you will be able to include in your teaching portfolio. Additional details about these project will be provided as we work on them.

Updated 1/8/2015
# Initial Course Schedule

| Week 1  | 1/8/15 | TOPIC: Introductions and Orientation to the Seminar  
DISCUSSION: What does one study in a course on teaching?  
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| Week 2  | 1/15/15 | TOPIC: Innovations in Teaching Undergraduate Biology  
DISCUSSION: Group Project Introduction |
| Week 3  | 1/22/15 | TOPIC: What Do We Know About Learning?  
ASSIGNMENT: Bring your group project idea paragraph to class. |
| Week 4-9 |  | Collaborative project with students at Unity College. |
| Week 10  | 3/12/15 | NO CLASS – Spring Break |
| Week 11-15 |  | Work on individual project with final presentations scheduled for the last day of class. |
| Week 16  | 4/23/15 | FINALS WEEK – All written material must be submitted by the end of the week. |
Course & University Policies

Grading: Course grades will be determined based on the following criteria.

- Seminar preparation and participation = 50 points
- Contributions to group project = 20 points
- Individual project = 30 points
- Total possible points = 100 points

Letter grades will be assigned using the following categories.

- A: 90-100%
- B: 80-89%
- C: 70-79%
- D: 60-69%
- F: 59% and below

Academic Integrity Policy: Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity ([http://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html](http://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html)) will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the assignment will be imposed.

Missed Assignments: The schedule presented for completing assignments is designed to help you pace your work and provide opportunities for feedback. Regularly missing deadlines will likely have a negative impact on your grade.

Email Communications: Each student is issued a university e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. Please use your university email address when contacting your instructor.

Disability Resources: If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services reviews documentation related to a student's disability, provides verification of the disability, and recommends reasonable accommodations for specific courses.

Additional Considerations: The instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule or other aspects of this syllabus during the semester in order to best meet the educational objectives of the course. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class and posted prominently on Courseweb.

Updated 1/8/2015