



BIOL3630

Special Interest Topics in Biology

Session 2, Infrequent attendance, North Ryde 2020

Department of Biological Sciences

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Disclaimer

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Notice

As part of [Phase 3 of our return to campus plan](#), most units will now run tutorials, seminars and other small group learning activities on campus for the second half-year, while keeping an online version available for those students unable to return or those who choose to continue their studies online.

To check the availability of face-to-face and online activities for your unit, please go to [timetable viewer](#). To check detailed information on unit assessments visit your unit's iLearn space or consult your unit convenor.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff Ken Cheng ken.cheng@mq.edu.au
Credit points 10
Prerequisites Permission by special approval
Corequisites
Co-badged status
Unit description Students with a special interest in a particular area of biology may be permitted to enrol in this unit. Students work with an academic mentor to pursue literature-based research on a selected topic in biological sciences. It is necessary for the student to contact the coordinator and arrange for a staff member to supervise their readings and topic development. Assessment is based on two literature reviews, or equivalent, plus a seminar. Students taking this unit must be able to undertake self-directed and independent study.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- ULO1:** Utilise data mining techniques and skills to comprehensively and rigorously research a topic (or topics) from the primary scientific literature
- ULO2:** Evaluate, synthesise, and assess the evidence presented in scientific literature
- ULO3:** Communicate your understanding of a topic using written scientific conventions
- ULO4:** Discuss and explore, via oral presentation, the most important data, results, and conclusions from the primary scientific literature

General Assessment Information

Assessment descriptions

Information of each of the assessment tasks and how they will be assessed is provided on the Unit's iLearn page. A brief summary of each assessment is provided below:

Early Semester Task (2%)

Word limit: By arrangement with supervisor Due date: Week 3, by **11:59 pm on Sunday 16 August**

Write one or two paragraphs summarising a key paper. The main aim of the assessment is to provide some early feedback on writing, including aspects of correctness, comprehensibility, and style. The student will be provided feedback as to whether substantial practice to improve writing is needed.

Essays (40% each)

Word limit: 2500 words (each essay), not including title page, references, boxes, tables, and figure captions

Due dates: Essay 1 – Week 8, by **11:59 pm on Sunday 4 October**; Essay 2 – Week 12 by **11:59 pm on Sunday 1 November**

Students will submit two essays (Essay 1 and Essay 2) on two, possibly related topics. Marking criteria are provided in a separate document. For each essay, students will be assessed on coverage and comprehension of the literature relevant to the chosen topic, critical evaluation of the material, and style and writing.

The essays will be independently assessed by the supervisor and at least one other member of staff with relevant expertise. More staff may be co-opted to act as independent assessors if required.

Oral presentation (18%): online via zoom

Time limit: 15 minutes, plus 5 minutes of question time Due date: Week 13; date and time to be determined (see iLearn page)

Whether it be at scientific meetings or conferences, in schools, or in boardrooms, oral presentations are a time-honoured way of disseminating information and reporting results to an audience. **Each student will be expected to present a seminar of 20 minutes in duration (15 mins talk + 5 mins for questions/discussion).**

This will be your chance to argue your point of view and discuss the evidence in front of an audience. With only 15 minutes, it is important to structure your talk well, keeping the structure simple, but logical. Do not try to cram everything you have learned about the topic into 15 minutes. For a 15-minute presentation you should be looking at no more than a dozen PowerPoint slides (+ 1 slide showing references).

You will need to carefully evaluate and present only **essential, important, and relevant materials, especially illustrations**, in an organised and logical sequence. The best seminars are those that are simple to comprehend, logically organised, clearly illustrated, and infotaining! The seminar is worth 18% of your final mark and so we expect high-quality work, especially in terms of scientific evaluation, factual correctness, relevance, and clarity. Seminars will be presented to an audience consisting of at least 2 staff members. Relevant postdocs, postgrads,

and MRes students will also be invited to attend. Other students completing BIOL3630 will also be present (online).

All students will need to present their seminar using their own computer. Marks will be allocated for scientific content, interpretation, logical flow and organisation, presentational quality, both oral and visual, adequate acknowledgement of relevant sources, and ability to answer audience questions. See the rubric for the seminar presentation on iLearn.

Assignment submission

All written assessments are to be submitted via the **Turnitin Assignment submission** section on the unit's iLearn page. You should also email a copy of the assessment to the Convenor (ken.cheng@mq.edu.au) and your supervisor. Sometimes, the turnitin upload may get stuck in cyberspace.

Turnitin is a plagiarism-detection software. It compares each submission to most other electronic sources, including the work of your classmates or of previous students from Macquarie and other universities, web sites, and published material available on the Internet, such as electronic journal articles and book chapters. The results will be analysed with reference to the University's Policy on Academic Honesty.

Extensions and penalties

The deadlines for assignments are not negotiable. **Late assignments will be penalised:** 5% off the mark allocated for essays will be deducted per day or any part of a day for any work that is submitted after the due date. Extensions are granted only on grounds of illness or misadventure, and appropriate supporting documentation must be submitted. All applications for special consideration or extension must be sought *before the due date* unless this is absolutely impossible. **All applications for extensions of deadlines must be submitted via the University's online system.**

Work submitted after 2 weeks beyond the due date, or beyond the date for which an extension has been given, will not be accepted. If you are having problems completing an assignment, please contact the unit Convenor as soon as possible.

Student Feedback and Evaluation

As this is a small unit, there should be a considerable amount of contact between the student and her/his supervisor. This contact can be face to face or via electronic communication (Skype, zoom, email). Informal feedback will be provided on a semi-regular basis. In addition, you will receive written feedback on your written assessments. In the Week 13 seminar session, there will be an opportunity to complete an anonymous unit evaluation survey. Informal evaluation of the unit in the form of suggestions or comments can be made throughout the semester either to the Convenor or to your supervisor.

Definition of Plagiarism and Departmental Policy on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is theft of another person's writing, and will not be tolerated in this, or any other unit at this University. Heavy penalties apply, including exclusion from further study. Incidences of plagiarism will, in the first instance, require an interview with the unit convenor, who may decide to pass the case on to University Disciplinary Committee.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
talk	18%	No	Week 13
essay 1	40%	No	4 October 2020
summary	2%	No	16 August 2020
essay 2	40%	No	1 November 2020

talk

Assessment Type [1](#): Presentation

Indicative Time on Task [2](#): 12 hours

Due: **Week 13**

Weighting: **18%**

conference-style oral presentation

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Utilise data mining techniques and skills to comprehensively and rigorously research a topic (or topics) from the primary scientific literature
- Evaluate, synthesise, and assess the evidence presented in scientific literature
- Discuss and explore, via oral presentation, the most important data, results, and conclusions from the primary scientific literature

essay 1

Assessment Type [1](#): Essay

Indicative Time on Task [2](#): 60 hours

Due: **4 October 2020**

Weighting: **40%**

review paper in the form of an opinion piece in the family of Current Opinion journals

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Utilise data mining techniques and skills to comprehensively and rigorously research a

topic (or topics) from the primary scientific literature

- Evaluate, synthesise, and assess the evidence presented in scientific literature
- Communicate your understanding of a topic using written scientific conventions

summary

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 5 hours

Due: **16 August 2020**

Weighting: **2%**

Write one or two paragraphs summarising a key paper for the first essay topic

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Utilise data mining techniques and skills to comprehensively and rigorously research a topic (or topics) from the primary scientific literature
- Evaluate, synthesise, and assess the evidence presented in scientific literature
- Communicate your understanding of a topic using written scientific conventions

essay 2

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 60 hours

Due: **1 November 2020**

Weighting: **40%**

review paper in the form of an opinion piece in the family of Current Opinion journals

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Utilise data mining techniques and skills to comprehensively and rigorously research a topic (or topics) from the primary scientific literature
- Evaluate, synthesise, and assess the evidence presented in scientific literature
- Communicate your understanding of a topic using written scientific conventions

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this

type of assessment

- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

This unit has only one scheduled meeting in Week 13, exact date and time to be determined. This meeting, via zoom this year, is for students to present a talk on one of their essay topics.

Students are responsible for finding a supervisor to guide them in their independent study.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be

made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to help you improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Getting help with your assignment](#)
- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Changes from Previous Offering

The Week-13 session for student talks will be online via zoom this year.