



BIOL3630

Special Interest Topics in Biology

Session 2, Online-scheduled-weekday 2022

School of Natural Sciences

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General Information

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| 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 the most important data, results, and conclusions from the primary scientific literature

General Assessment Information

Assessment descriptions

Detailed instructions on the essay/opinion pieces along with rubrics can be found on the unit's iLearn page. A summary of each assessment is provided here:

Early Semester Task (2%)

Word limit: By arrangement with supervisor

Due date: Week 3, by **11:55 pm on Sunday 14 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, abstract, references, tables, figures, and figure captions

Due dates: Essay 1 – Week 8, by **11:55 pm on Sunday 2 October**; Essay 2 – Week 12, by **11:55 pm on Sunday 30 October**

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 convenor and the supervisor. More staff may be co-opted to act as independent assessors if required.

Oral presentation (18%): 6 Wally's Walk 106, 9:00–12:00, 4 November

Time limit: 15 minutes, plus 5 minutes of question time

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.

We expect students to present live and in person unless they live far from campus. 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. Submit Word files for written work, Powerpoint slides for the talk.

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: new this year

Late penalties are now standardised across the University. Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark, out of 100) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a grade of '0' will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at **11:55 pm**. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical concern.

Extensions are granted only on grounds of illness or misadventure, and appropriate supporting documentation should 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.**

Assessment Tasks

| Name | Weighting | Hurdle | Due |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--------|-----------------|
| Essay 1 | 40% | No | 2 October 2022 |
| Essay 2 | 40% | No | 30 October 2022 |
| Short Essay | 2% | No | 14 August 2022 |
| Talk | 18% | No | 4 November 2022 |

Essay 1

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 58 hours

Due: **2 October 2022**

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
- Discuss and explore the most important data, results, and conclusions from the primary scientific literature

Essay 2

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 58 hours

Due: **30 October 2022**

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
- Discuss and explore the most important data, results, and conclusions from the primary scientific literature

Short Essay

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 5 hours

Due: **14 August 2022**

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

Talk

Assessment Type ¹: Presentation

Indicative Time on Task ²: 12 hours

Due: **4 November 2022**

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 the most important data, results, and conclusions from the primary scientific literature

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

See the unit's iLearn page for many resources provided for students.

Unit Schedule

This unit does not have any set classes. We have one scheduled oral presentation session in Week 13, Friday 4 November in 6 Wally's Walk 106.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>). 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](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

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

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/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

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and

courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

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

The Writing Centre

[The Writing Centre](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the 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

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via [AskMQ](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

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.