

1. General Course Information

Course Information

Biology 4950F – Seminars in Genetics

List of Prerequisites

A minimum grade of 70% in Biology 3596A/B and enrollment in year 4 of the Honors Specialization in Genetics, or permission of the Genetics Undergraduate Coordinator.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

List of Antirequisites

Biology 4920F/G, 4944F/G, or the former Biology 4930F/G, 4931F/G

All course material will be posted to OWL: <http://owl.uwo.ca>. Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site.

If students need assistance, they can seek support on the [OWL Help page](#). Alternatively, they can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#). They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

2. Instructor Information

Dr. Patrick McDonald (pmcdona5@uwo.ca)
(Office hours by appointment)

Students must use their Western (@uwo.ca) email addresses when contacting their instructors.

3. Course Description

Current research in genetics critically reviewed and discussed through a combination of student presentations and written assignments.

Learning Outcomes: Students will

- Participate in debates
- Deliver a formal seminar
- Write a blog and letter to the editor
- Write a term paper
- Evaluate debates, seminars
- Participate in a journal club and describe and critique a primary research paper
- Write effectively
- Perform effective searches in reputable internet sources
- Work effectively in a team
- Join the conversation and identify ethical challenges presented by advances in human genetics/genomics research and its translation to the clinic and marketplace
- Identify the science, technology, stakeholders and issues in current bioethics challenges
- Understand, discuss and debate current topics in bioethics associated with genetic/genomic technologies

4. Course Materials

Students should check OWL (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

All course material will be posted to OWL: <http://owl.uwo.ca>.

If students need assistance, they can seek support on the OWL Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

5. Methods of Evaluation

The overall course grade will be calculated as listed below:

Letter to the Editor	10%	Due Oct. 7 before 11:00 pm
Debates	15%	During class (5% first – 10% second)
Blog report	10%	Due Oct. 28 before 11:00 pm
Seminar	30%	During class starting Nov. 10
Term Paper	20%	Due Dec. 2 before 11:00 pm
Participation	15%	Evaluated throughout course

In order to pass the course, you must deliver a seminar presentation to the class and submit a term paper.

Written assignments will be submitted to Turnitin (statement in policies below).

Participation based on a combination of class engagement, professionalism, quality of evaluations, quality of questions, discussion and comprehension of material demonstrated.

Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. The table below outlines the University-wide grade descriptors.

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Accommodated Evaluations

Late assessments will be subject to a late penalty 10 %/day

An assessment cannot be submitted after it has been returned to the class; the weight will be transferred to the final grade

6. EDI statement

The pronouns used by:

- Instructor: Dr. Patrick McDonald is he (pmcdona5@uwo.ca)

7. Land acknowledgment

We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples (e.g. First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society.

More information about Indigenous Services (<https://indigenous.uwo.ca/>) and this Land Acknowledgement (<https://communications.uwo.ca/comms/land-acknowledgement/>) are available.

8. Accommodation and Accessibility

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities policy can be found at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor

if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar:

<https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (see http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/exam_schedule.html).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

9. Academic Policies

The website for Registrarial Services is <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>.

In accordance with policy, <http://www.uwo.ca/its/identity/activatenonstudent.html>, the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual’s official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at his/her official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Turnitin ***aids*** in identifying plagiarism. All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Professionalism & Privacy:

Western students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations and professional conduct apply to this course:

Students are expected to follow online etiquette expectations provided on OWL

All course materials created by the instructor(s) are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared

Recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission

Permitted recordings are not to be distributed

All recorded sessions will remain within the course site or unlisted if streamed

Online Etiquette:

Some components of this course may involve online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honour the following rules of etiquette:

- “arrive” to class on time
- use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet)
- ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of discussions in the event that a class discussion deals with sensitive or personal material
- to minimize background noise, mute your microphone for the entire class until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise
- please be prepared to turn your video camera off at the instructor’s request if the internet connection becomes unstable
- unless invited by your instructor, do not share your screen in the meeting

The course instructor will act as moderator for the class and will deal with any questions from participants. To participate please consider the following:

- If you wish to speak, use the “raise hand” function and wait for the instructor to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question.
- Please remember to unmute your microphone and turn on your video camera before speaking.
- Self-identify when speaking.
- Please remember to mute your mic and turn off your video camera after speaking (unless directed otherwise).

General considerations of “netiquette”:

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.
- Be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing.
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment. “Flaming” is never appropriate.
- Be professional and scholarly in all online postings. Use proper grammar and spelling. Cite the ideas of others appropriately.

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of Zoom-bombing a class or of other serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

10. Support Services

Please visit the Science & Basic Medical Sciences Academic Counselling webpage for information on add/drop courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters: <https://www.uwo.ca/sci/counselling/>

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 661-2147 if you have any questions regarding accommodations.

The policy on Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found here: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

The policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be found here: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf

Western University is committed to a thriving campus as we deliver our courses in the mixed model of both virtual and face-to-face formats. We encourage you to check out the Digital Student Experience website to manage your academics and well-being: <https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/>.

Learning-skills counsellors at the Student Development Centre (<http://www.sdc.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <http://westernusc.ca/services>.

The following links provide information about support services at Western University.

[Appeal Procedures](#)

[Registrarial Services](#)

[Student Development Services](#)

[Student Health Services](#)