

Biology 4920F Course Outline

1. Course Information

Course Information

Biology 4920F

Fall 2025, 3-hour tutorial per week. No formal lectures.

Forty percent of your grade is focused on work associated with Western's Community-Engaged Learning (CEL)

List of Prerequisites

Restricted to Year 4th Honours Specialization in Biology and Scholars' Electives.

If we go into another lockdown, zoom and OWL will be the primary **interface** and video recordings for assessments.

2. Instructor Information

Instructors	Email	Office	Phone	Office Hours
Dr. Graeme Taylor (Course Coordinator)	gtaylor8@uwo.ca			appointment
Dr. Katie Oates CEL Coordinator	Koates2@uwo.ca	Careers & Experience		appointment

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

Office hours are by appointment. I prefer in-person meetings, but I am also comfortable with Zoom if necessary.

3. Course Syllabus, Schedule, Delivery Mode

Course objectives and learning outcomes: This course's primary focus is to further develop the skills necessary to search, understand, synthesize, discuss, and present (both written and oral) current biology topics. After completing this course, you should be able to speak more spontaneously, instinctively, and directly with an audience and learn how to adapt the presentation's complexity for different audiences. We will also apply our skills to our community; this will be a core component of the course, facilitated by *Community Engaged Learning (CEL) at Western* (<http://experience.uwo.ca/index.html>).

Course website: An OWL website will be established for this course. Items posted to this website include required readings, videos, announcements, grades, useful URLs, and assignment instructions.

Date	Scheduled Topics	Assignment Due	Assig. value
	Introductions & CEL		
	Prep for presentations	CEL partner assigned	
	Discussion on writing & AI		
	Presentations - graded		
	Presentations - graded	Short supportive essays	15% + talk
	Review of Presentations		
	Halfway review of CEL projects		
	Review of research writing		
	<i>Reading break</i>		
	Graded Research Presentations	Research Paper & talk	20% & 15%
	Graded Research Presentations		
	Reflections		
	CEL presentations & submissions		40%
	CEL presentations & submissions		

4. Course Materials

There is no required text book or software. All course material will be posted to OWL: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>. Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

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

Technical Requirements

On the chance that courses go online a stable internet connection and computer with working microphone and/or webcam.

5. Methods of Evaluation

Grading Scheme and Assessment Dates (see schedule for dates)

10% - participation and leadership

15% - a short 10-minute presentation in class with a supportive 800-word essay

20% - 2000-word essay (research paper on a non-human topic)
15% - a 20-minute research presentation based on your paper
40% - *CEL partner's evaluation, deliverables, reflective essay, group based exit talk
all final grades based on interviews with your instructor

Grading scale for undergraduates as determined by the Senate: University-wide grade descriptors:
A+ 90-100, and one could scarcely expect better from a student at this level. An **A** 80-89 Superior work, which is clearly above average. **B** 70-79 Good work, meeting all requirements. **C** 60-69 Competent work, meeting requirements **D** 50-59 Fair work, minimally acceptable. **F** below 50 Fail

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf,

This policy does not apply to requests for Academic Consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person.

The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All Academic Consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

When a student mistakenly submits their one allowed Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** for the assessments listed above or those in the **Coursework with Assessment Flexibility** section below, the request cannot be recalled and reapplied. This privilege is forfeited.

Evaluation Scheme for Missed Assessments

Your assignment is due on the day specified, ending at 10 pm; submit your video recording to a shared folder on Western OneDrive. Your writing, both in WORD and as a PDF, for this assignment will be forwarded to an OWL portal, and it will be checked for plagiarism using Turnitin. Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day and the cut-off date is a week after the assignment was due, under such a case the work receives a grade of zero. All work must be completed and assignment-grades cannot to reweighted to another assignment.

6. Additional Statements

Religious Accommodation

When conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request an accommodation for their absence in writing to the course instructor and/or the Academic Advising office of their Faculty of Registration. This notice should be made as early as possible but not later than two weeks prior to the writing or the examination (or one week prior to the writing of the test).

Please visit the Diversity Calendars posted on our university's EDID website for the recognized religious holidays:

<https://www.edi.uwo.ca>.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic Accommodation disabilities.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf).

Academic Policies

The website for Registrar Services is <https://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>.

In accordance with policy,

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf,

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 their official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

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:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic discipline undergrad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

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>).

Support Services

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

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

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

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 Accessible Education at

http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

if you have any questions regarding accommodations.

Learning-skills counsellors at Learning Development and Success (<https://learning.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.

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/>.

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