

**Ecology -- PCB 3043 -- Fall 2016**  
**SEMINAR ASSIGNMENTS (must do two!)**

You are responsible for writing two reports after going to seminars related to ecology. Florida State University is a "research institution" with research grants contributing over \$200 million to the university annually (about 30% of the operating budget). More pertinent to this class, students at Florida State University have an important opportunity to learn about science directly from those doing research. Most faculty have on-going research and these scientists, as well as their students and visitors from all over the world, give frequent presentations on their research. This gives you a chance to hear about ecology first-hand and, since many of these scientists involve undergraduates in their research, you may also learn of interesting opportunities.

You are required to go to two ecology-oriented seminars during this semester and to write short reports summarizing the research that is presented. You may choose from Ecology and Evolution Seminars (almost every Friday at 4:00), one of the approved Colloquium Series talks (most Thursdays at 4:00), or any other seminar or scientific talk that is pre-approved by Dr. Miller or a Teaching Assistant. Ecology and Evolution Seminars and Departmental Colloquium are in King 1024, and the Colloquium is preceded by a reception (with snacks and drinks!) at 3:30. Schedules for Ecology and Evolution and Colloquium can be found on the FSU Biological Science homepage and will be announced in class. These can sometimes be crowded, so arrive early.

The first report must be turned in anytime before October 13. The second must be turned in by December 12, the Monday of Finals Week. Please submit your reports as hardcopies to the TA. Do not send us a pdf or any other form of electronic submission.

Each report should be approximately one page in length (we will not read anything longer than two pages) of double spaced typescript. State the name of the speaker, title of the seminar, and date presented at the beginning of the report. Your report should include **(1) the hypotheses addressed (the purpose(s) of the talk), (2) the approach to the problem (general methods), and (3) the conclusion of the scientist about her/his research.** Keep it simple and succinct. Your grade is largely based on these three sections, so make your answers to each part very clear. This should be a concise summary of the speaker's research and not a play by play of what the speaker discussed. For instance, do not write, "to conclude the speaker discussed what the benefits of sponges are to coral reefs." Instead, tell us what the speaker told us about *how* sponges are beneficial to coral reefs. Remember, this is a written report. Make sure to reread your reports so that you have proper grammar and sentence structure, no typos, etc. Use spell check! And also, remember to *italicize* the scientific names of organisms.

We recognize that some of these talks will be difficult to understand or may have an organization that is difficult to translate into a report. However, from experience we know that students can understand most of the seminars. Most of these talks are geared towards a general audience; try focusing on what you do understand and not worrying about what you don't. If the talk has many parts, just focus your report on the section that you best understand or feel is the most important. Our advice is to do your best and talk to us if you are having problems. We will use the Discussion Board on Blackboard to run a forum after many of the seminars where you may ask questions about the talks.

**An important note on etiquette at these seminars.** First, if you have a question, ask it! Science is about asking questions. Most speakers really appreciate questions from undergraduates and are happy to explain things. On the other hand, speakers may have not explained things well and it is your right to make them clarify their work. So, feel free to ask questions or go up and talk to speakers afterwards, especially if you didn't understand a key point. Finally, it is very rude to leave a seminar early. **Leaving during a seminar is disruptive and shouldn't be done except in an emergency.** On the other hand, if the speaker for E&E or Colloquium drones on past **5:05**, it is then socially acceptable to leave -- QUIETLY.