Meeting Time and Place: Thursday 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM, BSC 101

Instructor: Dr. Ralph Feuer; South Life Science Room 358; 594-7377; rfeuer@sciences.sdsu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Etiquette: Turn off your cell phones and pagers before entering the lecture room. The required sign-in sheet will be distributed after the end of the seminar. Please stay until questions and answers with the invited speaker have ended.

Content: Recent research advances in selected areas of modern molecular biology presented by faculty of the Molecular Biology Institute and established outside investigators.

Learning Objectives: Students will
- Compare and contrast experimental approaches utilized by researchers studying a wide spectrum of scientific topics in molecular biology
- Analyze and appraise primary research data as presented by each investigator
- Identify vital concepts and judge the relative importance of topics illuminated during the presentations
- Appraise the seminar presentations by taking notes, summarizing, and critically evaluating the experimental data and conclusions described by the invited speakers
- Practice scientific writing abilities by completing a one page summation assignment (as described below)

Grading: Pass/No pass
Please sign in (name and RED ID #) at the end of each seminar. Grading will be based on attendance and the one page summation assignment (described below). Students will be allowed to miss one seminar with prior approval. Those individuals caught signing in for absent students will fail the course. Please email me in advance if you will not be able to attend any seminar.

One Page Summation Assignment:
Each student will submit a one page summation describing a seminar of his/her choice during the semester. The one page summation assignment will be due on May 12th at 5:00pm. These assignments may be emailed to me. The one page summation (double-spaced; Arial Font - 11; 1 inch margins) assignment should describe the scientific topic presented by the invited speaker, a description of relevant data and scientific methodologies, important conclusions, and a critical evaluation of the conclusions.

Although only a single summation assignment describing a seminar of his/her choice is required over the course of the semester, students are expected to take notes, follow and evaluate the data presented by the speakers for each and every seminar. Students are also invited to ask questions to the speaker after the conclusion of each seminar.
Be Prepared to Maximize the Potential Knowledge Gained From Attending Scientific Seminars:

How should you prepare for each seminar? A few days before the scheduled seminar, perform a search on PubMed or Google on the invited speaker and the topic to be presented. Read a representative and recent publication from the speaker. Read a review on the scientific field covered by the speaker.

Taking Notes:

Go over your notes after each seminar while the material is still fresh on your mind. A major purpose of studying and taking notes is to discover what you don't understand so that you can do something about it. Don't just passively read your notes, think about them and ask yourself questions about them. Do you understand what was said during the presentation? Does it make sense and why? Compare and contrast new information described by the invited speaker with things that you have already learned.

People remember better if they listen attentively and actively write down what they hear. Keeping good notes is essential for maximizing the knowledge gained by attending scientific seminars. Good note taking is an acquired skill. Don't try to write full sentences -- you will be so busy writing that you may miss the next point and your notes will be harder to study. Instead of writing down every word during lecture, write down key phrases and use short abbreviations.

CSU Employee Furloughs - Impact on Classes:

This year across this campus and around the CSU system some class days will be cancelled because of furloughs. A furlough is mandatory un-paid time off; faculty and staff on each CSU campus are being "furloughed" two days per month.

It is important to recognize that these days off are not holidays. Instead, they are concrete examples of how massive state budget cuts have consequences for you as students and for me as a faculty member.

The CSU has suffered chronic under-funding for at least 10 years. This year the budget cuts are the worst in the history of the CSU system -- $584 million or 20% of our budget.

The CSU administration is attempting to deal with these cuts with huge increases in your student fees (32%), elimination of your classes, and lay-offs of faculty and other university employees.

In addition to paying higher fees, you will be affected by reduced services and classes. The library will have shorter hours. Many campus support services will be decreased or eliminated. It will be more difficult to get signatures to meet deadlines. Classes you need may have been cut from the class schedule or are full.

To minimize or avoid faculty and staff furloughs in future academic years, you may want to contact your State legislators so that they better understand how cutting the state budget for higher education affects your education and your future.