



School of Systems Biology
 Graduate Academic Programs

10900 University Blvd., MS 5B3, Manassas, Virginia 20110

Syllabus ” Diversity of Scientific Traditions

Instructor Name: Yuliya Dobrydneva, Ph.D.

Course number: BIMR260

Credits: 3

Email address: ydobrydn@gmu.edu

Bulletin Course Description

This undergraduate course is designed for the students of all backgrounds who are interested in learning about diversity of concepts concerning the systematic study of the nature and the human body across cultures and civilizations. All civilizations have collected this type of knowledge and analyzed it, which often led to breakthroughs in technology. The course will describe various biomedical concepts in traditional cultures and their interplay with modern biomedicine. The goal of the course is to trace the development of the systems’ approach to modern science and learn about foundational scientific concepts underlining the achievements of different cultures across the globe. Special emphasis will be placed on a progress of life sciences in a context of cultural diversity.

Course content: The course will contain didactic lectures, discussions, students’ presentations, collaborative work, and projects.

Course Prerequisites:

Students are expected to be familiar with the basic concepts of natural sciences such as biology, chemistry, and physics on a conceptual level.

Textbook: not required

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to

1. Compare and contrast modern scientific ideas and diverse perceptions of natural world and human biology across civilizations/societies
2. Understand how various cultures developed the natural science knowledge base, with concentration in systems biology concepts
3. Explain scientific origin of the cultural practices in societies around the world

Components of the course grade:

Quizzes, weighted evenly 25% (Quizzes are open book, open sources and untimed.)

Online discussions, weighted evenly 25%

Group activities /presentations 30%

Final project/ Narrated presentation 20%

This course does not allow extra credit for any work.

Course Policies

Expectations

1. Let the instructor know of your needs and constraints as early as possible prior to the assignment due dates.
2. Notify your instructor during the first week of the semester regarding course schedule conflicts due to military obligations and/or religious observances. Any notification beyond the first week of classes may not be approved and grade of zero will be entered.
3. Various participation activities will be posted throughout the semester. Students are expected to demonstrate critical and creative thinking mainly through the discussion boards and various assignments. It is important that students participate in all assignments as defined by the course schedule to demonstrate knowledge comprehension.
4. All questions or discussion points must be completely answered. Grades are based on your thoughtful response. Entries must clearly reflect the requirements of the assignment. All written work must be word processed with acceptable grammar and sentence structure and submitted in Word or pdf format in the course Blackboard by the assigned due date.

LATE POLICY: PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

1. Students should make every effort to submit/complete assignments, discussion boards and exams on time.
2. Any assignment that is not turned in on time, without prior arrangements with the instructor, will result in a zero grade for this assignment
3. Submitting assignments after deadline carries 10 pts penalty for each day it is late, unless prior arrangements were made.
4. Any arrangements to extend a deadline for an assignment must be made prior to the deadline.
5. No extension will be granted after the deadline.
6. Each student is allowed maximum of two (2) extensions per semester. Other requests may not be granted and grade of zero will be entered.
7. No make-up work will be accepted after the final project due date.
8. Any assignment/assessment that has not been completed by the end of the semester will receive a grade of zero

Grading Scale

- The final grade in this course will be based on a percentage of points earned **relative** to total possible points. Listed below is the point distribution for the grade calculation. However, an absolute grading scale cannot be determined until all scores have been compiled and evaluated. In order to optimize your overall performance use the following scale as a rule of thumb: 100-90% (A); 89-80% (B); 79-70% (C); <69% (D or F).

Participation and make-up work: In case of illness or quarantine, please contact the instructor to set up a plan for make-up work. Late assignments will not be accepted unless due to emergency, illness, quarantine, work-related or other documented reasons. A grade of zero will be entered for all missing assignments that were not pre-arranged with the instructor for make-up.

Other considerations: If there are any schedule issues related to religious holidays, please inform the instructor the first week of class. Completion of regular weekly homework is expected to take several hours.

Email requirements:

1. Mason requires that Mason email be used for all courses.
2. You may forward your Mason email to other accounts but always use your Mason e-mail when communicating with me to allow verification of your identity.
3. You are required to check your Mason email account regularly and to keep your mailbox maintained so that messages are not rejected for being over quota.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas or work as one's own. Students must give credit for any information that is not either the result of original research or common knowledge. If a student borrows ideas or information from another author, he/she must acknowledge the author in the body of the text and on the reference page. Students found plagiarizing are subject to the penalties outlined in the Policies and Procedures section of the University Catalog, which include a hearing by the Honor Code Committee and may include a failing grade for the work in question or for the entire course. The following website provides helpful information concerning plagiarism for both students and faculty: <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>

Honor Code:

- George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited
- All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.
- See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/> for more detailed information.

Enrollment:

- Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class.
- Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadline published on the Registrar's website.
- Note the add/drop dates in the Academic Calendar published on the Registrar's website.
- After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons.
- Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal.
- See <http://registrar.gmu.edu> for selective withdrawal procedures.

Ethics:

Ethical behavior in the classroom is required of every student. The course will identify ethical policies and practices relevant to course topics.

Technology:

Students are expected to be competent in using current technology appropriate for this discipline. Such technology may include presentation software. Students are required to become familiar with Mason's Responsible Use of Computing Policy #1301 http://copyright.gmu.edu/?page_id=301

Diversity:

Learning to work with and value diversity is essential in every class. Students are expected to exhibit an appreciation for multinational and gender diversity in the classroom.

Civility:

As a diverse community of learners, students must strive to work together in a setting of civility, tolerance, and respect for each other and for the instructor. Rules of classroom behavior (which apply to online as well as onsite courses) include but are not limited to the following:

- Conflicting opinions among members of a class are to be respected and responded to in a professional manner.
- Side conversations or other distracting behaviors including cell phone use or non-class online access are not to be engaged in during lectures, class discussions or presentations
- There are to be no offensive comments, language or gestures

Students not complying will be asked to cease immediately or leave the class session.

Netiquette For Online Discussions [1]: Our discussion should be collaborative, not combative; you are creating a learning environment, sharing information and learning from one another. Respectful communication is important to your success in this course and as a professional. Please re-read your responses carefully before you post them so others will not take them out of context or as personal attacks. Be positive to others and diplomatic with your words and I will try my best to do the same. Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications your joke may be viewed as criticism. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be easily misconstrued.

[1] Netiquette prepared by Charlene Douglas, Associate Professor, College of Health & Human Services, GMU.

Students with Disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.