

EEB 3894: Current Topics in Ecology & Evolution

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Spring 2015

Response Papers to Primary Scientific Literature

This is a discussion based seminar course corresponding with the EEB department's 30th anniversary special seminar series featuring members of the National Academy of Sciences. Since a major goal of this course is to become critical science readers and hold meaningful, thoughtful discussion (both amongst ourselves and with the visiting scientist), we *will* require outside preparation before each class meeting. This includes:

1. Reading an assigned article from the primary literature.
This will be sent out via email, and will also be posted on the course website http://hydrodictyon.eeb.uconn.edu/eebedia/index.php/Current_Topics_in_Ecology_and_Evolution_Spring_2015/
2. Organizing your thoughts, ideas, concerns, and questions about the article
3. Writing a one-page response paper

Why are we doing these things?

The response papers are a good way to critically think about the article before coming to class, while also improving your concise, scientific writing skills. Discussions are a key component of science: they are a great way to share ideas, gain insight you may have missed on your own, and generate further inquiry.

Grading

Response papers will be due electronically by the beginning of class each week. Please send to both Jimmy and Nora, james.bernotuconn.edu and nora.mitchelluconn.edu. **No** late papers will be accepted! Response papers will be 5 points each, though we will drop your lowest score (total of 60 points).

Expectations for Response Papers

1. Length: 1 page

That's 1-page *double-spaced*, 12-pt font, nothing over! These responses should be short, and a way to organize your thoughts and generate questions for the discussion. Scientific writing is also concise-practice those skills here.

2. Come up with an idea

The paper is *not* a summary of what you have read: it's a *response* to the article. Think of an idea or question that relates to the article-take some notes to expand that idea.

3. Content

Start with a brief introduction of the idea, then continue to build on this while referring to specific pieces of the article. You may want to connect this to things you have learned in other classes, or which we have discussed previously. What insight can you add? We want to know what you *think*.

4. Edit your work!

This is very important. Make sure that it fits within the 1-page limit. Check for grammar and spelling issues. In addition, ask yourself, does the paper logically make sense? Does it flow correctly? Read it out loud to yourself.

5. Citations

When referring directly to something from the article, use in-text citations, for instance "Bernot & Mitchell (2015) believe that both parasites and plants are really cool)". When referring to a paper with 3 or more authors (i.e., Mitchell, Bernot, and Schlichting (2015)), you should refer to it by the first author's last name followed by et al. The above example would be properly referenced in your response as: "Mitchell et al. (2015) completed an experiment that..." We will not require a full citation at the end of the text, since we assigned the article.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and cheating are violations of the student conduct code, and may be punished by failure in the course or, in severe cases, dismissal from the University. For more information, see Section IV of the Student Conduct Code available at the web site of the Dean of Students.