

CAPS 200: A Choice Elective For Students Interested In Biomedical Research

Are you interested in what biomedical research is about and how it is done? Studying scientific facts does not automatically shed light on why or how those facts are obtained. CAPS 200 is designed to help you understand the why and the how behind those facts. If you are interested in a challenging course where you will have the opportunity to work collegially in group discussions, problem solving, presentations and devoting time reviewing scientific literature in depth, this course is for you!

Two UBC scientists will visit the classroom to present research seminars based on projects from their laboratories. Each visit is followed by a series of “deconstruction” classes designed to help you garner a greater appreciation of the science behind the research and the research process. During the course you will read and analyze scientific papers, discuss research findings and ultimately prepare and present a research proposal for a summer research project to the class and the speaker scientists.

There are no examinations in this course. The time you would normally spend studying and preparing for exams is spend outside of class accumulating knowledge required to enable you to discuss, analyze and synthesize ideas. The course follows the flipped classroom model and requires substantial reading, journaling and written solutions to problem sets.

The course is limited to second year students to ensure early exposure, comparable background and abilities. We expect to attract highly motivated students who have a keen interest in biomedical research to join this course. The enrolment is limited to 30 students to foster in-class discussion and learning. BIOL 200 is a prerequisite.

Here are some remarks by students who have taken this class in the past two years:

“Having a science class that forced you to read and write in the discipline taught you a lot about writing in the discipline”.

" I really enjoy difficult questions, at the same time though it was really good to get the support when you are stuck with a difficult question...it allowed me to be really open with my learning and discuss what I struggled with understanding".

" It was really well designed. I really liked the teaching, how it was organized; the way she did not tell you the answer but guide you by asking more questions".

"A lot of courses at UBC, especially in science, have a very standard method of assessment; multiple choice clicker questions, quizzes and exams. They are not my favorite; I don't find them engaging. I am a big supporter of more homework and less exams. I struggle with exams and that kind of mentality for assessment"

"I thought the amount of reading was extraordinary and the material dense. I was not used to reading scientific literature, especially at the beginning of the course. I wasn't prepared and it took time to get used to".

"It was really different. The mini-journals made us accountable to write down key points from each article, forced us to ask questions and implications for our proposal. It was challenging and new but in a good way".

"It did not meet my expectations, it far exceeded my expectations--is what it was! My expectations were very low but it was quite a surprise, I was very excited from the first class; even though Dr Osborne talked to us about how much work was involved."

"It was surprisingly the best class I've taken at UBC so far. The teaching style and how it was organized and how it was presented was easy to digest. Dr. Osborne helped a lot in inspiring and explaining and making concepts easy to understand. But every step of the way she pushed us. I ended up reading the papers more carefully to write a better mini-journal".

"Because of the way it was structured, I ended up doing a lot of work for it, which is more than I can say for any of my other courses".

It helped improve my writing". "Journaling kept me up with the reading and helped with time management; I had to be prepared for every class".

" I learned to be more critical of what I read and check for evidence".

