



## **BISC 529: Seminar in Marine Biology**

**Units: 1**

**Fall 2024—Tuesdays 11:30-12:30**

**Location:** Torrey Webb Room

### **Instructors:**

Melissa Guzman

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### **Course Description**

This course accompanies the MEB section's Tuesday Seminar Series. Going to seminars can be very helpful for your own science, but it's not just sitting and listening! This course is about getting in the habit of listening actively and with an inquisitive mind and coming up with good questions.

### **Learning Objectives**

After this course, you will be able to:

- Meet the greater network of scientists who are part of the fields represented in MEB.
- Ask a great seminar question.
- Efficiently assimilate information from a talk.
- Identify presentation styles that you can apply in your own scholarship.

### **Description and Assessments**

You will be asked to submit a reflection on Blackboard for each talk that you attend. The reflection asks you to respond to 4 prompts:

1. In one sentence, what was the talk about?
2. Why is this a problem people care about?
3. What was a major finding?
4. Come up with a question for the speaker (you don't have to ask it, but this is a good habit to get into)
5. [for the fall semester, we will hear 15-min talks from our 3<sup>rd</sup> year students, for these you will be asked to give constructive feedback in addition to the talk summary]

## Grading Breakdown

This class is graded as credit/no credit. Each reflection is graded for 7 points (or 8 if you are giving feedback).

We typically have 14 seminars each semester. To pass the class, you must earn at least 84 points, which equates to attending 12 seminars and receiving full credit.

## Reflection Submission Policy

Submitting your reflection is how we will keep track of the seminars you attend. Submit reflections 24 h after the date of the seminar- so by the following Wednesday at noon for a Tuesday noon seminar. Submissions sent in 24-48 h after the seminar (*e.g.* by Thursday at noon) will receive half credit. Submissions made later than 2 days after the talk won't receive credit.

## Policy on absences

Please email Julia or Melissa at least 2 days before the talk you will miss if you need to arrange a make-up. Note that the make-up seminar can be any scientific seminar held on campus, but it needs to be a research seminar. Please let us know what you are going to so that we can set up a link for your reflection! Check out the course materials/announcements on Blackboard for ideas other seminar series on campus- and consider attending ones that look interesting regardless of if it's for this class 😊

## Seminar etiquette

1. Please show up a couple minutes before noon so we can start on time.
2. We expect you to attend in person if the talk is in person, unless you have a reasonable excuse to not be there, such as if you are sick or traveling.
3. If you are attending remotely, make sure you are muted when you sign on. It is polite to turn on your camera at the beginning and end of the talk, especially if you would like to ask a question.
4. When you are in a seminar, avoid looking at your phone or working on your computer- you are there to give your attention to the speaker. Please consider taking notes in a notebook or with a tablet/stylus.

**Course schedule- all seminars are at 11:30 on Tuesday in the Torrey Webb room unless otherwise indicated.**

[talk schedule will be announced in August]

## Policy on giving feedback for student talks

As part of BISC 529 we are asking you to give feedback to your peers. And in your 3<sup>rd</sup> year and above, you will also be receiving feedback on your research presentations. Giving feedback and receiving it is an important skill for scientists (and humans!) Our goal is to create a training environment where we can all improve our ability to communicate.

What are the keys steps to giving good feedback?

1. Be constructive. This is a training environment, we are all here to improve as communicators. The goal is to give feedback about what worked well and didn't work well, but make sure that you explain *why*, and use I statements. Give the kind of feedback you'd like to receive.

Less constructive: you talked really fast

More constructive: I think slowing down the pace of the introduction would have helped me assimilate more of the big picture.

Why? Notice at the second response provides more detail, making it easier to interpret the intent behind what you are saying. It also is framed from your perspective (I think) and is actionable- slow down this part and I will understand better.

2. Reflect on how you deliver your feedback. Don't ever give written feedback that you wouldn't tell the recipient in person. It's not ok to send in your hot takes. You may be picking up on something valuable, but thoughtless phrasing can be incredibly hurtful to the person receiving your feedback.

Consider the comment: "nice job". Say it in your head enthusiastically. Then say it sarcastically. Two very different meanings, right? You can't control what tone your recipient will read in your feedback, so pause and re-read what you've written before you share it. If you read what you wrote with a negative or angry tone, how does it sound?

3. Be aware of your own implicit bias. We all bring a constellation of identities and past experiences with us into this training environment. This diversity of identity and experience is an incredible strength. Please be aware that your experience and identity may not be that of your colleague.

What are keys to receiving feedback?

1. Adopt a growth mindset- feedback is a way to understand what people took away from your talk, and how your slides and presentation helped or hindered your ability to communicate. You've got to be willing to listen to receive feedback. You don't have to take the advice, but you do need to take it in and avoid personalizing it. This is an exercise in trust: please operate under the assumption that the people giving feedback are trying to help make your talk even better.
2. Collect feedback as data. It's important to acknowledge that there is no universally superior style of presenting your work. Great presenters know their audience and how to effectively communicate to that audience. Of course, an audience isn't a monolith: each piece of feedback you get is an individual data point. You can use feedback from multiple people to spot trends: pay attention when multiple people pick up on the same points.

3. Be self-aware about how you react. Two people can receive the same feedback differently. It can be hard to receive a piece of negative feedback. We are all learning, and you may receive some unhelpful feedback, but its important that everyone feels that they can share feedback and be heard.

Further reading:

‘Thanks for the feedback’ Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen. Penguin. 2014

## **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

### **Academic Integrity:**

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, comprises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university’s mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity’s website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

### **Students and Disability Accommodations:**

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers.

Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](https://osas.usc.edu). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

**Support Systems:**

[\*Counseling and Mental Health\*](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[\*988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline\*](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[\*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)\*](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[\*Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)\*](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[\*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment\*](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[\*The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)\*](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[\*USC Campus Support and Intervention\*](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or [otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu)

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.