

Bacteriophage and Bacterial Cell Biology Graduate Journal Club Syllabus for Fall 2016

Class Time: Wednesday 12:00 – 1:00 pm, occasionally modified for Instructor’s schedule (officially 1200 – 1250 for 1 credit hour)

Class room: BioBio 106A or TBA

Office hours: By appointment through the course secretary.

Instructor: Ry Young (5-2087), room 311A BioBio; ryland@tamu.edu

Administrative Assistant: Daisy Wilbert (5 -9427), room 308 BioBio; daisy@tamu.edu

Website: <http://cpt.tamu.edu/bich-676/>

TAMU L.E.A.D.S Emergency Information:

<http://studentaffairs.tamu.edu/emergency>

Course structure and objectives:

This Journal Club is an official function of the Center for Phage Technology. While graduate students will constitute the official registered enrollment, CPT staff may also participate. The JC is modeled on the Beckwith-Silhavy literature class of the 1970s. For enrolled students, the educational objectives are (a) to build your knowledge of phage and bacterial cell biology and (b) to develop your presentation and “think on your feet” skills. To these ends, the practical goal is to make each class a highly interactive discussion, so all the participants (including faculty and staff) have the opportunity to participate and learn something and so that you will get lots of practice in critical reading and presentation. To this end, there are some general principles and rules:

1. **There will be a minimum of formal media preparation.** As much as possible, papers will be presented by projected transparencies of the figures and tables; transparencies will be prepared by the course administrative assistant, Daisy Wilbert. A computer/projector will be available, with the pdf of the paper loaded, but in general we will use it only for showing figures that do not convert into transparencies well, and structures/movies. The best thing about transparencies is you can mark on them!

2. There are usually two **Designated Presenters** (DPs) for each meeting. The DPs are responsible for the physical set-up; i.e., making sure the projector(s), transparencies, and lighting are functional. *The DPs have additional responsibility for giving a short background and looking up important methodology to explain to the group.* Powerpoint is optional here; whatever is easier. The expected level of effort will be to generate one or two transparencies or slides, or just write on the board. Nothing has to be memorized; you can use prepared notes for the Intro and you can bring any references you want for the Methods. It would be best if the DPs split the duties, like one person do the background, the other focus on unusual methods, but this is up to the team.
3. **The presentation will be done jointly, by everyone else in the class that day.** In some random order, to be determined each session, an individual will stand up and describe the first figure or table. What is the question, what was the approach, what were the results, and what did it mean? Then the next person does the next table/figure, and so on. If you are called on to do this, and you don't understand something, just say so. The odds are that someone in the room understands, just as others may have questions. The theory is that peer pressure will, at equilibrium, have everyone putting in the effort to read and understand the paper. (This is in part why I insist on part 4, below.)
4. **Background reading.** The Instructor may also assign background reading material for everyone to read, to help with understanding the subject of the paper. While it will not be required to be as prepared on the background paper, it is highly advisable to read it through at least once so that the Introduction prepared by the DPs is comprehensible. This is PARTICULARLY important for students who are new to the phage and bacterial cell biology literature.
5. **The Instructor and grading:** The Instructor is there to moderate, to provide experience/expertise, etc. There will be a grade assigned but it depends only on your level of participation, not on your background and depth of knowledge. However, failure to prepare, if I detect this, will attract attention. This is a graduate Journal Club so normally the grading would be A for strong participation, B for adequate and C for inadequate or unprepared participation.
6. **Every student** who enrolls in the fall and is still here in the spring must sign up for the spring too. So you are committing to this process for the whole academic year.

Please let us know dates where you would prefer not to be the Designated Presenter due to some exigency in the schedule.

Choice of Papers

1. Each of the participating faculty has the option for at least one paper to be presented in the series. Faculty are requested to email the paper selection as a pdf file, complete with relevant Supplementary Information, to the Instructor. The Instructor may assign other slots as needed.
2. Graduate students will choose the other papers subject to approval by the Instructor. Paper suggestions must be made to the Instructor at least one month in advance of the proposed presentation date.
 - a. Paper suggestions, including complete pdf (with all important supplementary information also in the same pdf file), should be uploaded to the course website with comments regarding suitability.
 - b. A list of prior presentations over a number of years can be found on the website. This should be consulted before suggested papers are uploaded.