Instructors: Dr. Eric L. Walters (MGB302G) and Dr. Vicki Garcia (MGB 347E)
Office hours by appointment only
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Course objectives and Course expectations of students:

Biology 708/808 provides graduate students with a specific topic seminar assigned to specific faculty members on a rotational schedule. All seminars require graduate students to lead discussions. During each meeting a student topic leader leads a discussion on specific topics or papers appropriate to the theme. Students registered for the seminar must act as the topic leader at least once each semester. All participants are expected to come prepared for the discussion. Grades are based on the presentation as topic leader and also on extent and quality of participation in the discussions throughout the semester. A higher level of understanding will be expected of 808 level students. The seminar instructors are responsible for the administrative duties associated with the course and serve as discussion moderators.

Honor code and Academic dishonesty:

By enrolling in this course, you are agreeing to abide by the University Honor Code. Any offenses will be dealt with according to University policy.

Course resources:

All course material discussed will be gathered by instructors or the assigned student from the peer-reviewed literature, books, and web sources. The course schedule and assigned readings will be available on my website: http://ericlwalters.org/modern_stats.html

Due dates and attendance:

All students are expected to sign up for a particular topic and date of presentation at the first class. Students should come to class on their assigned date prepared to give their presentation and lead the discussion. All other students are expected to attend each class and be active participants in the discussion. A 5% deduction will be taken for each unexcused absence.

Grades and Course expectations of students:

Student-led discussion and demonstration: On the assigned date, each student pair will be expected to lead a discussion of the peer-reviewed journal article or book chapter relating to the topic of the presentation, and to lead the class through an R-based example of how to apply the statistical technique. The instructor will post this PDF on the course website and all class members are expected to read the article in preparation for class. The presenters will facilitate discussion of the paper and example, and should be familiar with all aspects of the paper and example prior to coming to class. The presenters should read background material, be familiar with the statistical approaches used, be able to interpret all output, and generally have the ability to answer background questions from the other class members.

Participation: Each student in the class is expected to come to class prepared to discuss the topic and reading assigned. A reasonable attempt at reading some literature related to the topic should be attempted so that when the student gets to class, they should be somewhat familiar with the topic being discussed. The assigned article should also be read in a way that the student fully grasps all aspects of the paper. Students should be able to answer questions posed by the presenters and,

likewise, should come to class prepared with talking points based on the paper. Students are expected to participate in class discussions. 50% of the overall grade will be based on class participation.

Disruptive Behavior

No electronic devices used for outside communication will be allowed during class. All electronic devices must be turned off prior to entering the classroom with the exception of laptops, tablets, or smartphones used to read PDFs. Each violation, after the first warning, of this policy will result in 5% being deducted from a student's overall score for each infraction.

Likewise, disruptive behavior in class includes, but is not limited to, the following: arriving late, conversing during class unless directed to do so by the instructor, answering a cell phone (or allowing it to ring by not turning it off), sending or receiving a text message, packing to leave before class is finished, sleeping, studying unrelated materials in class, or using a laptop or other device (smartphone, cell phone, personal assistant, blackberries, etc) for electronic communications. Each violation, after the first warning, of this policy will result in a 5% deduction from a student's overall score.

Evaluation and grading

Your overall grade will be based on the following assignment of points:

Presentation and Demonstration	50%
Class Participation	50%

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following scale: 90.0 - 100% = A; 80.0 - 89.9% = B; 70.0 - 79.9% = C; 60.0 - 69.9% = D; Below 59.9% = F

No extra credit will be available. In keeping with University regulations, grades of Incomplete (I) will be given only in exceptional circumstances beyond the student's control (such as illness or injury), and only after the student has completed 80% or more of the course requirements.

Communication

We will be communicating with students via ODU e-mail. Students are responsible for checking their ODU e-mail accounts regularly and are responsible for all information contained in those communications. We cannot guarantee that e-mail forwarded to non-campus accounts will be received, as ITS does not support off-campus e-mail. We will only read e-mail originating from an ODU account.

Conflict resolution

Problems with the course instructor should be brought to the attention of Dr. Wayne Hynes, Department Chair, or his designee.

Changes to course and/or requirements

I reserve the right to make appropriate changes to the course and its requirements following timely notification of the students.

Catalog Description for the course: BIOL 708. Ecological Sciences Seminar. 1 Credit. A graduate seminar course in the ecological sciences. The format of the course depends on the faculty running the seminar, but most seminars involve student-led discussions on current research articles.

Accommodation statement: Students are encouraged to self-disclose disabilities that have been verified by the Office of Educational Accessibility by providing Accommodation Letters to their instructors early in the semester in order to start receiving accommodations. Accommodations will not be made until the Accommodation Letters are provided to instructors each semester.

Schedule and Outline for material to be covered:

Class 1, Tues Jan 12 – Room 311
Hour 1: R Beginner
Hour 2: Discussion AIC papers - Garamszegi 2011; Symonds and Moussalli 2011

Class 2, Thurs Jan 14 – Room 353
Hour 1: R Basic analyses (t-tests, ANOVAs etc)
Hour 2: Discussion AIC papers - Burnham et al 2011; Mundry 2011

Class 3, Tues Jan 19 - Room 311
Hour 1: R Intermediate analyses (GLMs? GLMMs?)
Hour 2: Discussion GLM/GLMM/AIC? papers - TBA

Class 4, Thurs Jan 21 - Room 353
Hour 1: R AIC analyses
Hour 2: Student led discussion and demo

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Class 5, Tues Jan 26 - Room 311
1: Student led discussion and demo

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2: Student led discussion and demo

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3: Student led discussion and demo

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Class 6, Thurs Jan 28 - Room 353
1: Student led discussion and demo

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2: Student led discussion and demo

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3: Student led discussion and demo

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