

APBI 498 – UNDERGRADUTE ESSAY IN APPLIED BIOLOGY

***Registration forms and proposals are due one week before the first day of classes.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

COURSE INFORMATION

| Course Title | Course Code Number | Credit Value |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Undergraduate Essay | APBI 498 | 3 credits |

PREREQUISITES

No specific prerequisites. APBI 398 Research Methods or academic writing course is recommended. Approval of Academic Advisor required.

ADMISSION

Admission to APBI 498 is coordinated through the **APBI undergraduate program advisor**, and must be recommended by the **APBI faculty member who will be supervising the work**. If students interested in APBI 498 are from outside the program of Applied Biology in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems, they should contact the undergraduate program advisor for their major to confirm how this course will be applied to their degree requirements. For students in the Applied Biology Program, APBI 498 is counted as a restricted elective (see https://wiki.ubc.ca/LFS:Restricted_Electives)

The Interim APBI Undergraduate Program Advisor is Dan Naidu (APBI.advising@ubc.ca). Opportunities for conducting essays are limited and registration in APBI 498 is not guaranteed. Please see the section on "Registration" for additional details.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Students would register in 3-credits of APBI 498 which are generally undertaken within a single semester. However, it is possible to complete the essay over two semesters. Please contact the APBI Program Coordinator to discuss this option (APBI.advising@ubc.ca).

The Undergraduate Essay provides a means for individual students to undertake a customized literature review that will help to develop and strengthen research skills and to accommodate special research interests that cannot be met through other APBI courses. The Undergraduate Essay differs from a directed study or a thesis in that there are no field activities or lab work included in the essay. However, the student may involve an external collaborator to explore a research topic of interest. In this case, the collaborator may provide additional resources and expert input.

Work completed in an Undergraduate Essay must be unique and cannot overlap with a Practicum (i.e. APBI 496, LFS 496), Directed Studies (i.e. APBI 497) or Undergraduate Thesis (i.e. APBI 499). Questions should be directed to the APBI Undergraduate Program Advisor.

Students are limited to the number of credits from self-directed studies that can be counted towards their degree (i.e. APBI 496, 497, 498, 499; LFS 496, others). Questions regarding this should be directed to the Program Advisor.

There is no set meeting time for this course. Instead, the work plan is arranged and agreed to by the student and the supervising faculty member. This plan must be set out in writing with a copy to the student, faculty member, external collaborator (if relevant) and APBI undergraduate program advisor. The work plan will consist of a defined research question and associated literature review.

Students will be expected to spend approximately 50 hours of work per credit (e.g. a 3-credit essay course would require approximately 150 hours). A regular schedule of consultations should be pre-arranged between the supervisor and the student to monitor progress. Meeting times should form a regular entry on the timetables of both the student and the supervisor. If the essay includes external support (i.e. the student is collaborating with a field supervisor), the supervising faculty member will make appropriate arrangements for regular monitoring of progress.

If the project to be conducted is associated with a summer or part-time, paid or volunteer position held by the student, care must be taken to ensure that any hours of work on the essay are over and above those required by the related position. The supervisor must be satisfied that this requirement has been met.

The student and supervisor may choose to include an end of term presentation to summarize their essay. Although this is not a requirement of the course, students are encouraged to complete an end of term talk in order to gain experience academic presentations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The objective of this course is to provide students with an introduction to independent study. Students will develop skills in working with an academic supervisor, developing a research plan, reviewing academic literature, and describing on their research results in a written report. They may also synthesize their report into a final presentation at the end of the term.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Responsibilities of the Academic Supervisor

The Academic Supervisor must be a faculty member from the Faculty of Land and Food Systems. This person oversees the student's progress and is responsible for submitting a final grade to LFS Student Services. Specific responsibilities include:

- Selection of appropriate project in conjunction with the student.
- Remain in compliance with all ethics requirements.
- Provide guidance on the literature review and essay.
- Schedule regular meetings with the student.
- Provide timely feedback on a draft essay.
- Arrange for a second marker of the final essay.
- Review a final presentation.
- Submit a grade to LFS student Services upon completion of the course.

The involvement of the supervisor should normally be limited to the first draft of the report. The role of the supervisor in the written report should be restricted to:

- 1) providing general recommendations regarding structure, development, and progression of ideas; and
- 2) providing advice on the general format of the report, according to the guidelines, and the use of correct grammar, spelling, and sentence structure.

Responsibilities of the External Collaborator

In some cases, there may also be an external collaborator. This is a person may be a senior graduate student, or a researcher/professional working with a partner organization that has specific interest and expertise in the research topic. The field supervisor can provide scholarly support, suggestions and access to relevant materials for the Undergraduate Essay.

Responsibilities of the student

- Make arrangements well in advance to work under the guidance of a faculty member as a project supervisor.
- Strict adherence to deadlines and guidelines for the course, as stated in this document and arranged with the supervisor.
- Remain in compliance with all ethics requirements.
- Submit copies of the project proposal to the project supervisor by the agreed due date. The project proposal (2- 4 pages) will consist of the following information:
 - The aim or hypothesis of the project.
 - The significance of the project (why is it interesting or important), supported by relevant background information and literature.
 - The potential problems or difficulties that might be encountered in the project.
 - The time-line for the work (the date when specific steps or milestones will be completed, including the date of submission of the written report).
- Allocate appropriate time to this course over the term(s)
- Submit the final report for evaluation at the end of the term. The supervisor may request that these be either printed or electronic.
- Prepare and present a final presentation (optional)

LEARNING SCHEDULE

The Learning Schedule will be established between the student and the research supervisor at the time of registering for the course. Target deadlines, established within two weeks of the start of the course, should be set for the completion of various phases of the project to ensure timely completion.

As per the calendar, there may be class time assigned to APBI 498. The assigned class time is limited to periodic check in with the assigned APBI 498 instructors (not the Academic Supervisor) and other students completing the essay. This will be defined by the assigned APBI 498 instructor at the beginning of the term. Throughout the term the student will be in ongoing contact with their Academic Supervisor who will oversee progress and provide a grade.

If the assigned class time conflicts with another course, then the student may complete it asynchronously with permission of the instructor.

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

The Learning will be assessed through two assignments: the essay and an oral presentation of the synopsis of the essay.

The essay will be read, marked and commented upon by the academic supervisor. The supervisor will select a second reader for the essay, for comments before assigning a final mark.

The material in the essay should be placed in the following order:

- (1) Title page
- (2) Abstract or Executive Summary followed by a short list of key words
- (3) Table of Contents, Index of Tables and Index of Figures
- (4) Main body of the essay
- (5) References
- (6) Appendices (if any)

The electronic .doc version of your essay may be submitted to the TurnItIn software package or similar software by the Academic Supervisor. This software will be used to identify the possibility of plagiarism within the student essay, from either web-based sources or from other works included in the database. Plagiarism constitutes serious academic misconduct and that it can result in penalties up to and including permanent withdrawal from the University. Students are encouraged to learn about what plagiarism entails and to discuss ways of avoiding it with the academic supervisor. Information on the TurnItIn software can be obtained at www.turnitin.com. Instances of plagiarism will be subject to the academic discipline procedure as outlined in the Academic Calendar under "Student Discipline".

Grade Guidelines:

(90-100%): This grade is an indication of an outstanding piece of work. The essay is extremely well-written and organized. There is good evidence of creativity and critical analysis.

(80-90%): There exists a high level of quality throughout all aspects of the work. The essay is well-written, with only minimal typographical and editorial errors. The topic is well-researched and presented. An excellent understanding of the relevant issues is demonstrated. Very good critical thinking and/or analysis skills are evident.

(70-79%): There is generally good quality throughout the work. The essay is reasonably well-written, with only minimal typographical and minor editorial errors. The topic is adequately researched and presented. A good understanding of the relevant issues is demonstrated. Some critical thinking and/or analysis skills are evident, but the thrust of the paper is primarily descriptive.

(60-69%): There are several problems of some significance with the work. The essay likely demonstrates only marginally acceptable writing, with sufficient typographical and editorial errors to detract from the presentation. The organization of the essay is acceptable, but concrete suggestions could be made for improvements. Only a moderate understanding of the relevant issues is demonstrated. Evidence of critical thinking and/or analysis is minimal.

(50-59%): There are number of serious flaws with the work. The essay is poorly written, with sufficient typographical and editorial errors present to significantly detract from the presentation. There may be

significant concerns about the organization of the essay. Only a marginal understanding of the relevant issues is demonstrated. Evidence of critical thinking and/or analysis is minimal.

Failure (< 50%): A failing grade indicates an unacceptable essay. The quality of writing is poor and there may be significant concerns about the organization of the essay. Understanding of the relevant issues is not demonstrated. There is little or no evidence of critical thinking and/or analysis.

The presentation will be assessed in class or in a format mutually agreed upon by the Academic Supervisor and the student.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Details on how to access student support and surrounding policies are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

REGISTRATION

Students must complete a registration form which can be obtained from the course wiki site: <https://wiki.ubc.ca/Course:APBI498>. In preparing the registration form, students are expected to complete the following in advance:

- Review the content of the Course Syllabus with the Academic Supervisor and the External Collaborator (where applicable). Available at: <https://courses.landfood.ubc.ca/lfscourses/>
- Develop a project proposal summary which includes: 1) Research Goals; 2) Learning objectives, 3) Work Involved, 4) Outcomes / Output, 5) Assessment criteria and attach to the registration package.
- The student and Academic Supervisor have reviewed the necessary ethics requirements and agree to complete ethics trainings (as required)
- Obtain signatures from the all parties indicated on the registration form.
- Submit the form to the APBI Program Advisor - APBI.advising@ubc.ca for registration.