

University of Guelph – Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology

MCB\*6500 M.Sc. Research Topics in MCB [1.0] &

MCB\*7500 Ph.D. Research Topics in MCB [1.0]

**Course Coordinator:** Dr. David Josephy SC2253 [djosephy@uoguelph.ca](mailto:djosephy@uoguelph.ca)

The course will be taught by:

David Josephy (coordinator), Richard Mosser, and Annette Nassuth (Fall 2015)

David Josephy (coordinator), Annette Nassuth, and James Uniacke (Winter 2016)

Welcome to the graduate program in Molecular and Cellular Biology! One of the degree requirements is completion of the two-semester course MCB\*6500 (M.Sc.) or MCB\*7500 (Ph.D.). This course is closely related to the development of your thesis project; you will prepare a written research proposal and present it to the department in a seminar. These tasks will help you to develop the writing and oral presentation skills upon which you will be relying, when you prepare and defend your thesis. This document serves as the Course Outline for both MCB\*6500 and MCB\*7500; the requirements are almost the same. Please read this outline carefully. If you have any questions, please ask the Course Co-ordinator.

**Summary of your tasks:**

In the first semester, you will write a Literature Assignment (LA), a report in which you analyze a journal article related to your thesis topic; and you will write a Research Proposal (RP) describing your research plans. Students present their Research Proposals as departmental seminars: the Friday noon-hour “brown-bag” seminar series. In the first semester, you will attend the seminar presentations given by the students who started their programs one semester before you. In the second semester, you will make your own oral presentation and you will attend the presentations given by your classmates.

The final grade for the course will be weighted as follows:

Literature Assignment (LA)	10%
Research Proposal (RP)	40%
Seminar	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

***The Literature Assignment (LA)***

The LA is accompanied by a comprehensive web site which will guide you through this component of the course; *please follow the instructions given on the web site.*

[www.uoguelph.ca/mcb/teaching/mcb6500-7500/index.shtml](http://www.uoguelph.ca/mcb/teaching/mcb6500-7500/index.shtml)

**Your Advisor will assign a primary research article related to your thesis research, ideally before the first class meeting.** Detailed criteria for the choice of article are given on the web site and must be followed; please read them carefully. You will complete a guided analysis of this research article and prepare a written report. This assignment will strengthen your writing and critical analysis skills.

### *Document Format:*

Both the LA and RP documents should be prepared single-sided, double-spaced, with a standard 12-point font (e.g., Times New Roman) and 1" margins. (Please do not leave blank lines between paragraphs.)

### *LA Submission and Grading:*

The LA will be graded independently by two members of the faculty panel; the grades will be averaged. The grading rubric and the deadlines for submission are given in an Appendix. The rubric also indicates the expected (approximate) lengths of the sections. The total length of the LA will be about 15 pages (*i.e.*, fifteen double-spaced pages, or about 3,500 words.) Submit **two printed copies** of your LA to the Coordinator. Also submit an **electronic** copy (.pdf format) by e-mail: [djosephy@uoguelph.ca](mailto:djosephy@uoguelph.ca).

### *The Research Proposal (RP)*

This component of the course provides you with an opportunity to develop and refine your skills in scientific communication. The emphasis is on writing skills in the context of developing a thesis proposal. You are not expected to present preliminary data from your thesis research.

The RP is prepared under the guidance of your Advisor and Advisory Committee members. The *literature review* section gives an introduction to your area of research, a detailed description of the significance of the research, and a discussion of relevant background literature, focused on the key experiments leading to your proposal. The *research proposal* section includes a clear, testable hypothesis; specific objectives; experimental approaches (including rationale for choice of the experimental systems and techniques); possible pitfalls or limitations (and how they might be circumvented); anticipated outcomes and how they will be interpreted.

For MCB\*6500, the RP should be approximately 20 pages in length, consisting of about 15 pages of literature review and five pages of research proposal. For MCB\*7500, the RP should be approximately 30 pages in length, consisting of about 20 pages of literature review and 10 pages of research proposal. (References, tables, and figures are not counted as part of the page length.) Bibliography references must include article titles.

Reproducing some tables and figures from the literature is acceptable, as long as the sources are clearly indicated, but preparing your own figures is preferable, since you can focus on the points that you want to convey. Try to achieve an appropriate balance.

### *RP Submission and Grading:*

Submit a **printed** copy of your RP to **each member of your Advisory Committee + two copies to the Course Coordinator**. Also submit an **electronic** copy (.pdf format) by e-mail to the Course Coordinator: [djosephy@uoguelph.ca](mailto:djosephy@uoguelph.ca)

Each member of your Advisory Committee will evaluate your RP independently and submit a grade to the Course Coordinator. These grades will be averaged (grade a). Two members from the faculty panel will submit grades (grades b and c). The three grades (a, b, and c) will be averaged to give the final grade.

### *The “Brown-bag” Seminar:*

In the second semester, you will make your oral presentation (“brown-bag” seminar, based on your Research Proposal), providing you with the opportunity to develop your skills in scientific communication. You will prepare the seminar under the guidance and direction of your thesis advisor. The seminars are held on Fridays; usually two seminars per week; 12:00 noon and 12:45 p.m.; SCIE 1511. Your seminar should be 30 min. long; **presentations which deviate more than 5 min from this timing will be penalized 5%; (see Appendix 6, Seminar: Grading Scheme).**

**Prior to the start of the Winter 2016 semester, you must sign up for a seminar slot: Carol Schlaht (SC4481) will send an announcement by email when the sign-up period begins. Students should ensure that their Advisors and Advisory Committee members are available to attend, before confirming their seminar dates. The first slots will be Friday Jan. 22, 2016 (tentative date).**

**You must submit (electronically) your *seminar title* and an *abstract (maximum, 250 words)* to Carol Schlaht by noon, Wednesday of the week before your seminar. A 5% penalty will be applied for late submissions.**

The marking scheme, which provides a guide to the expectations for successful completion of the course, is given in an Appendix. Each member of your Advisory Committee will evaluate the seminar independently and submit a grade to the Course Coordinator. These grades will be averaged (grade a). Two members from the faculty panel will each submit a grade (grades b and c). The three grades (a, b, and c) will be averaged to give the final grade.

---

***Appendices:***

1. Schedules and Checklists
2. Literature Assignment: Specifications for the Report
3. Literature Assignment: Grading Rubric
4. Learning Outcomes
5. Research Proposal: Grading Scheme
6. Seminar: Grading Scheme
7. Prof. Josephy's Writing Tips; Common Grammatical Errors
8. Policies

## Appendix 1. Schedules and Checklists

When?	What?	✓
<b><u>As soon as possible.</u></b>	Discuss with your advisor the article that you will review for the <i>Literature Assignment</i> . Forward an (electronic) copy of the article to the Course Coordinator: <a href="mailto:djosephy@uoguelph.ca">djosephy@uoguelph.ca</a> .	
<b><u>Friday, Sept. 11; noon - 12:45 p.m.</u></b>	First class meeting. Room: SCIE 1511. All new graduate students are required to attend. <i>Advisors are also encouraged to attend. Summer cohort students are also encouraged to attend.</i>	
<b><u>Wednesday, Sept. 16, 10:00 a.m.</u></b>	Q&A session with the Coordinator to discuss the LA; <b>SCIE1511</b>	
<b><u>Friday, Sept. 25; noon</u></b>	Submit <b>two printed copies</b> of your LA to the Coordinator. Also send an <b>electronic</b> copy (.pdf format) by e-mail: <a href="mailto:djosephy@uoguelph.ca">djosephy@uoguelph.ca</a> .	
<b><u>During the semester, starting Friday, Oct. 30; noon.</u></b>	Attend the Friday noon “brown-bag” seminar presentations by the Summer-cohort students. The talks are usually held in SCIE 1511. The seminar notices will be distributed to MCB department members one week in advance. <b>All students are required to attend all of these seminar presentations. Attendance will be recorded. Any absenteeism should be reported to the course coordinator prior to the date, providing an appropriate reason. An incomplete grade will be assigned for undocumented absenteeism.</b>	
<b><u>Before Nov. 30</u></b>	Ms. Carol Schlaht will advise you when you may contact her to schedule your seminar slot for the Winter semester.	
<b><u>Monday, Dec. 14; noon</u></b>	Submit <b>two printed copies</b> of your RP to the Coordinator. Also, send an <b>electronic</b> copy (.pdf format) by e-mail: <a href="mailto:djosephy@uoguelph.ca">djosephy@uoguelph.ca</a> . You are also responsible for delivering a copy of your RP to each member of your Advisory Committee. The graded RPs will normally be returned to you two weeks before your “brown-bag” seminar in the winter semester.  <b>A penalty of 10% will be applied for any late submission.</b>	

## **Appendix 2. Literature Assignment: Specifications for the Report**

The content and editorial specifications of the LA report should follow these guidelines. Suggested page lengths for each section are given on the Grading Rubric, which is the next Appendix.

**Title Page:** The title page should include:

- Title: your own concise statement of the topic of your analysis;
- The complete reference for your article, in the format used by the journal “*Molecular and Cellular Biology*” ([http://mcb.asm.org/site/misc/journal-ita\\_org.xhtml#02](http://mcb.asm.org/site/misc/journal-ita_org.xhtml#02));
- Your name, program (M.Sc. or Ph.D.), and your Advisor's name;
- Date of submission.

**Abstract (Suitable for Press Release):**

Place the Abstract at the beginning of your document, but it should be the *last* section that you write. Write an abstract of no more than 250 words, explaining the intellectual and scientific context, results, and outcome of the research reported in your article in a form that could be published in a general-interest magazine or newspaper - that is, in plain language for the general public. Do not paraphrase the authors' abstract or use technical terms. Define essential scientific words within your abstract. This may be the most challenging part of the assignment!

**Intellectual and Human Context:**

Summarize the intellectual and human contexts of the research reported in your article, including answers to all the questions considered during Steps 1 and 3. Discuss the research literature relevant to the work (the intellectual context).

**Table of Methods:**

Compile a list of the methods used by your researchers into a Table. Indicate which method will be described in your report. Include references to resources that explain the method. The table should follow the format below.

#	Method	Reference
1	Inoculation of petri plates	(1)
2	Bacterial cell culture	(1)
3	Cell disruption (French pressure cell)	(2)
4	Cell fractionation by differential centrifugation	(3)
5	Enzyme purification by Ni(NTA) affinity chromatography	(3)
6	Protein assay	(4)
7	A specific enzyme assay	(5)*

\*This method is particularly critical to the reported research and is therefore described below.

In the table above, the references might refer to, for example: (1) appropriate pages in Gerhardt's Methods for General and Molecular Bacteriology; (2) Freifelder's Physical Biochemistry: Applications to

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology; (3) a document provided online by Qiagen, Inc.; (4) a journal article that describes a particular protein assay; and (5) a relevant volume of *Methods in Enzymology* or a journal article. If a method is described completely in the article you are analyzing, your article can be used as the citation for that method. Please do not cite undergraduate lab manuals, since they are not published documents.

### **Explanation of a Method:**

After obtaining the Course Coordinator's approval for your selection, explain the method that you selected during Step 2 by answering these questions:

How is the method performed? What data are obtained? How are the data interpreted? What information is gained by using this method?

Diagrams often help to explain research methods; you may include diagrams in your report, and they are not included in the page limits.

In writing this explanation, imagine that you are answering the questions above for a student colleague who is not familiar with the selected method. For examples of explanations like the one you will write, see Nelson and Cox, *Lehninger Principles of Biochemistry*, 5th Edition (Section 3.3, "Working with Proteins") or the explanations of research methods provided by the reference books cited in Step 2. Also, think about the best lab manuals provided during your undergraduate studies. Your goal will be to write such an explanation of the most important/novel method used by your authors, in your own words. Note that you should explain the method (how it works, what it does) rather than writing an experimental protocol. Thus experimental details (1 mL of this added to 2 mL of that) are not usually required.

### **Hypothesis/ Question; Analysis of Results; Subsequent Work:**

Target this report for other professionals in your discipline (faculty, students, staff). Summarize the experimental results obtained by your authors, as specified in Step 4. Do *not* paraphrase the Results section of your article... rather write your own, analytical summary of the results. Illustrate this section with flow charts (*e.g.*, for protein purification), tables and figures of your own design. Refer specifically to your Tables and Figures (*e.g.*, Smith *et al.* analyzed the effects of several mutations on chemotaxis. Their results are summarized in Table 1) and to the data in the article you are analyzing (*e.g.*, Smith *et al.* observed that bacteria lacking CheA were unable to respond to aspartate as a chemoattractant (Fig. 4 of Smith *et al.* (10)). Do *not* reproduce tables and figures from your article in your report.

Summarize the outcome of the research, including both the authors' own interpretation (summarized during Step 5), that of other authors, and subsequent research (summarized during Step 6). Do *not* paraphrase the Discussion section of your article! Look back at the review articles on your topic for examples of the style to be adopted here.

Use the on-line Science Citation Index to find subsequent articles citing a specific paper. One way to access the Science Citation Index is as follows:

1. Go to the Journal Articles page of the University Library web site.  
<http://ja.lib.uoguelph.ca/>
2. Search for Web of Science by database title and go to the Web of Science site.
3. Select Web of Science from the drop down menu next to the Orange Search tab.
4. The default search is "Basic Search". Instead, click the blue down-arrow to open the drop-down menu, and select "Cited Reference Search".

5. Enter minimal information to obtain a list of references including the one of interest. For example, search with the distinctive names of two authors. This approach will be easier than trying to enter detailed citation data for the particular article of interest.

6. Select the article of interest and click “Finish Search”. The citing articles will be listed, with additional citation info.

Let’s find the articles that have cited this paper: Romantsov, T., Helbig, S., Culham, D.E., Gill, C., Stalker, L., Wood, J.M., Cardiolipin promotes polar localization of osmosensory transporter ProP in *Escherichia coli*, *Mol. Microbiol.* 64:1455-1465, 2007.

At the “Cited Reference Search” screen, in the first window (“Cited Author”); enter the names: “Romantsov and Helbig” (which are probably more distinctive than “Wood” or “Gill”). Click “Search”; the target paper will be retrieved.

Select the article and click “Finish Search”.

To prepare the citation summary table, list the number of citations per year, the number of self-citations per year, and up to three examples of journal names per year, selected to illustrate the breadth of impact of the work. Discuss a few of the citing articles (a few sentences each, including your citations of the articles discussed).

For example, a citation summary for the target article is given below.

Year	Citations	Self-citations	Journals
2007	2	0	<i>Mol. Microbiol.</i> , <i>Curr. Opin. Microbiol.</i>
2008	11	2	<i>Ann. Rev. Biochem.</i> , <i>Biophys. J.</i> , <i>Infect. Immun.</i>
2009	11	1	<i>Chem. Phys. Lipids</i> , <i>Cold Spring Harb. Persp. Biol.</i> , <i>J. Mol. Biol.</i>
2010	7	1	<i>Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.</i>
2011	14	1	<i>Curr. Opin. Cell Biol.</i> , <i>New Engl. J. Med.</i> , <i>J. Food Prot.</i>
2012	15	1	<i>J. Med. Microbiol.</i> , <i>Rapid Commun. Mass Spectrom.</i>
2013	6	0	<i>Crit. Rev. Biochem. Molec. Biol.</i> , <i>Int. J. Molec. Sci.</i>
Total	66	6	

### Reference List:

Using *Molecular and Cellular Biology* format, cite appropriate references in your text and list the references cited in your report. Marks will be deducted if the reference citation format is inconsistent/incorrect. Remember that this is a reference list, not a bibliography; every item in your reference list must be cited in the text of your report.

As stated in the Course Outline, the LA should be prepared single-sided, double-spaced, with a standard 12-point font (e.g., Times New Roman) and 1" margins. Please do not leave blank lines between paragraphs. The total length of the LA should be about 15 pages.

**Appendix 3. Literature Assignment: Grading Rubric**

Student:

Grader:

Component	Grade	(max.)
<b>Intellectual Context</b> (2-3 pages): What was known at the time? Who else was interested? Are specific publications discussed and cited to illustrate these points (including some that were not cited by the article under analysis?)		5
<i>Comments:</i>		
<b>Human Context</b> (1 page): Who did the work, where and with what support? Where was the work published? Why did the authors do this research?		2
<i>Comments:</i>		
<b>Table of Methods:</b> Is the table complete? Are adequate references cited?		5
<i>Comments:</i>		
<b>Explanation of a Method</b> (2 pages): How is it performed? What data are obtained? How are the data interpreted? What information is gained?		5
<i>Comments:</i>		
<b>Hypothesis / Question</b> (½ page): What question did the researchers ask? / What hypothesis did they test?		2
<i>Comments:</i>		



<p><b>Analysis of Results</b> (3 pages): Are all results discussed – with reference to specific tables and figures in the article? Are results summarized in new tables/figures? Were the techniques appropriate? Were statistics used appropriately? How did the authors' interpret their work? Do their data support their interpretations?</p>		5
<p><i>Comments:</i></p>		
<p><b>Citation Index Output</b> (to be placed in Dropbox, but not printed out): Was the Cited Reference Search performed correctly?</p>		1
<p><i>Comments:</i></p>		
<p><b>Subsequent Work</b> (3 pages): Is the output from Science Citation Index summarized in a table and discussed? Are the results from a few key, subsequent articles discussed? What does the subsequent work tell us about the significance of the analyzed research article?</p>		5
<p><i>Comments:</i></p>		
<p><b>Abstract</b> (250 words): Does the abstract cover all aspects of the analysis? Are jargon and acronyms avoided, technical terms defined? Would it be understood by an interested person who is not a scientist?</p>		5
<p><i>Comments:</i></p>		

<b>Editorial Quality</b>		5
<i>Comments:</i>		
<b>Total Grade</b>		40

***Grade summary:***

<b>Component</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>(max.)</b>
Intellectual Context		5
Table of Methods		5
Explanation of a Method		5
Human Context		2
Hypothesis / Question		2
Analysis of Results		5
Citation Index Output		1
Subsequent Work		5
Abstract		5
Editorial Quality		5
<b>Total Grade</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40</b>

#### **Appendix 4. Learning Outcomes for MCB\*6500 and MCB\*7500**

We are confident that you can already read and learn science; otherwise, you would not be in graduate school! Now, you are moving from passive to *active* involvement in your field. Instead of just learning what other scientists have done, you are now going to be creating new knowledge and putting your own ideas forward.

These courses are focused on the development of your *intellectual independence*. You will be learning how to study the literature: identifying important papers, reading them critically, summarizing them, and thinking about their significance. You will be learning how to *synthesize* what you have read: that is, rather than just reading specific papers or reviews one at a time, and repeating their conclusions, you will be trying to *integrate them into a coherent whole*, making a "mental map" of how they fit together. Perhaps you read a 1996 paper which hypothesized that one particular gene is regulated by another; and a 1999 paper that proved that this hypothesis is correct; but then a 2002 paper said, "No, it's not so". Finally, a 2005 paper resolved the apparent contradiction, by showing that the hypothesis is correct in yeast, but is incorrect in mammals. What you have now assembled is a *narrative*: a sequence of contributions that fit together to make a story, advancing our knowledge of the subject. Making coherent sense out of these distinct facts is *integration*, and learning to do this is an important part of your maturation as a student. Based on your understanding of the state of the field, you will then explain the contribution that you hope to make. Finally, in the seminar, you will convey all these ideas to your audience.

*Reading the scientific literature*: A naive reader will take everything he or she reads "for granted", as the plain truth. A sophisticated reader recognizes that each writer - even a scrupulously honest author - has a particular point of view, with biases, preconceptions, or misunderstandings that colour his or her work. Sorting out the true from the false, the brilliant from the mediocre, the innovative from the mundane - these are aspects of critical analysis. They are examples of the most general question that we all must grapple with: what is the nature of the "good"?

The understanding and wisdom you are developing as a graduate student will bring little reward unless you can express them in words that others can follow and understand. So, another key aspect of the course is development of your writing skills. Scientific writing is a specialized art: you need to learn the rules and practices of good general writing, and you also need to learn the disciplinary conventions. The skills you develop now will serve you throughout your career - when you write manuscripts, prepare your thesis, and, later, when you write grant applications, contract proposals, technical reports, and so on.

*Originality*: Your written and oral presentations for this course are understood to be your own original creative work. Putting your name on your presentations is a type of warranty, certifying that you are the author of the work and are responsible for its content. Scientists are deeply aware of the problem of plagiarism. This is because our most important outputs are our words, data, and drawings. Baseball players can point to their home runs; construction contractors can show off the houses they have built; but most scientists can only point to their publications - their *ideas*. If someone else takes credit for those ideas, the real author feels violated. A person who advances his or her career by presenting other peoples' ideas as his own is cheating - gaining an undeserved advantage over his or her peers.

Plagiarism can be defined as "using others' work and misrepresenting that work as your own". The strategy for steering clear of accusations of plagiarism is the same as the strategy for productive studying. If you have studied a paper carefully and achieved a deep understanding of what you have read, then you should be able to put the paper away, go to bed, and get up the next morning and write down, in your own

words, the key ideas of the paper, without having to look at it again. If you can't do that, then you did not read the paper thoroughly enough. Anybody can copy out passages of a published paper; that does not make you a scientist, any more than copying out a Shakespeare sonnet makes you a poet.

From time to time, you may wish to quote from another's work. Perhaps you have read a statement or definition that was so apposite that you want to "show it off" to the reader. If so, put it in quotation marks. But this will be an occasional luxury, not a consistent pattern. *Even a single word* should be placed in quotation marks, *if it is a word that you would not normally have used yourself*, or if you wish to indicate a "coinage" - the introduction of a new expression into the language:

*The philosophical theory known as "utilitarianism" was developed by John Stuart Mill.*

*In 1987, the Brundtland Commission of the United Nations put forward the concept of "sustainable development".*

The same considerations apply to visual material as apply to writing. You should avoid reproducing figures from other sources, and never do so without acknowledging the source. Almost always, you will find that the published figure is not exactly what you need for your presentation, in any case. If you draw your own figure, then you will draw *exactly what you want to show*, and you will not need to "mold" your presentation to fit someone else's vision. In particular, if you take figures or slides from your advisor or your lab colleagues, this must be explicitly acknowledged.

When you discuss and analyze published work, you may need to reproduce figures from other sources. You could put a slide on the screen and say, for example, "Here is the dose-response curve measured by Higgins and colleagues in 1995. You can see that it is linear at low doses, and then drops off above 10  $\mu\text{mol}$ ." This is simply an appropriate analysis of previous work. In contrast, if you show a slide illustrating the structure of the plant cell wall, and use it to illustrate your ideas, *without acknowledging that the slide was taken from a textbook*, then you are plagiarizing, just as if you had used someone else's words.

If you have any questions or concerns about the topics discussed here, please feel free to discuss them with the course instructors.

**Appendix 5. Research Proposal: Grading Scheme**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. Literature Review (50 points).** Criteria: thorough coverage of the research field with appropriate citation of the primary research literature, rather than dependence on review articles; critical analysis of past work in the field; emphasis on current progress rather than historical developments; clear indication of the research problems and delineation of specific objectives.

Comments:

**B. Research Proposal (30 points).** Criteria: Development and clear statement of hypotheses; appropriate use of experimental system(s); suitability of technical approaches; anticipated outcomes and potential obstacles.

Comments:

**C. Editorial quality (20 points).** Criteria: Spelling; grammar; style; effective use of Tables and Figures; format. (It is expected that the LRRP will benefit from the judicious use of tables and figures. Students are encouraged to include some tables and figures that are original works, synthesizing relevant materials, rather than simply reproducing all of the tables and figures from published sources.)

Comments:

*Additional comments:*

Professor: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_/50   B: \_\_\_\_/30   C: \_\_\_\_/20  
Final % Grade: \_\_\_\_

**Appendix 6. "Brown-bag" Seminar: Grading Scheme**  
**MCB\*6500/ MCB\*7500 Research Topics in MCB:**  
**Grading Sheet for Seminar Presentations, S2015**

Please return to David Josephy (Course Coordinator)

Student Name:

Seminar Date:

**A. Background: knowledge of the literature and understanding of the subject (20 points).**

**B. Research Proposal: Clearly stated hypothesis and/or objectives; rationale for experimental strategy chosen; originality and significance; consideration of potential obstacles; analysis of possible outcomes (25 points).**

**C. Presentation skills: organization; clarity; speech; pace; enthusiasm (25 points).**

**D. Question period: ability to respond to questions (20 points).**

**E. Suitability of presentation for an audience with diverse scientific backgrounds (10 points).**

*Additional comments, if any:*

Professor:

Signature:

**A: \_\_\_/20   B: \_\_\_/25   C: \_\_\_/25   D: \_\_\_/20   E: \_\_\_/10   Final % grade: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Note: A 5% penalty will be applied by the course coordinator to presentations which deviate more than 5 min from the allotted 30 min for the talk.**

## **Appendix 7. Prof. Josephy's Writing Tips**

### **Commonly misspelled words**

derivative; electrophilic/ hydrophilic/ nucleophilic/ lipophilic (only one "l"); fluor, fluorescent ("u" before "o"); gauge; inoculate (only one "n"); innocuous (two "n" s); naphthalene ("h"s both before and after the "t"); occurs (single "r"); occurring, occurred (double "r"); parallel; phosphorus (element) vs. phosphorous (+3 oxidation state of phosphorus); separate.

"i" before "e", except after "c", or when sounded as "ay", as in *neighbour* and *weigh*:  
yield; receipt; freight (but "protein" is an exception to this rule!)

The word "alot" does not exist.

### **Frequently confused words**

"its" = *possessive case of the pronoun it*; "it's" = *contraction of "it is"*

Compare: "Virtue is its own reward" vs "It's a nice day for a walk."

*Note: Contractions ("it's", "don't", "can't", etc.) are best avoided altogether, in formal writing!*

### **The nouns affect and effect:**

An *effect* is a result or consequence. "The main effect of the recent recession was a rise in the unemployment rate." (There is also a noun *affect*, but it is rarely used, except in psychology or psychiatry; it means an emotion or mood: "Her affect was subdued because of chronic depression".)

### **The verbs affect and effect:**

To *affect* means to influence: "The presence of contaminating proteins affected the yield of the ligation reaction."

To *effect* means to bring about, to accomplish: "The implementation of all of our standard operating procedures has now been effected."

(The verb "to affect" also has another meaning: to pretend: "The actor, although English, affected an Australian accent." This meaning is related to the noun "affectation"; you are unlikely to encounter this meaning in scientific writing.)

### **The nouns dependent and dependant:**

A dependant (noun) is a person supported by another: "The tax credit is made available to the parent and his or her dependants." Dependent (adjective) means *influenced by*: "The rate of the reaction is dependent on substrate concentration."

### **The verbs ensure and insure:**

To *insure* is to protect against loss: "I have insured my bicycle against theft." To *ensure* is to make certain: "I have ensured that all the campfires have been put out."



### ***Than and then:***

***than*** (conjunction used in comparisons) vs. ***then*** (adverb describing temporal order)

Correct: The incubator is warmer than room temperature.

Correct: The cells were lysed and then the lysate was centrifuged.

### **Numerals and units:**

In English, we distinguish between things that can be counted (such as books and bricks) and things that cannot, such as a length of time or a weight of sand. The word “fewer” is used in the former case and the word “less” in the latter. Compare: “Our department hired fewer faculty in 2014 than in 2013.” vs “My laptop uses less power than my desktop computer.”

Counting numbers (integers) less than ten should be *written out as words*. “Our book club has 127 members. Seven members serve on the Board of Directors and three on the Newsletter Committee”.

If a quantity is *not* a counting number, then it should be written as a numeral: “The temperature is 4 °C”; not “The temperature is four °C”. (After all, the temperature might be 4.14 °C, and it would be absurd to write ““The temperature is four point one four °C””!)

A measure is singular, regardless of size. “1 mL of water was added.” “12 mL of water was added.” (If we write “12 mL of water were added”, this would imply that we added 1 mL of water at a time, 12 times!)

The *best* practice is simply to avoid using measures and units as subjects. Instead, use the substance as the subject. Write: “Water (12 mL) was added” rather than “12 mL of water was added.” This construction is simpler and it focuses attention where it belongs: on the subject (water) rather than on the measure and the units.

### **Common Latin abbreviations:**

*i.e.* = id est = that is: “The test is mandatory; *i.e.*, it must be written.”

*e.g.* = exempli gratia = for example: “Many different countries have hosted the football World Cup, *e.g.*, France, Japan, the U.S.A., and Brazil.”

*et al.* = et alia = and others. “The authors of the paper are Wright, Wakabayashi, et al.”

Note that “et” is *not* an abbreviation and is *not* followed by a period.

When writing these abbreviations (or other foreign-language terms), it is standard to use *italic* font.

When speaking, it is best to substitute the English equivalent.

### **Bibliographies**

In your bibliographies, capitalize only the first word of a title - even if different conventions are used in the journal itself (some journals capitalize every major word of a title, when typesetting a paper). Include volume and page numbers but not issue numbers; do not include “doi” information.

#### *Correct:*

Poon, J.C., and Josephy, P.D., Hydrolysis of S-aryl-cysteinylglycine conjugates catalyzed by porcine kidney cortex membrane dipeptidase, *Xenobiotica* 42: 1178-1186, 2012.

#### *Incorrect (in several ways):*

Poon, J.C., and Josephy, P.D., Hydrolysis of S-Aryl-cysteinylglycine Conjugates Catalyzed by Porcine Kidney Cortex Membrane Dipeptidase, *Xenobiotica*. 42(12): 1178-86, 2012.

doi: 10.3109/00498254.2012.700427.

In a title and at the beginning of a sentence, the first non-Greek letter after a lowercase Greek letter should be capitalized.

*Correct:*  $\gamma$ -Globulin from the same sample but containing no Cu salt served as copper control.

*Incorrect:*  $\gamma$ -globulin from the same sample but containing no Cu salt served as copper control.

The same rule applies to numerals:

*Correct:* 1-Naphthol 2-hydroxylase catalyzes the conversion of 1-naphthol to 1,2-dihydroxynaphthalene.

*Incorrect:* 1-naphthol 2-hydroxylase catalyzes the conversion of 1-naphthol to 1,2-dihydroxynaphthalene.

**The most common grammatical errors that one sees in MCB\*6500 papers.**

**1. Failure to use a comma where it is appropriate (especially after an introductory phrase or clause).**

*Correct:* After IMAC purification, a single band was seen on the gel.

*Incorrect:* After IMAC purification a single band was seen on the gel.

*Correct:* To perform the assay, substrate is added to the enzyme at time  $t=0$ .

*Incorrect:* To perform the assay substrate is added to the enzyme at time  $t=0$ .

**The failure to use commas to set off a nonrestrictive phrase or clause** is a similar error.

*Correct:* Hemoglobin, which is the body's major reservoir of iron, can undergo autoxidation.

*Incorrect:* Hemoglobin which is the body's major reservoir of iron can undergo autoxidation.

(Note that, when reading these sentences, you would naturally pause at the comma. In most cases, the written comma corresponds to the pause in speech.)

**2. Unnecessary (intruding) commas;** *e.g.*, do not use a comma between a single subject and its verb.

*Correct:* The recombinant protein will be purified by IMAC.

*Incorrect:* The recombinant protein, will be purified by IMAC.

**3. Comma splice:** joining two independent clauses with a comma.

*Incorrect:* The enzyme assay was highly sensitive, fluorescence spectroscopy was used for detecting the product.

*Correct:* Use a semi-colon: "The enzyme assay was highly sensitive; fluorescence spectroscopy was used for detecting the product". Or, as a better solution, join the clauses with an appropriate conjunction: "The enzyme assay was highly sensitive because fluorescence spectroscopy was used for detecting the product."

**3. Failure of subject-verb agreement;** most commonly, this causes difficulties when a phrase or clause comes between the subject and the predicate.

Correct: Misfolded intermediates of this protein cause cytotoxicity. (The subject is “intermediates” (plural), not “protein” (singular)).

Incorrect: Misfolded intermediates of this protein causes cytotoxicity.

4. Failure to **hyphenate compound modifiers**. *Compound adjectives* are two or more words that together make an adjective. When they come directly before a noun, they’re known as “compound modifiers” and are usually hyphenated: noise-canceling headphones; blunt-end ligation. The hyphen prevents confusion: would a “public school opening” be the opening of a public school, or the public ceremony opening some other type of school? “Public-school opening” makes it clear that we mean the former, not the latter. (I saw a headline recently that referred to an accident causing “non-life threatening injuries!”).

Correct: I will need a wake-up call in the morning. (*Wake-up* is a compound modifier of *call*.)

Incorrect: I will need a wake up call in the morning.

Correct: I need to wake up at 6 a.m. (*Wake up* is a phrasal verb and should not be hyphenated.)

Incorrect: I need to wake-up at 6 a.m.

5. Use a semicolon, not a comma, to join two independent clauses separated by a conjunctive adverb. The conjunctive adverbs include **accordingly, consequently, hence, however, moreover, otherwise, therefore, and thus**.

Correct: The basement membrane does not contribute to selectivity; however, damage to this membrane leads to proteinuria.

Incorrect: The basement membrane does not contribute to selectivity, however damage to this membrane leads to proteinuria.

## **Appendix 8. Policies:**

*E-mail Communication:* As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

*When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement:* If you are unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the Coordinator in writing, as soon as possible, giving your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Graduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration.

*Drop Date:* The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is March 6.

*Academic Misconduct:* The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community - faculty, staff, and students - to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Graduate Calendar.

*Recording:* Presentations cannot be recorded without the prior written permission of the presenter (whether instructor, student, or guest lecturer.)

*Resources:* The University Graduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations which apply to graduate programs.