



Botany & Microbiology at The University of Oklahoma



Bot 4983 - Plant Biology for the 21st Century Course Description

SUMMARY – The Botany Capstone course (Bot 4983) is designed as an independent student research project supervised by a faculty member who is part of a three-member Capstone advisory committee. The Capstone supervisor and two other advisory committee members will be chosen according to the student's interests and the nature of the project. The research project undertaken by the student may be based on library research or a combination of laboratory, field, and library activities. Results must be written up and orally defended before the three-member advisory committee.

Meeting time – There is no set meeting time for Bot 4983. The Botany Capstone represents independent research with activities, timetables, and effort dictated by the project.

Grading – Bot 4983 is S/U graded.

Selection of Capstone supervisor and advisory committee members – Students must identify their research interests and find a faculty member who is willing to serve as their Capstone supervisor. Potential supervisors should be contacted either before (preferable) or during the first week of the semester when the student is enrolled in Bot 4983. In addition to the supervisor, the Capstone advisory committee is made up of two other faculty members. Selection of advisory committee members can be guided by the Capstone supervisor.

Nature and scope of the Capstone project – Botany Capstone projects vary from student to student, depending on their research interests, their Capstone supervisor, and the nature of the independent research project. Bot 4983 is designed to be flexible and to allow close interaction with faculty.

Outcome of the Capstone project – The Botany Capstone is designed to integrate and culminate an undergraduate's training in plant biology. Outcomes for Bot 4983 must include:

- 1) A written product (i.e., a 'senior thesis')
This will vary in length and format depending on the nature of the independent research.
- 2) An oral 'defense' of the thesis in front of the entire Capstone advisory committee.

It is strongly recommended that results of the project are communicated orally, such as at a research conference or in a seminar.

Learning objectives of the Botany Capstone – There are five main objectives:

1. To integrate coursework and learning experiences of a Botany undergraduate degree
2. To become familiar with the process and activities associated with independent research
3. To develop research skills and to gain expertise in a particular area of plant biology
4. To improve scientific and technical writing skills
5. To gain experience in communication of scientific results in both written and oral formats

Timetable – The Botany Capstone course should be completed in one semester.

After a project has been developed with the Capstone supervisor, work on the research project must progress rapidly and consistently. Because the written component of the capstone usually requires multiple drafts and several revisions, the first draft of the Capstone thesis should be handed in to the supervisor several weeks before the end of the semester. Once the supervisor accepts the thesis, it is distributed to the entire Capstone committee. An oral defense of the Capstone thesis must be held in front of the full advisory committee before the last day of finals week.

Questions? Please consult the handout entitled “*Preparing a Botany Capstone Project*”: *Tips, Hints, and Suggestions*”, prepared by Ms. Amy Ramsey (a former Botany student). The handout can be viewed online at the Botany & Microbiology website at URL: <<http://www.ou.edu/cas/botany-micro/botany-capstone.html>>. The Botany Capstone Coordinator should be contacted (contact data below) for additional information.

Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct

Students participating in the Botany Capstone course are expected to adhere to the highest academic and ethical standards set by the University of Oklahoma and other professional organizations. The underlying principles underlying academic endeavors at the University of Oklahoma are focused on academic integrity, which entails honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Academic misconduct includes the following: 1) cheating, 2) plagiarism, 3) fabrication, 4) fraud, 5) destruction, misappropriation or unauthorized possession of university property, 6) bribery or intimidation, 7) assisting others in the aforementioned acts, and 8) attempting to engage in the aforementioned acts. Academic misconduct will not be tolerated and academic misconduct procedures will be followed if an infraction is suspected. Students are urged to review and acquaint themselves with the University of Oklahoma *Academic Misconduct Code* printed in the OU Student Code, which also can be viewed as a PDF file at the following URL: <<http://www.ou.edu/studentcode/OUStudentCode.pdf>>. Please pay particular attention to the section on academic misconduct and plagiarism.

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