

Bio 580, Spring 2009
The genetics of adaptation

Instructors:

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Meeting time: Tuesdays, 10 – 11:30 am
McDonnell 412

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Information

The purpose of this seminar course is to explore current topics on the genetics of adaptation. Emphasis will be on advances that have come about in the last decade, with the application of genomic approaches to evolutionary and ecological studies. Each week's readings will focus on a particular topic and will often include a combination of review articles and empirical studies.

Course Organization

Students enrolled in the course will be responsible for leading discussions, with two students assigned per week. Each student will be a discussion leader twice during the semester.

The two discussion leaders for a given week may wish to meet with one of the course instructors ahead of time to discuss strategies for preparing their presentations. In some cases, the presenters may decide to divide up a week's topic by article; in other cases, it may make more sense to divide up the topic by theme.

Guidelines for Discussion Leaders

Each seminar leader will begin their portion of the discussion with a presentation of approximately 20 minutes. The primary goal of these presentations is to make the assigned readings understandable to all seminar participants. Be explanatory, and present the material in an orderly manner. Your presentations should emphasize interpretation of the papers over criticism. Technical material that is needed to understand the readings should be presented thoroughly. If participants get lost early in the presentation, they may be unable to follow the rest of the discussion.

While you should concentrate on the assigned readings, you may find it useful to bring background or other material into your presentation. You are welcome to do so, but you should keep the emphasis on the assigned readings. After giving your presentation, begin the discussion by raising specific points in the readings. Keep the comments of

discussion participants directed towards the main issues of the seminar, and try to place comments into a useful context relative to the overall discussion.

A secondary goal of the 20-minute presentations is for students to develop skills in making oral presentations. You will be receiving feedback from the instructors on the organization and format of your presentations along with potential suggestions for improvement.

Guidelines for Participants

Students enrolled in the course are required to read all assigned articles each week and to come to class prepared to discuss the papers. Come with a list of specific questions/comments for the discussion and plan to be an active participant each week.

Readings

PDFs of each week's assigned readings will be available on the Bio 580 course website:

<http://www.nslc.wustl.edu/courses/Bio580/bio580.html>

Grading

Course grades will be based on your effectiveness as a discussion leader (65%) and your active, insightful contribution to discussions (35%).