



BSC 595 Research Literature and Technique

COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2026 CRN: 23737

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Walter Paulin Tapondjou Nkonmeneck

Course Location: Online

Office Location: STC 208

Office Hours: MWF 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM (via [Zoom](#) by appointment only)

Office Phone: (903) 886-5221

University Email Address: walter.tapondjou@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: **Email**

Communication Response Time: less than 48 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Textbooks: No textbook is required

Additional Texts and/or Materials: Peer-reviewed articles

Course Description

This course is designed for the non-thesis option students in the last semester of their MS in Biology program. Upon satisfactory completion of this course, the students are deemed to have met all the academic requirements for graduation. This course has three major components. The first component will consist of a weekly learning activity on the major aspects of scientific literature review related to a topic to be selected by each student from a range of broad topic areas provided by the instructor of record. The

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second one is the integration of the information obtained on the selected topic and the production of a scientific research paper. The third part will be a comprehensive exit examination that will contain questions from at least five graduate courses offered by the Department of Biological and Environment Sciences.

1. Research literature coursework

This coursework is designed to provide graduate students with fundamental knowledge and working experience in gathering scientific information and producing a systematic review from a variety of authentic sources in a selected area. In addition to independently writing and submitting assignments, students will also learn some major aspects of writing an insightful scientific review. One major purpose of this course is to improve written communication skills of the students. There will be short PowerPoint files on major areas in the process of preparing and writing a scientific review paper in a professional scientific format.

2. Production of a scientific research review paper

The first step will be the identification of a topic for the review. The topic will be selected in consultation with the instructor from the broad areas provided. Once the topic is finalized before the set deadline the student will start working on the review and will submit a complete draft for review to the instructor before the set deadline. The instructor will provide feedback or corrections as necessary. The student is expected to address all the concerns/corrections and will submit the final copy of the review before a set deadline. Check the course schedule for the deadlines.

3. Comprehensive exit examination

Students are expected to take a comprehensive exit exam as a part of the BSC 595 course and as a requirement for graduation. Questions for different courses will be prepared by the faculty teaching each graduate course. Each student will select at least five graduate courses related to their discipline within biology for this exam. Therefore, not all the students will have the same set of questions. Students are expected to dedicate time each week to reading, writing, and practicing the skills we cover in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Define literature review and understand the concept of systematic review.
2. Understand the differences between traditional reviews and systematic reviews.
3. Describe the main steps associated with the review process and understand the importance of setting a timeline.
4. Defining the scope of the review and write the review within that scope.
5. Understand the search concepts and practice data mining.
6. Identify the importance of assessing the relevance of the information gathered.
7. Describe the steps associated with the synthesis of collected information.
8. Understand the methods of analysis and integration of findings.
9. Describe the main elements required when writing and presenting the review.

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10. Produce an insightful research review.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

- Proficiency in using the D2L Brightspace Learning Management System through myLeo Online.
- Proficiency in the use of Microsoft Word and PowerPoint.
- Other relevant graphics programs for preparing effective PowerPoint presentations.

Instructional Methods

This course is being offered as a “Web Based” course. All course materials will be posted in D2L. The course consists of a series of activities and assessments to assist you in achieving the outcomes for all instructional units in the course. In case of any difficulty in accessing or understanding any course material, contact me immediately via e-mail. I will post announcements on the course homepage to remind students of important due dates, in addition to announcing them in class. Students can monitor their progress in the course on the course webpage in D2L Brightspace.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

- Submitting assignments before deadlines;
- Studying previous course materials to take exit exams;
- Students are encouraged to take as many exams as possible rather than taking the minimum required number of exams.
- Checking both course pages and emails for course-related announcements

GRADING

Assignments: 60%

Meeting deadlines: 10%

Review paper/Essay: 30%

Comprehensive exit exam: 0% (Not counted towards the course grade)

Important Notes:

1. If a student submits all the assignments before the deadline, he/she will get 10%. For each late submission 2% will be deducted. Therefore, consistent late submission of the assignments may result in a deduction of up to one letter grade.

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2. There will be six assignments, and each one will contribute 10% to the final grade in the course.

Assignment grading plan:

Presentation of a clear purpose	2%
Main idea	2%
Organization	2%
Style and conclusions	2%
Grammar	2%

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%, B = 80%-89%, C = 70%-79%, D = 60%-69%, F = 59% or Below

Assessments

There will be three types of assessments that will contribute to the grade. These are:

1. Research literature coursework assignments: There will be six assignments.
2. Scientific literature review (essay)
3. Meeting deadlines

A passing grade (30/50 or 60%) in the Comprehensive exit exam is required for BSC 595 course completion and graduation. This score is also utilized as one of the assessment tools for the Institutional Effectiveness of the graduate program. This score is not counted towards the course grade.

Important information:

1. All assignments should be submitted before the deadlines.
2. **There will be no extra credit points for** offering to do additional work. A student's grade will be based exclusively on the points he/she earns in the categories listed above.

Requirements of Research Literature Review Paper Topic:

The topic of your literature review paper must meet the following two requirements.

1. The topic should focus on one of the following areas of biology:
 - Cell and Molecular Biology
 - Classical and Molecular Genetics
 - Ecology
 - Physiology including human, animal, and microbial physiology
2. The topic should challenge the existing scientific paradigm(s) and practices to formulate a breakthrough hypothesis for future research.

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Formatting Guidelines: *

Assignments: paper size – letter; margins – 1" all sides; font size – 12; font types – Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri only; line spacing – single; page limits – one page only; file format – MS Word (Don't convert your file to a PDF).

Review paper/essay: paper size – letter; margins – 1" all sides; font size – 12; font types – Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri only; line spacing – double; page limits – minimum 20, maximum 30, excluding form pages, figures and table, and bibliography/list of references; **file format – MS Word only (not PDF).**

*Submissions not conforming to these guidelines will not be accepted and graded.

Tentative Course schedule: *(adjustments may be made later at instructor's discretion)

Unit 1, Jan 12 – Jan 16	<p>Unit 1: Scientific process</p> <p>Introduction to literature review; importance of review in scientific research; how to review a scientific paper.</p> <p>Identify and finalize the topic for Research Literature Review</p> <p>Assignment 1 Deadline: Submit your selected topic for BSC 595 Research Literature & Review for instructor's approval 01/22/2026; 11:59 PM, CST</p>
Unit 1, Jan 20 – Jan 30	<p>Continuation of Unit 1</p> <p>Critical elements of a proposal abstract</p> <p>Assignment 2 Deadline:</p> <p>A) Identify key parts of an abstract and critique.</p> <p>B) Formulate a directional hypothesis 02/05/2026, 11:59 PM"</p>
Unit 2, Feb 2 – Feb 6	<p>Unit 2: Literature review approaches</p> <p>Identify various types of research; analyze the structure and limitations of a research article.</p> <p>Assignment 3 Deadline:</p> <p>Peer-review the article posted in D2L and submit the report by 02/12/2026, CST.</p>
Unit 2, Feb 9 – Feb 13	<p>Continuation of Unit 2</p> <p>Assignment 4 Deadline: Submit a working outline of your BSC 595 review paper by 02/19/2026, 11:59 PM CST.</p>
Unit 3, Feb 16 – Feb 20	<p>Unit 3: Planning and preparation of literature review; avoiding plagiarism.</p>
Unit 4, Feb 23 – Feb 27	<p>Unit 4: Literature search methods and the use of the citation software.</p> <p>Comprehensive Exit Exam Deadline: TBA</p>
Unit 5, Mar 2 – Mar 6	<p>Unit 5: Identifying and defining the significance/scope of the review.</p>

The *syllabus/schedule* are subject to change.

	Assignment 5 Deadline: Submit complete Introduction of your BSC 595 paper 03/19/2026, 11:59 PM CST.
Spring Break, Mar 9 – Mar 13	Campus is closed
Unit 6, Mar 16 – Mar 20	Unit 6: Assessment of scientific evidence and findings Assignment 6 Deadline: Submit a complete abstract of the BSC 595 research review paper by 03/26/2026, 11:59 PM CST.
Unit 7, Mar 23 – Apr 3	Unit 7: Analysis of information
Unit 8, Apr 6 – Apr 10	Unit 8: Synthesis of included research literature; referencing styles; structure of abstracts; credits for other sources Review paper draft deadline: Submit the final complete draft of the research review paper by 04/16/2026, 11:59 PM CST.
Unit 9, Apr 13 – Apr 24	Unit 9: Writing up and presenting data
Unit 10, Apr 27 – May 1	Deadline: Submission of final copy of the review paper by 05/01/2026, 11.59 PM CST

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TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CVID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CVID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

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Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>.

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedures 13.99.99.R0.01](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generallInformation/attendance.aspx>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

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Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

Graduate Students Academic Integrity Policy and Form

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.pdf>

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Student Disability Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/student-disability-services/)

[https://www.tamuc.edu/student-disability-services/](http://www.tamuc.edu/student-disability-services/)

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

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Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.

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<http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html>

AI use policy [Draft 2, May 25, 2023]

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors 'guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty