

## *Departmental Honors Thesis IE: ANIMLSCI 494TI*

**Course:** ANIMLSCI 494TI

**Prerequisites:** Successful completion of ANIMLSCI 499Y and concurrent enrollment in ANIMLSCI 499T.

**Credit:** 1 credit

**Time:** Spring semester, Thursdays 5:30-6:45, ISB rm 427L

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### *COURSE DESCRIPTION*

The goal of this seminar is to enhance your Departmental Honors Thesis Experience by examining and applying your general education learning. Because this course is restricted to Departmental Honors Students who are simultaneously enrolled in 499T, the course will be small (<12 students) allowing for highly interactive seminar classes that are designed to either use your general education acquired skills to more successfully participate in your thesis and to think more deeply about the impact general education courses have had on how you approach aspects of your individual capstone. Real-world skills and issues will be implemented and discussed including: organizing a departmental “how to get involved with research” night, debating the ethics of common lab dilemmas and learning how to deliver effective research presentations.

Students will reflect on their General Education experiences and discuss how they directly impact their Honors Thesis. They will share these reflections and discuss how working in a laboratory has impacted their overall educational experience in-class. The students will then work together to organize (with the instructor) an information evening that is designed to bring together other VASCI students who are interested in joining laboratories and share their reflections on this topic. At the end of the semester the students will write a formal 5-page reflection piece that will culminate the reflection segment. In addition to co-organizing the information session, the students will also work in groups to debate case-studies on ethics in the laboratory. Finally the seminar course culminates with several classes devoted to effective presentations and peer-driven critiques of scientific presentations on their original research.

## *INTEGRATIVE EXPERIENCE*

The integrative experience is defined as the following by the General Education Council: “The Undergraduate experience can be a fragmented one. Students fulfill a set of General Education requirements, fulfill another set of requirements for the major, and take various electives. They also participate in a range of extracurricular activities. Too often they see these components of their undergraduate education as unconnected and disjointed rather than experiencing them as an integrated whole that helps prepare them for a lifetime of learning.”

The intent of most of the Honors students in the Veterinary and Animal Science major is to prepare them for veterinary school or for graduate school, however this major is performed in the context of a liberal arts education. Because students in the major take a large number of basic science courses, their general education requirements often seem disjointed from their primary major. While many of the specific higher level learning objectives listed in the IE are fulfilled by students who have chosen to perform the 6-credit Individual Honors Thesis, this course is meant to supplement and enhance the Individual Honors Thesis Experience, elevating it to an IE course. As an IE it will not only directly explore the impacts that general education courses have had on how their research is directed, executed, researched and assembled but it is also intended to use some of the General Education acquired skills to enhance their thesis work.

One of important aspect of an IE is reflection- which allows for a deeper understanding of how the general education curriculum has impacted learning. After reflecting on paper and in class, the students will co-organize and participate in a “How to get involved in research” evening designed to encourage younger students to get involved in research by publicly discussing the impact that being in a laboratory has had on their education. The reflection component of this course will culminate with a final 5-page paper reflection.

A third important criterion of the IE is the creation of a shared learning experience for applying students’ prior knowledge to real-world problem. While the individual thesis experience in our department often involves a shared learning experience, the last 4 sessions of this course will directly formulate a shared learning experience. Specifically we will have an in-class discussion involving ethical and moral dilemmas faced in the lab- specifically in data reporting and data manipulation. Additionally a class session will be devoted to effective presentations- a skill that involves design, oral communication and language arts. In two class sessions students will use their own thesis defense presentations to both convey information to one another and using the art of constructive criticism to provide one another with reviews on the effectiveness of their own presentations. The culminating event of the semester will be the public defense of their own thesis (12 minute presentation) followed by a 3-minute question and answer period.

## *CLASS SCHEDULE*

### **Class #1**, Jan 22.

Overview of class goals, introduction. Beginning discussion of reflection.

### **Class #2**, Jan 29.

Initial 2-page reflection paper due in class.

Discussion: What types of classes have you taken? What were the goals of those classes? What other types of skills did you learn in those classes? How have they helped you in your major? Do those courses contribute to your ability to write, conduct and/or organize your Honors Thesis? How?

### **Class #3**, Feb 5.

“How to get involved in research.” Organizational meeting. Allocation of responsibilities.

### **Class #4**, February 19.

“How to get involved in research” event. Begins at 6:00. Participation required. Pizza provided.

### **Class #5**, March 12.

Ethics in Data Presentation/Interpretation

Readings: Case Studies (TBD)

Come prepared to participate in discussion and to give your own examples of laboratory ethical dilemmas you may have encountered.

### **Class #6**, March 26.

Effective Presentations. What makes an effective powerpoint presentation?

### **Class #7**, April 9.

Honors thesis public presentation: practice and critiques

### **Class #8**, April 16.

Honors thesis public presentation: practice and critiques

Final 5 page Reflection Paper due **Thursday, April 23** by 5 pm.

\*Science Day Thursday **April 30: Public thesis defenses** throughout the morning. Lunch provided. Poster session in the afternoon.

## *GRADING*

Participation: 60%

Reflection paper #1: 15%

Final Reflection paper: 25%

## **The University of Massachusetts Academic Honesty Policy:**

### **I. STATEMENT OF POLICY**

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. [See [Appendix B](#) for detailed examples of behavior that constitutes academic dishonesty.] Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. [See [Appendix C](#) for some suggested ways to deal with issues of academic integrity.] Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. The procedures outlined below are intended to provide an efficient and orderly process by which action may be taken if it appears that academic dishonesty has occurred and by which students may appeal such actions.

Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent.

**Please see:**

**[http://www.umass.edu/dean\\_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/index.php](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/index.php) for the remainder of the academic honesty policy.**