

BIOL 371: Graduate Student Wellness Syllabus and Schedule
University of Vermont - Fall 2020 – 1 Credit

Meeting time: Remote meetings on Microsoft Teams, Fridays from 10:50-11:50am.

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I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours Monday-Friday 9am-5pm.

Course description: This course will educate graduate students on the health, wellness, and accommodation resources that are available to them on campus. Additionally, there will be lessons and workshops led by myself and external speakers that target physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and financial wellness. Not only will this course focus on improving overall wellness, but it will also address how to manage the unique challenges of graduate school. The overall goal of this course is to provide graduate students with a framework for navigating the challenges of graduate school and to give students the tools to be happy, fulfilled, and successful.

Learning outcomes:

- Understand graduate student rights and available resources
- Have a framework for how to navigate the advisor/advisee relationship
- Gain understanding of how to successfully manage finances with TA/RAships and fellowships
- Obtain new tools and reinforce existing strategies for managing time and stress
- Improve overall wellness

Classroom expectations: Our virtual classroom will be a safe and welcoming environment to discuss and learn from our challenges and successes as graduate students, both inside and outside of the classroom. For this reason, it is of the utmost importance that students hold respect for themselves and their classmates. Please take care to be mindful of the potential impact of your statements before speaking, and reflect that often intent is different than impact. Please also speak from your personal experience (using I statements), and avoid speaking to the experience of other graduate students. Please be mindful that the stories shared with the class should be left in the class. It is possible to take the lesson from the story and share it with others, while leaving the details of the story within the class discussion.

Student rights: Students with a documented disability have a right to accommodations.

Please contact me as soon as possible regarding any necessary accommodations. I want every student to feel safe and welcome voicing their opinion and exercising their right to step out of a conversation if they need to. If you are unable or uncomfortable voicing your opinion via the Teams audio/video feature, please feel free to post questions in the chat, or write in questions/comments. This class is meant to serve you. Please reach out to me if you have any questions/comments/concerns.

Evaluating student performance:

Students in this course will be evaluated primarily through participation in and out of class. As an alternative to in class participation, students can submit a short (1-2 paragraphs) written reflection. There will also be some formal assignments included in student evaluation.

Wellness reflections	30 points
Self-care assignments	10 points
In and out of class participation/engagement	60 points
Total:	100 points

Wellness reflections: There will be three wellness reflections throughout the semester. Each reflection will be 1-2 paragraphs, written during class time. These reflections will remain private, and do not need to be shared with me, or the class. We will use these reflections to prompt discussions about our wellness goals. Consider the following questions while writing your reflection: have you dedicated any resources towards your wellness goals, have your wellness goals changed since your last reflection, are there any new or modified goals you would like to set for yourself for your next reflection?

Self-care assignments: There will be two self-care assignments throughout the semester. Assignments will be given at the end of a class session, and be in line with the recent themes covered in the class. The expectation is that students will spend at least five minutes dedicated to this assignment, and be ready to discuss in the class session on the day the assignment is due.

Schedule:

Date	Topic	Readings for discussion	Additional resources	Assignments
9/4	Course introduction		https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.htm https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20Pronouns%20Resource.pdf	Wellness reflection 1
9/11	Being mindful of diverse perspectives	https://www.phdbalance.com/post/reflection-and-realizations	https://www.phdbalance.com/grad-school-blog/categories/bipoc https://restforresistance.com/zine/mental-health-is-different-for-people-of-color	

			http://diorvargas.com/poc-mental-illness https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/invisible-minority-stem https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/we-are-not-same-boat	
9/18	CAPS guest speaker	https://www.uvm.edu/health/profiles/annie-valentine-med Come with questions		
9/25	Building community		https://smallpondscience.com/2017/12/18/academia-selects-against-community-ties/ https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/joining-reading-group https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/staying-connected-grad-school	Self-care assignment 1
10/2	Navigating advisor/advisee relationship	https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2019/10/07/how-build-good-relationship-your-adviser-opinion	https://www.facetsjournal.com/article/facets-2015-0014/#ttl5 https://www.facetsjournal.com/doi/suppl/10.1139/facets-2015-0014/suppl_file/facets-2015-0014_supplement1.pdf	
10/9	SAS guest speaker	Come with questions		

10/16	CHWB led mindfulness course			
10/23	Physical wellness		http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/healthy/getting/overcoming/tips https://www.uvm.edu/health/food-insecurity-uvm https://www.uvm.edu/health/nutrition-services	Wellness reflection 2
10/30	Avoiding burnout	http://ijobs.rutgers.edu/wordpress/2015/10/27/stress-and-burnout-in-graduate-school-recognizing-preventing-and-recovering/#sthash.oD5GvHIT.dpbs https://blog.zencare.co/covid-burnout-remote-work/		
11/6	Time management	https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/saying-no	https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/avoiding-the-busy-trap-in-graduate-school https://grad.uw.edu/practicing-the-art-of-saying-no/	Self-care assignment 2
11/13	SFS guest speaker	Come with questions	https://gsas.columbia.edu/blog/10-financial-planning-tips-graduate-students http://pfforphds.com/	

			https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/investing-strategies-grow-your-wealth-during-graduate-school https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sXGlyPil-8&feature=youtu.be	
11/20	Intellectual wellness	https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/thinker%E2%80%99s-block-play-your-way-out-dissertation-rut https://ideasonfire.net/staying-curious-about-your-research/		
11/27	Thanksgiving break			
12/4	Wellness goals reflection			Wellness reflection 3