Course Assignments and Policies

What is Chem 199L? Why is it offered?
This is a class that starts with your interests in science and teaches you the tools to investigate those interests using scientific literature, course offerings, and undergraduate research experiences. The main goals of our course are for you to:
1. Identify and refine your scientific interests.
2. Link these interests to current scientific research.
3. Find ways to explore these interests at the University, whether in classes, research groups or other academic endeavors.

Chem 199L is Not Like Other Courses
Time and again we hear our first-year and returning students say that “CBEL is not like any other course I’ve taken on campus” and we are happy to report that this is our aim! We want you to build a community of engaged scholars of science. We want you to contribute to class through discussion and questions. We want you to enjoy the class and all it offers! Here is an outline of some of the different activities we will do in our class throughout the semester.

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays: Class Schedule
Monday is reserved for first-year students. We will cover topics from our textbook and from current science research during class. The format of class will be lecture-discussion; Dr. Lu or a guest lecturer will present information expecting questions and comments from you throughout the 50 minute class period.
Wednesday all students (both first-year and returning) attend to do activities, take tours, or hear from guest speakers. The format of class is not like a lecture most days – it is meant to be more engaging and fun.
Friday students will meet in small groups outside our normal lecture hall. Instructors and TAs will not be present – it is a time for students only, so that you can get to know one another, work together, and bond over shared experiences.

Class Field Trips
As a class, we will take two main field trips. On one trip, we will attend a major scientific conference. The other will be a tour of an industrial research facility. These trips are not required but are highly encouraged as part of the Chem 199L experience. We will provide additional information soon regarding larger overnight trips.
We will also take several smaller trips to laboratories on campus to get a look at current research being done by undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral students. These laboratory tours are required. Please arrive promptly at class so that we are not late to the tours.

Working Together in Subgroups
Everyone will be assigned to a small group that will meet on Fridays throughout the semester. The returning students will oversee your group’s activities. The groups will work on class activities such as Jeopardy quizzes, journal club, and the special topics discussion. Most importantly, the groups will have discussions about life as a science major at UIUC. Topics include, but are not limited to, getting into a research group, surviving tough science courses,
best instructors and TAs to select for classes, working in a research group, applying for internships and co-ops, how to get into a dream graduate school, taking the MCAT, etc.

Attendance at subgroup meetings is required. The schedule for the subgroup meetings is on this page. Groups can choose to hold extra meetings, and will probably find it necessary to do so. All subgroups will meet on Friday from 12-1pm. The location of your group meeting will be determined by your returning student leaders. Groups will have to fill in and submit a simple form to Dr. Lu to indicate meeting attendance and completion of the major meeting goals each week.

**Journal Club**

All students are required to choose, summarize and present a scientific article to their subgroups three times throughout the semester. The two best students will be chosen to present their article via Powerpoint presentation to the whole class. Those two best students need to submit their presentation to Jing He (the Journal Club TA) no later than the MONDAY before the Wednesday you are to present to the whole class. The goal is to have every first-year student give a presentation, so be sure that you choose a great article and you summarize and present to your subgroup with gusto!

**Speakers**

This class features exciting and interesting guest speakers! We will have UIUC graduate students, UIUC alumni, and faculty give talks in our class about their current research and their experiences within the scientific enterprise. We also encourage going to seminars and lectures outside of class for extra credit. One lecture outside of class will be required, and this information will be given to you within the first 10 days of class.

**Special Topics Discussion**

Near to the end of the semester, students will undertake an investigation into a controversial issue in society, and try to make decisions on policies and practices using scientific information. This is a chance to showcase how you’ve learned to use scientific literature, especially primary sources. This is also an opportunity to work with your subgroup on a major project.

**Jeopardy Quizzes for First-Year Students**

Quizzes will take place twice during the semester. Each quiz will involve material covered in class prior to that date (book chapters and discussions). Teams will be made up of subgroup members. Participation is MANDATORY for first-time students (counts for 15% of your course grade)! It is crucial that you have read, taken notes, and studied the materials in the book chapters to obtain a good grade on these quizzes.