

Chemistry 294 - Fall 2014 Seminar in Chemistry

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Seminar time: Friday, 1-2 pm (SQU 338). Occasionally, seminar may go past 2 pm. Students needing to leave at 2 pm will be given an opportunity to leave at that point.

General Information:

Chemistry 294 is a core requirement for all chemistry graduate students. To complete your requirement, you must enroll for 4 semesters. The class is graded credit/no credit. No incomplete grades are given.

You must attend 80% (11 of 14) of the offered seminars during the semester to receive credit. You are responsible for signing in each week. Students who arrive after the speaker has started will be counted as absent.

Please be courteous to the speakers. Do not use a cell phone to text or receive calls during a seminar. Turn your cell phone off upon coming to seminar. Any use of a cell phone will result in being marked absent for that seminar. If you arrive after the speaker has started, please enter quietly and sit near the door.

Literature seminar information:

All chemistry graduate students must present two seminars, one literature and one on their thesis. The two seminars cannot be presented the same semester. Giving a literature seminar is a requirement for advancing to candidacy. Students who sign up to give a seminar but fail to do so will be required to wait one semester before being allowed another opportunity. Thesis seminars will be held at other dates and times (not during the Friday, 1 pm time).

The topic of your literature seminar should be determined in conjunction with your research advisor and should not be related to your research area. A "Literature Seminar Approval Form", including topic and abstract, must be submitted several weeks before the beginning of the semester and be approved by the graduate committee before you are given a seminar date. Forms and deadlines can be found in the graduate section of the department website: <http://www.csus.edu/chem/degree-programs/Grad%20Forms.html>

Guidelines for literature seminar presentations:

The goal for the seminar speaker is to disseminate important, relevant information to the audience in a manner that is organized, understandable, and engaging.

The topic should be recent and relevant; these are chemistry seminars, so choose your topic appropriately. You should do a literature review, utilizing at least 10 peer-reviewed literature references, including more than half primary literature articles (as opposed to review articles). Textbooks, which might be used for background material, should not be included in the 10 references. Wikipedia and other

encyclopedias (on-line or printed) should **NEVER** be used as references. Several of your articles should be from within the past two years (hence the recent portion of the topic requirement).

An abstract must be submitted at least one week prior to your seminar. It will be posted on the seminar flyer. References should be included.

Below are some tips for presenting a good seminar. Please also refer to the handouts “Literature seminar preparation” and “Tips for scientific talks” on the CHEM 294 website for more information.

Tips for presenting a good seminar:

- Clarity and good organization are important features of any good presentation.
- Have an overview slide that gives a brief outline of what you will be discussing.
- Do not use slides with too much information on them. Keep it simple.
- When a reference is used, it should be cited on the slide.
- Be sure to provide adequate background information so that the audience can understand your talk.
- Make sure everything is large enough and has enough contrast so that your audience can clearly read your slide—busy backgrounds are generally not helpful.
- Make eye contact with the audience. Pay attention to how the audience is reacting to you.
- Practice your talk several times before you give it. Have your research advisor and your peers listen to your presentation. This will help you figure out what you want to say and how you want to say it. It will also give you the opportunity to find out how long your presentation will be (see below). Watch how other seminar speakers make their presentations. What did they do well and where were there problems?
- Make the most of the opportunity. This is your chance to share your knowledge on a subject that interests you and learn how to make scientific presentations.

Seminar Evaluation and Acceptable Seminars:

- Your seminar should last approximately 45-50 min. Seminars lasting less than 40 minutes or longer than 55 minutes will not receive credit for this graduation requirement, and a new seminar will have to be given on a new topic in a subsequent semester.
- Student literature seminars will be evaluated by faculty in attendance. (See the “Seminar evaluation form” handout on the CHEM 294 website.)
- Either the seminar coordinator or the student’s research advisor will meet with the student after the seminar to go over evaluations and give suggestions for improvements in future seminars.
- A seminar will be considered acceptable if every faculty member reviewing the seminar gives it a “pass” grade.
- Students receiving a majority of faculty evaluations of “fail” will be considered unacceptable and the student will be required to give another seminar on a new topic in a subsequent semester.
- Students receiving a mixture of both “pass” and “fail” marks will be required to meet with the seminar coordinator to assess remediation.

Timeline:

- Three weeks prior to the beginning of the semester-students will turn in their seminar abstract and “Literature Seminar Approval Form” noted above. The abstract will need to be approved by the graduate committee before a date for the seminar can be scheduled.
- One month before seminar — students will turn in a detailed outline of the talk.
- One week before seminar — students will turn in their PowerPoint slides along with an abstract and references for their seminar flyer.

- Monday of seminar week — the student's research advisor must notify the seminar coordinator by email that they have seen and approved your talk for the up-coming Friday. You may not give a seminar without your advisor's approval.
- Day of seminar — dress appropriately for the occasion. Show up early to make sure the A/V equipment is working.