Science and Today’s Headlines
College of Science and Mathematics: Science Gateway Seminar

*Intr-D 187S – 01*

**Time and Place:**
Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 - 1:50 PM
Wheatley 2-031

**Instructor:**
Dr. Andrew J. Grosovsky  
Professor of Biology  
Dean, College of Science and Mathematics

**Office:** W-2-020 (Dean’s Suite).  
**Office Hours:** There are many ways of contact, in person or electronically, with immediate response usually possible. We will be scheduling regular individual appointments for advising and discussion. If you would like to schedule additional individual time at any point in the semester, we will be very happy to arrange an appointment.  
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**Reading Material:**  *Books, articles and other reading materials to be assigned.*

**Course and Community Objectives:**
This course is an important component of the Freshman Success Community (FSC) program. Both the seminar and the FSC are important programs to enhance the experience and academic success of new freshmen entering the College of Science and Mathematics. As a participant in the FSC Program you will have the opportunity to become much more familiar with your fellow students, your faculty, student success staff, and the resources available to you at UMass Boston. Transition from high school to university is often a big challenge. The FSC Program will allow you to form a partnership, with us and with your fellow students, to help you succeed as
university science majors. We want to help you to start thinking now about how to progress towards a timely graduation, and to prepare to achieve your post-graduation goals.

Our specific objectives are:

- To empower you to do your very best in the set of introductory courses in which you and your classmates are jointly enrolled (Intro Biology, General Chemistry, Pre-Calculus or Calculus).
- To provide you the best possible support to enter your sophomore year having successfully completed the entire freshman curriculum.
- To provide you with the best possible skills, network, and preparation for future success in classroom and extra-curricular activities that are essential for success in science.

We will focus on discussion of topics with broad societal impact that have important scientific underpinnings. Using this approach, you will become increasingly familiar with scientific discourse, the scientific method, and important new scientific findings. Using this scientific framework, the course will address all of the objectives of the UMass Boston First Year Seminar Program:

- Critical reading
- Critical thinking
- Clear writing
- Academic self-assessment,
- Collaborative learning
- Information technology
- Oral presentation

**Course Organization:**
The course will focus on several topics of discussion. Each will occupy approximately two weeks of time. Students will have the opportunity to help in selecting topics and in determining the length of time spent on any particular topic. Potential topics include:

- Evolution
- Personalized Medicine
- Genetically Modified Foods
- 2013 Nobel Prizes
- Emerging Viruses
- Student-Identified Science Topics in the News
- Genome Revolution
- Angelina Jolie
- New Discoveries in Biomedical Science
- Book Discussion
- Review of a Scientific Paper
- Stem cells
- Carcinogenesis
- Environmental Toxicology
Students will be organized into groups, and work collaboratively on assignments associated with various topics. On-line collaborative tools, particularly the course wiki, will enable joint effort and discussion even at a distance or when logged in at different times. At times, class time will also be devoted to in-person discussion and work on group wiki pages. Over the course of the academic year our students will develop many wiki pages, which can easily be made available to a wide audience if we choose.

In addition to discussion of science topics, class time will also include presentations from a variety of guest speakers who can describe UMass Boston resources for student success.

**Grading:**
- 15% Class Attendance: All students are expected to participate in group assignments, and to attend and actively participate in each class session.
- 25% Participation in Satisfactory Group Assignments: Each student group member will receive a grade for satisfactory completion of assigned topics. The wiki permits individual contributions to be documented.
- 30% Individual Writing Assignments: Individual students will be assigned at least once a semester to lead the group write-up and to be sure that it is completed to their standards of satisfaction. Active contribution of group members is encouraged.
- 30% Individual oral presentations: Individual students will be assigned at least once a semester to present the group work using a PowerPoint presentation. Active contribution of group members is encouraged.

**Policy for Missed or Late Assignments due to Emergency:**
If you find you will need to miss an assignment due to an unanticipated emergency, you must communicate the issue with the Dean or TA prior to the class or due date. There will be no opportunity for make-up, but you can receive an excused absence. For a missed assignment, a note from an appropriate individual explaining the reason for your absence will be required. Unexcused assignments turned in late will be penalized 30% of the total value per day.