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 these interests using scientific literature, course offerings, and undergraduate research experiences. The main goals of our course are for you to:

1. Develop the ability to think critically, like a true scientist.
2. Identify and refine your scientific interests.
3. Link these interests to courses you are taking, as well as current scientific research.
4. Find ways to explore these interests at the University, whether in classes, research groups, or other academic endeavors.
5. Help you with networking with other students and senior researchers in order to realize your goals after graduation, whether it is graduate school, medical school or a position in an industry.

Chem 199L is Not Like Other Courses
Time and again we hear our first-year and returning students say that “Chem199L 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 science scholars. We want you to contribute to class through discussion and questions. We want you to enjoy the class and all it offers! Below is an outline of some of the different activities we will do in our class throughout the semester.

Class Outline

Online Lectures- In redesigning our course, we are excited to now offer all of our lectures online. These lectures will generally alternate weekly between special topics in chemistry and biology and practical lectures. These lectures will be available at the beginning of each week and you are expected to watch them prior to coming to class on Wednesdays.

• *Special topics lectures* are aimed at exposing you to the various areas of chemistry and biology to help you further explore what you like learning about.

• *Practical lectures* are aimed at helping you develop skills that will be necessary for you to explore your interests, as well as to get you exposed to and thinking about your own undergraduate experience.

Activities- Every Wednesday, you will attend class to participate in activities or hear from guest speakers. The format of day is not meant to be like a lecture– it is meant to be more engaging and fun!

Small Group- On Fridays, you will meet in small groups outside of our normal lecture hall. This is a time to focus specifically on the students, so that you can get to know your mentors and one another, work together, and bond over shared experiences.

Speakers
This class features exciting and interesting guest speakers!

We will have UIUC faculty give talks in our class about their current research and their experiences within the scientific enterprise. These are to get you thinking about the kind of research that takes place at UIUC and to get you interested in exploring a research lab of your own to join.

We will also have a guest speaker from the Chemistry Career Counseling Center come in to give two talks about careers in the science fields and building a strong science resume. These are to get you thinking about your long-term goals, what you need to get involved with as an undergraduate, and how to successfully get the experience you need to reach these goals.
Working Together in Subgroups
Everyone will be assigned to a small group that will meet on Fridays throughout the semester, with mentors overseeing your group’s activities. The groups will work on class activities such as journal clubs and the special topics discussions. 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, etc.

Attendance at these subgroup meetings is required. The schedule for the subgroup meetings is on the syllabus. 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. Your mentors will determine the location of your group meeting. At the end of each subgroup meeting, mentors will complete and submit a reflection form to indicate attendance as well as completion of the major meeting goals.

Journal Club
All students are required to choose, summarize and present a scientific article to their subgroups two times throughout the semester. The best students from each subgroup will be chosen to present their article via Powerpoint presentation to the whole class. Those students need to submit their presentation to Parisa (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 to summarize and present to your subgroup with gusto!

Lab Trips
In your small groups, you will take two trips to laboratories related to your interests on our campus to get a look at current research being done by undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral students. Every lab is different, not only in what they do, but how they are run. By touring two different labs, we hope that you can get a feel for what is out there for you to be a part of. We also hope that these tours give you a better feel for what it is truly like to be involved in undergraduate research!

Special Topics Discussion
Towards the end of the semester, students will undertake an investigation into a controversial current issue in society and try to make decisions on policies and practices using scientific information. Each subgroup will be assigned to research one aspect of this topic to present to the class on the first day of presentations. Based on discussions from the first day, groups will then have a debate about the current issue on the second day of presentations. This will be your chance to showcase the skills you have acquired during the course of the semester, such as how to use scientific literature, especially primary sources. You will have two subgroup meeting times to work on your projects to ensure a high quality and lively debate!

Jeopardy Quizzes (For Section L Students Only)
Quizzes will take place twice during the semester in teams made up of your subgroup members. Each quiz will cover material from the online special topics lectures and their related book chapters prior to that date. Participation is MANDATORY (counts for 15% of your course grade)! It is crucial that you have taken notes and studied the materials in the online lectures and book chapters well in order to obtain a good grade on these quizzes.