

Term paper grading rubric. Biology 590S. Origins of Cellular Life Fall 2017

Papers will be review articles describing the literature surrounding a strong thesis argument. Paper format (length, style, bibliography, etc) will be in the style of **Trends in Genetics** papers (see the “Reviews and Opions” tab and follow the instructions for review paper format). Papers will be graded in the following categories:

Logistics

- Rough drafts are due **5:30pm, Wed October 4, 2017**. The grading rubric listed below will be used for grading, although with relaxed stringency.
- For peer reviews of your rough draft, please pick a partner and trade papers and edit each others rough drafts. Peer reviews will be due back to your partner two weeks after the rough draft due date, i.e. **5:30 pm, Wed Oct 11**. You should expect to receive your rough draft edits back from the instructor then as well. This deadline has been added to the syllabus and wiki.
- Final papers are due **5pm on the last day of class, December 4, 2017**.

Rubric

1. **Title Page - 5 points**. Must follow the Trends in Genetics instructions for authors specifications. Use a whole page for the title page.
2. **Thesis statement - 10 points**. Clearly and concisely state your purpose in a single sentence. The thesis statement should be compelling, thought-provoking.
3. **introduction - 10 points**. The introduction should give an overview of the structure of the paper as well as providing sufficient background for non-specialists in the field to understand the body of the paper. This section should be only a few paragraphs. Be sure to state why the thesis you have chosen is important. Follow the specifications on the instructions for authors page.
4. **Paper body - 15 points**. Each paragraph supports the main thesis with detail from the relevant primary and review literature (with an emphasis on primary literature). Supporting detail should develop the main thesis idea but also provide a glimpse of leading alternative viewpoints to convince the audience of your thesis statement. As stipulated in the Trends in Genetics instructions, the body of the paper is expected to include a “synthesis” of the literature, not a comprehensive summary or list.
5. **Organization - 10 points**. Demonstrate logical and subtle sequencing of ideas with clear transition statements between well-developed paragraphs.
6. **Conclusion - 10 points**. Briefly summarizes the paper, restates the thesis but is still interesting and engaging to read.
7. **Mechanics - 10 points**. The paper should be free from errors in punctuation or spelling. The paper should be of appropriate length and follow the format specified in the “instructions for authors” page.
8. **Usage - 10 points**. The paper should be free of grammatical errors, and should have clear and correct sentence structure (no run-ons, a mixture of short and long sentences, etc).
9. **Citation - 10 points**. All inline citations (to both figures, tables, and references) should be in the correct format with no errors. As a general rule, for any idea that does not come from the writer’s own head, the appropriate paper should be cited inline.
10. **Bibliography - 10 points**. Should be in the correct format as specified on the “instructions for authors” page. At least 10 and not more than 100 primary articles should be cited.