INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Sunita Nadella  GSB105  Email: sisip@mcmaster.ca

Course Description:

The Independent Study course is designed to provide students with an opportunity to (a) explore in more depth or detail an area which a student has encountered in a previous course or (b) explore an area which is not part of the curriculum. To this end, honours thesis courses (Life Sci 4A03/4B06/4C09) are capstone courses for those who have a strong interest in conducting original research and wish to gain greater experience in research design, data analysis and interpretation.

Students carry out these courses under the supervision of a faculty member and present the findings in a scholarly paper. In collaboration with the supervisor, the student must develop a comprehensive course outline that includes, among other details: title of the research topic, objectives, assignments for grade allocation, meeting times and dates, assignment due dates, a list of topics with assigned readings. An honours thesis can be an empirical research project or more rarely a thesis of a theoretical nature. For an empirical project, the student develops a testable hypothesis and uses scientific procedures to collect data and evaluate the hypothesis. For a theoretical project, the student integrates and evaluates existing evidence to offer new interpretations and hypotheses.

Pre-requisites: Registration in Level IV of a Life Sciences program and permission of the Course co-ordinator

Not open to students with credit or registration in any department- or program-based applied placement, independent study, research seminar, internship or practicum course within the University.

Lectures:

- Lectures are scheduled Thursday 3.30-4.20pm.

Required Texts & Materials:

There is no required course textbook. All material for the course will be administered through Avenue to Learn (http://avenue.mcmaster.ca) for students to download and bring to class.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Have developed foundations for more advanced learning;
- Have developed a research proposal that will be presented to peers and the Course coordinator during the first term;
- Have developed a clearly defined research question that will be used to undertake independent research and to prepare a final report (4A03 or 4B06) or thesis (4C09);
- Have the ability to present and defend their research findings to an audience of peers, mentors and associated knowledge groups.
- Have demonstrated mastery of the chosen field commensurate with students in an Honours program.

Absences & Missed Work:

IN CLASS PARTICIPATION: No documentation is required and no penalty will be assigned if students miss one class per term during the tenure of the course. For every class missed thereafter 1 mark will be deducted from the participation grade.
The following illustrate only four of many forms of academic dishonesty:

- copy or using unauthorized aids in laboratory exercises
- improper collaboration in group work; and
- copying or using unauthorized aids in quizzes, tests and examinations

All students are reminded of the importance of academic integrity, and the serious consequences of academic dishonesty.

**Section on Use of Turnitin.com**

In this course, we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and/or in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal
verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Copyright Policy
In this course you will have access to material that is subject to copyright laws. This includes (but is not limited to) textbooks and all resources developed by the instructors such as lab manuals, demonstration videos, quizzes, assignments, tests, class notes and class slides. Under no circumstance are you allowed to share or redistribute this material in any printed or electronic form without the explicit written consent of the copyright holder. This includes posting any course material on Internet bulletin boards, course repositories, social networks, etc.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities
Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances
McMaster University (the University) strives to be welcoming and inclusive of all its members and respectful of their differences. Students, staff, and instructors come from a range of backgrounds, traditions and beliefs. The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student’s religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code, through respectful, accessible, and fair processes. http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-Observances.pdf

The instructors and the university reserve the right to alter this outline if necessary. The instructors and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.