

Biology in Society Assignment

The Biology in Society assignment is an opportunity for you to choose a subject at the intersection of science and society, and to go deeply and creatively into that subject. This assignment will consist of a ~30 min presentation (or workshop or discussion). This will be an exciting, 'show-and-tell' portion of the class, where we can tackle some of the critical issues that are sometimes left out of science courses. Try to ask a question that is extremely interesting to you, and that you think will be interesting and/or useful to your colleagues. Remember that all discussion should be both thoughtful and respectful.

Example jumping-off questions:

- What makes an effective scientific presentation?
- What is effective scientific outreach?
- What is scientific misconduct? Why does it happen and how can it be mitigated?
- How does CRISPR work? How is it changing biological research?
- What are the implications and limitations of personal genome sequencing?
- How can we talk about a controversial, biologically relevant topic (e.g. abortion, LGBTQ issues, animal research) from a *respectful* and scientific perspective?
- What do we know and not know about Zika virus?
- What can you do with a bio major?

Example assignment ideas:

- Present (and workshop) your own research project
- Present (and workshop) a 'chalk talk' of your research plans
- Organize an 'Ask a Graduate' workshop
- Present and discuss a biological subject relevant or controversial in the media
- Present and discuss a new research method (e.g. CRISPR, whole genome sequencing, BRCA1 mutations)
- Review a scientific book or blog
- Present a relevant twitter feed, Instagram account or blog you've started and maintained throughout the semester
- Present and discuss issues of biological and scientific ethics
- Explore different scientific careers
- Lead a workshop on writing your grad/med school essay
- Lead a workshop on writing your CV
- Lead a workshop on scientific poster design
- Design and present a museum exhibit
- My favorite weird organism

All subjects must be approved by and discussed with me beforehand.