

## Discussion Preparations

### *For Bio367 Monday article discussions*

**Our weekly meetings** this semester will be dedicated to **analyzing one or two articles** from the infectious disease literature. Articles will be available at least a **week in advance** either as a **handout**, on the **library website** or as a **link from the course website**. People will be assigned to lead the discussion for each class period, and the discussion should include:

1. A **broad overview** of the **main question(s)** the paper addresses
2. A **brief description** of **background information** relevant to the paper
3. An exploration of the **experiments** described in the paper--**how** were they **performed**, what **results** were found and **how** should we **interpret** them (is our interpretation the same as the authors'?)?
4. **Speculation** about what **follow-up experiments** could be performed and **how** the authors might have **improved** the experiments (are all the proper controls present?).

To help everyone prepare for a lively discussion of the articles, everyone should **read the articles carefully** and **post** the following on the Bio367 Blackboard site **Discussion Board** (accessed by going through "Communications"):

1. **Two days before** a discussion, **discussion leaders** should enter the forum for that discussion and **start a thread by entering 3-4 questions for discussion**.
2. By **9 pm the Sunday before** discussion, each **discussion participant** should "reply" to the starting thread with a paragraph (~150-200 words) describing either:
  - What you found the **most interesting** about the article(s) and why.
  - **Question(s)** raised by the article(s) that you would like to discuss and your preliminary thoughts.

We will have the **most fun** and **learn the most** if **everyone participates** in discussions, therefore overall participation is worth 15% of the final grade (including the above sheets). **If** it becomes clear that **non-presenters are not reading the articles carefully** before class, the **pre-discussion requirements may change to include more analysis of the articles**.

### *For Bio067 discussions*

On **Tues. Sept. 11, Thurs., Sept. 27, Thurs., Oct. 25**, the **Bio067** class will be devoted to **discussing issues raised in class and in the readings**. For part of the class, we will break into **discussion groups consisting of 3-4 Bio067 students and one Bio367 student or 3 Bio367 students**. During the remainder of the period each group will **share interesting aspects of their discussion** with the rest of the class. The **Bio367 students** who are in discussion groups with Bio067 students will **lead the discussion on Tues., Sept. 11** (although subsequently Bio067 students should take the lead) and will be able to **help answer students' questions about biology**, but should also **generally participate** in the discussion **without dominating** the airwaves. The other Bio367 students will form their own discussion groups to avoid intimidating the Bio067 students.

Depending on your role in a given discussion, you will write a different style of “preparation,” which will be **turned in at the end of class** (typed, single-spaced, and no more than 1-2 pages in length).

***Discussion with Bio067 students: (Tues., Sept. 11=Tara, Mike, Nick, Duncan)***

To help you prepare to help Bio067 students understand the readings, you should bring in a list of **5 questions** (total) that you think the students may have about the readings, along with a sentence or two about **how you would address** each one. In composing your answers, remember that you will be explaining concepts to people with little biology background. The questions can be as simple as "what does "immunocompromised" mean?" or explore more complex concepts such as "why do DNA fragments forming the same pattern mean that the tuberculosis strains are the same?"

***Discussion with Bio367 students only: (Tues., Sept. 11=Laura, Morgan, Laura, Kelly, Deb, Alex)***

This "**Discussion Preparation**" will be similar to those that the Bio067 students will be writing.

To help everyone clarify their thoughts prior to the discussion, the “preparation” should consist of **TWO** distinct parts:

- (1) **A list of questions, comments, and thoughts related to the material.** These should be issues that you find **interesting** and that seem likely to **evoke discussion**. These points will come to mind while reading the assigned material, during lectures or after careful reflection, so make sure you write them down as they occur to you. The important point is that you are coming to class "armed" with topics for discussion. A few of these may be relatively straightforward **questions** (e.g., Exactly what did Garrett mean when she used the term "xxxxxx" on page XX?). Others should deal with **more complicated issues** (e.g., What were the main reasons that medical microbiology and biology had little overlap until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?), or relate to other topics or situations that come to mind (e.g., How much do you have to know about disease processes to develop therapies? What are different ways therapies are developed?). Critiques of the material are also helpful here as long as they are specific (Instead of writing something like "I did not agree with the material on page xxx", you would write something like "I did not find Lederberg's argument on page xxx convincing, since he is assuming blah blah blah.")
- (2) **A passage or two highlighted for group consideration.** These passages may be chosen for a variety of reasons. For example, it is possible that you simply found the prose itself worthy of examination (whether for praise or criticism). Perhaps you think that this passage highlights a central assumption or key observation made by the author. Perhaps you were confused by a particular passage and would like the group to discuss possible interpretations of the author's words. For this part of the discussion preparation you should simply list the page and "block out" the quotation (e.g., Lederberg, page 290, "In hindsight...more diffusible forms."), followed by a brief note detailing why you chose this passage (e.g., This passage made me wonder: If a virus that isn't a huge public health risk mutates into a more dangerous form, why would studies of the original form be helpful? Wouldn't important properties of the virus have changed?).