

MCB 7922 Journal Colloquy - Astrobiology

Academic Term: Spring, 2026

Course Format: Asynchronous

Credits: 1

Instructor:

Jamie Foster, Ph.D.

Off-campus: Space Life Sciences Lab, Merritt Island, FL, Room 204

Tel: 321-525-1047; jfoster@ufl.edu

Zoom office hours by appointment: <https://ufl.zoom.us/my/jamiefoster>

Course Description: This course is an online forum where students will be required to read and comment on the primary literature in the field of astrobiology. Astrobiology is the study of the origins of life, the distribution of life within the universe, and the future of Earth-based life during the exploration beyond Low Earth Orbit.

Course Learning Objectives: The objectives of this Journal Club are to: 1) enhance graduate students' understanding of the current state of knowledge regarding the field of astrobiology; 2) provide experience in reviewing and critiquing research articles; and 3) build scientific inquiry and written skill sets.

Course Prerequisites: None

No Required or Recommended Textbooks:

No texts are required, as you will be reading pre-assigned primary literature and review articles made available using Perusall in Canvas

Perusall rubric for discussion posts on the literature review each week:

1. You will receive points for opening (10%), reading the entire paper (10%), and being actively engaged with other students (20%).

2. Most of your score (60%) will be based on the quantity and quality of your posts on the document. The quality of the posts will also be considered, and emphasis will be given for analytical posts (e.g., are you evaluating strengths and weaknesses of the paper?).

Bye Week: I realize that life can be complicated and get very busy; therefore, each of you will be allowed to skip one week of the course. The gradebook in Canvas will automatically delete your lowest score in the course at the end of the semester, so there is no need to tell me when you plan to skip a week.

Technical Support:

UF Computing Help Desk & Ticket Number: All technical issues require a UF Helpdesk Ticket Number. The UF Helpdesk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

<https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>; 352-392-4357

Weekly Course Schedule:

Points in Class	Max points
Watch Course Intro Video	3
Making the Most of Perusall - Introduction	7

Paper 1	10
Paper 2	10
Paper 3	10
Paper 4	10
Paper 5	10
Paper 6	10
Paper 7	10
Paper 8	10
Paper 9	10
Paper 10	10
Possible Points	110
Final Grade	100

Note: even though the course has a max of 110 points, you can drop the lowest grade (e.g., bye week) and the grade will be calculated based on 100 points.

Grading Policy

Course grading is consistent with [UF grading policies](#).

Grading Scale

The course will be evaluated on a straight scale.

Grade Points	Grade
930.0 - 1000	A
900.0 - 929.9	A-
870.0 - 899.9	B+
830.0 - 869.9	B
800.0 - 829.9	B-
770.0 - 799.9	C+
730.0 - 769.9	C
700.0 - 729.9	C-
670.0 - 699.9	D+
630.0 - 669.9	D
600.0 - 629.9	D-
< 60.0	E

Academic Policies and Resources: Academic policies for this course are consistent with university policies. See <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

Campus Health and Wellness Resources: Visit <https://one.uf.edu/whole-gator/topics> for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF. Please contact [UMatterWeCare](#) for additional and immediate support.

Unforeseen Life Events: For ALL matters that require special consideration, please contact UMatter, We Care in the Office of the Dean of Students (<https://care.dso.ufl.edu/instructor-notifications/>). They will verify your case and contact me with advice on how to deal with your specific situation. I would like to note that a letter or e-mail from them does not guarantee

special consideration and deadline extension; it is merely a suggestion on how best to deal with your case. I will make the final decision based on their recommendation after reviewing your case.

Software Use: All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Privacy and Accessibility Policies:

- Instructure (Canvas)
 - [Instructure Privacy Policy](#)
 - [Instructure Accessibility](#)
- Zoom
 - [Zoom Privacy Policy](#)
 - [Zoom Accessibility](#)

Additional Resources

[**E-learning technical support**](#), 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu.

[**Library Support**](#), Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

[**Teaching Center**](#), Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

[**Writing Studio**](#), 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help with brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.