

**CHEM 615, Synthesis Seminar**  
**Spring, 2018**  
**Wednesdays, 4:00–4:50 PM LaT (FW) 300**  
**Defense and Candidacy Exams will begin at 3:00 PM**

Coordinator: Prof. Timothy Hagen, Faraday 350

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Office hours: by appointment

**Pedagogy:** Seminar presentation is a very important skill of the chemistry profession. It will likely play a vital role in any job-seeking process, and in one's success as a professional chemist. Thus, the purpose of Chem 615 is for students to present their research progress and/or their knowledge of the chemical literature, and to develop good presentation and question-handling skills. Faculty members and fellow students will assess presentations and ask insightful questions. By experiencing and learning from this, students will be better prepared to enter the professional world after graduation.

Skills to be developed and assessed through presenting a seminar in Chem 615 include: (1) the ability to organize a presentation so as to succinctly communicate the background, worth, and accomplishments associated with the science discussed; (2) the ability to conduct a thorough literature search on the subject, to find and communicate what others have done in the field; (3) the ability to present material in a way that holds the audience's attention; (4) the ability to answer questions to the best of one's ability during the presentation; and (5) the ability to accept and learn from criticism of one's work. Skills to be developed (and assessed) through being an audience member in Chem 615 include: (1) the ability to participate by asking relevant and challenging questions; (2) the ability to critique another's work in a professional, helpful way; and (3) the ability to broaden one's knowledge by absorbing information on topics far from one's area of interest.

**Rules:**

(1) All students in Chem 615 must attend both the Wednesday seminars and the Monday Graduate Colloquia. Unexcused absences from these seminars will result in the lowering of the overall letter grade. See below. Absences will be considered excused only if the Coordinator was informed beforehand, or if the absence was caused by an emergency, after which the student gave the Coordinator appropriate documentation regarding the emergency.

(2) Students must inform the Coordinator at the prep meeting what type of seminar they will give, and on what day. Seminar types include thesis/dissertation defenses (45-60 minute presentations), candidacy exams (45-60 minute presentations), post-candidacy research updates (45-60 minute presentations), pre-candidacy research talks (20-25 minute presentations) and literature talks (20-25 minute presentations). Students needing to present before a committee are responsible for selecting a date amenable to all committee members.

Students giving literature talks must discuss the topic to be addressed with the Coordinator at least two weeks before the presentation. The Coordinator will evaluate whether the topic is appropriate, sufficiently broad, and interesting. If it is not, the student is required to find a new topic, and to clear that with the Coordinator. The Coordinator's decision is final on this issue.

(3) Students must submit a title and an abstract for their presentation to the seminar coordinator at least one week in advance of their talk. The abstract should follow standard ACS guidelines. On the Thursday prior to the talk, students should distribute to mailboxes and post the abstract on the seminar information bulletin board across from the mailroom. Failure to submit and post the title and abstract will result in the student's overall course grade being lowered by at least one half letter (A to A-).

(4) The Coordinator will evaluate presentation quality, in consultation with other faculty members that attended the seminar. The Coordinator's decisions on quality are final. Points considered will be: clarity of the presentation, understanding of the presented subject, quality of visual aids, ability to answer questions, and demeanor and appearance.

(5) The student who gave the previous presentation shall introduce the subsequent presenter, and will conduct the question and answer session for the presenter. Students in the audience are expected to ask the speaker relevant and insightful questions during the question and answer session after the presentation. Such questions should be posed in a professional manner.

**Grading:** The seminar carries a letter grade evaluation (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F). Participation is essential to the seminar, presence of all is required. If for some reason you will be unable to attend a seminar, please notify the instructor in advance. Failure to attend more than two unexcused seminars will result in a decrease in the letter grade (example: A to A-). Each additional unexcused absence will result in an additional drop for each absence. Lack of involvement in questions or discussion will also result in the decrease in the letter grade. This rule does not apply to first year graduate students.

Grades can be lowered further as noted in the Rules, or based on the Academic Integrity issues below.

**Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism:**

Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense.

In the context of Chem 615, plagiarism is the most likely offense. Presenting work of somebody else as your own qualifies as plagiarism. Clearly, in a literature review the work presented is not your own. Make sure it is stated at the beginning of the presentation. Properly cite any figures, diagrams, schemes that were not created by you. **Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated and may result in failure of the entire course.**

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

A student who believes that reasonable accommodations with respect to course work or other academic requirements may be appropriate in consideration of a disability must (1) provide the required verification of the disability to the Disabilities Resource Center (DRC, previously the Center for Access-Ability Resources, CAAR), (2) meet with the DRC to determine appropriate accommodations, and (3) inform the faculty member in charge of the academic activity of the need for accommodation. Students are encouraged to inform the faculty member of their requests for accommodations as early as possible in the semester, but must make the requests in a timely enough manner for accommodations to be appropriately considered and reviewed by the university. If contacted by the faculty member, the staff of the DRC will provide advice about accommodations that may be indicated in the particular case. Students who make requests for reasonable accommodations are expected to follow the policies and procedures of the DRC in this process, including but not limited to the Student Handbook.

Students with disabilities can obtain a wide range of services, including housing, transportation, adaptation of printed materials, and advocacy with faculty and staff. Students with disabilities who need such services or want more information should contact the DRC at 815/753-1303.

**Preferred Gender Pronoun Statement:**

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Please also inform me and feel free to correct me and your classmates on your preferred gender pronouns. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak with me in person, or email me. The Gender and Sexuality Resource Center also has a webpage designed to help support people of all genders as they navigate NIU's system: <https://niu.edu/gsrc/>

**Multilingual Student Statement:**

I am committed to making course content accessible to all students. If English is not your first language and this causes you concern about the course, please speak with me.

**Student Sexual Misconduct Policy:**

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination to include sexual misconduct: harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the Counseling & Consultation Service's Advocacy Services, which can be contacted on at 815-753-1206, or in Campus Life Building-room 200. Alleged violations can be reported non-confidentially to the Affirmative Action & Equity Compliance Office in Lowden Hallroom 101, at 815-753-1118, or online at <http://www.niu.edu/sexualmisconduct/help/form.shtml>

Reports to law enforcement can be made to NIU Police & Public Safety at 815-753-1212. For an emergency, call 911.

**For more information about Sexual Misconduct:**

Prevention & Resources, visit <http://niu.edu/sexualmisconduct/index.shtml>

Note: As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as an instructor and a faculty advisor to a student organization. I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on NIU's campus with the University. Students may speak to someone confidentially by contacting Counseling & Consultation Service's Advocacy Services at 815-753-1206, or in Campus Life Building-room 200.

\*See Northern Illinois University Catalog for all other policies and guideline

Portions of the syllabus have been excerpted from the Chem 615 (PAIN) syllabus (Spring 2018) of Prof. T. Gilbert.