Objectives. In this course, students will be expected to demonstrate ability to:
1. Critically read scientific literature (identify strengths and weaknesses in published papers)
2. Articulate & defend opinions about published papers orally and in writing
3. Prepare graphics to support an oral presentation using PowerPoint or similar program
4. Summarize criticisms of assigned papers in a brief oral presentation
5. Guide class during discussion of literature
6. Explain orally data presented in figures and tables

Readings may be chosen by discussion leaders, subject to approval of instructor – candidate papers must be submitted to the instructor at least two weeks prior to discussion. Candidate papers are available from the instructor upon request, or if a paper is not submitted in time, one will be chosen by the instructor.

Discussion leaders
Each student will serve as discussion leader on a rotating basis (frequency depends on enrollment). Discussion leaders will begin the class punctually with a 10 min presentation that summarizes the background and motivation for the current week’s reading. Discussion leaders may draw from additional literature to enrich their presentations and provide a suitable background for understanding the material. In addition, the presentation should highlight interesting or controversial issues that emerged while reading the paper that might spark thoughtful discussion. Discussion leaders are also responsible for guiding the conversation productively.

Discussion participants
Each student not serving as discussion leader will be assigned a figure or table to present from the current week’s reading. Participants are expected to explain in detail what data are shown in the figure or table and to interpret the data in the context of the study. In so doing, the critical link between the data and the authors conclusions should be made clear.

In addition, each student (discussion leaders as well as participants) is expected to bring three questions to class (in hard copy) that we can draw upon to stimulate discussion.

Students will be evaluated on:
1. Questions for discussion
2. Presentation and leading of discussions
3. Participation in discussion, including explanation of figures/tables
4. Attendance

CSU, Chico acknowledges each student’s unique set of abilities and limitations, and works to provide all students with an enriching educational experience. Accommodations will be made, as possible, in cooperation with Disability Support Services (www.csuchico.edu/dss, Student Services Center 170, 898-5959), but it is the responsibility of the student to communicate his/her needs.