CHM1590Y Environmental Chemistry Seminar
Course Outline
2024-2025

Course Co-ordinators
Prof. Jennifer Murphy, email: jen.murphy@utoronto.ca
Prof. Frank Wania, email: frank.wania@utoronto.ca

Course Description

The seminar series offers an opportunity for graduate students to practice their presentation skills in a more formal setting, as well as providing a venue to learn from more senior speakers who are experts in various aspects of environmental chemistry. MSc students will present their exit seminar (typically in year 2 of their program) and PhD students will present their research proposal as part of the breadth requirement (typically in year 2 of their program). Students are also expected to attend environmental chemistry-themed Departmental Colloquia as part of this course.

Course Schedule

The course will consist of a series of talks held in-person on the St George and UTSC campuses, but we will simultaneously broadcast the presentations between campuses via Zoom. In-person attendance is encouraged for all students for all seminars, but students may attend via Zoom individually if needed due to extenuating circumstances. Students are responsible for checking the Quercus course page or reading departmental emails to receive updates about seminar schedules, Zoom links and modifications to the schedule.

Course Evaluation

To obtain credit for this course, all graduate students are expected to attend seminars regularly, ask questions in person, and submit the required questions on Quercus. Student participation and engagement will be evaluated on a **credit or no credit basis**.

This evaluation is determined based on student attendance, participation in seminars and **submission of two questions, that could be asked during the seminar, on Quercus within 1 week of the seminar** for evaluation by the course coordinators. The submitted questions should reflect the content of the presentation and should not be generic in scope. Although discussions with other students are encouraged, **each student is expected to prepare and submit original questions for evaluation**. Students must not use AI tools for the preparation of questions. Please see suggestions and guidelines for questions on Pages 5-6.

Students should also follow proper etiquette during seminars by refraining from creating distractions during presentations and using devices during seminars. All attendees should ensure that phones and related devices are turned off during presentations.

Policy on Absences

Students who are unable to attend any of the dates listed in the course schedule, must email the course coordinators and **request permission to substitute the missed seminar with an alternative seminar**. Students who miss a CHM1590Y seminar or required Chemistry Colloquium seminar; must submit a 250 word summary of the substituted seminar within 1 week of the alternative seminar date on Quercus in lieu of the standard two questions for CHM1590Y evaluation.

Policy on Course Conduct

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. The CHM1590Y teaching team will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and we wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment, and hate speech will not be tolerated. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, we encourage you to reach out to the staff in our Equity Offices.

OTHER INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND SUPPORT

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/).

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (https://uoft.me/pdt-faq).

ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS:

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility: if you require accommodations for a disability, or have any other accessibility concerns about the course, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES:

Following the University's policies, reasonable accommodations will be made for students who observe religious holy days that coincide with the due date/time of an assignment, tutorial, class or laboratory session. Students must inform the instructor before the session/assignment date to arrange accommodations.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES & SUPPORT:

The following are some important links to help you with academic and/or technical service and support:

- School of Graduate Studies' Policies and Guidelines
- Full library service and resources on conducting online research through University of Toronto Libraries University Libraries Research
- Resources on academic support from the Academic Success Centre
- Learner support at the Writing Centre
- Information for Technical Support/Quercus Support

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL LANDS:

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

Environmental Chemistry Seminar (CHM1590Y)
2024-2025 Seminar Draft Schedule

St. George room: Davenport Seminar Room (East) **UTSC room:** EV531

CHM1590Y Zoom Link: https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/82630995964 **PASSCODE**: CHM1590Y

Date	Time	Speaker	Type
Tuesday, Sep 17	1-2 pm	Dr. Faqiang Zhan	Invited speaker
Tuesday, Oct 15	1-2 pm	Dr. Jen Murphy	How to prepare a Research Proposal (2nd years only)
Tuesday, Nov 12	1-2 pm	Dr. Xinke Wang	Invited speaker
Tuesday, Nov 26	1-2 pm	Isabelle Lao	Research Proposal
Tuesday, Dec 17	1-2 pm	Dr. Chengkang Chen	Invited speaker
Tuesday, Jan 7	1-2 pm	Dr. Hongru Shen	Invited speaker
Tuesday, Jan 21	1-2 pm	Yao Yan Huang	Research Proposal
Tuesday, Feb 11	1-2 pm	Zhongwei Shi	Research Proposal
Tuesday, Feb 25	1-2 pm	Dr. Trevor VandenBoer	Invited speaker
Tuesday, Mar 11	1-2 pm	Alex Corapi	Research Proposal
Tuesday, Mar 25	1-2 pm	Dr. Sumi Wren	Invited speaker
Tuesday, April 15	1-2 pm	Yuki Liang	Research Proposal

Guidelines for developing and asking questions during seminars

Cultivating the ability to ask effective questions is important for professional development, and for broader engagement with the scientific community, especially when attending conferences. Learning how to ask questions after a presentation can also help you to develop stronger presentations yourself.

Students must submit 2 questions via Quercus for each seminar speaker and are encouraged to ask their questions during the seminar. Questions asked during the seminar are acceptable and encouraged for submission to Quercus.

Some tips for formulating good questions:

- Taking brief notes during the seminar can be helpful when formulating questions. Some aspects to think about during the presentation may include:
    - Is this result I had expected? Why or why not?
    - Does this presentation remind you of related papers or other presentations that you've seen – can you make comparisons that would result in a question at the end of the presentation?
    - Are there other methods that could have been used to address the hypothesis/hypotheses?
    - Were the results clear or did you not follow the logic?
    - Were there any alternative interpretations that you may have noticed?
    - Were the study conclusions sufficient to appreciate the broader findings of the work?

- Questions can be based on various aspects of the study and may include one or more of these categories:
    - Clarity – there may have been something that you did not understand or something that the presenter went over quickly because they were trying to cover a lot of ground. Something may have sparked your interest and it is acceptable to ask for clarification or more information.
    - Technical aspects – there are many ways to evaluate a hypothesis. It is appropriate to ask about the methods, how do some of the techniques work, what are some of the limitations of the methods, and alternative methods.
    - Outcome and Significance – you may think of some connections to your own work or other work you are familiar with. Perhaps think of ways the outcome of the presentation may relate to other scenarios. What new knowledge was gained that can inform new hypotheses (what would the next steps be)? Think about the broader implications of the findings – how can these results inform better environmental management or monitoring for example?

- How to format and prepare your question:
    - Ensure that your question isn't a comment (make sure your sentence ends with a "?").
    - Always be concise and clear.
    - If you've identified a gap or weakness, ask the question in a civil manner.
    - Think about the speaker's background and experience - save more challenging/critical questions for seasoned speakers.
    - Ensure that your question is objective and not subjective.