



DIRECTOR:
Ruth Lacey

2004-2005

Welcome to Science Senior Seminar

I am excited to be your Science Senior Seminar teacher this year. Science is a wonderful creative modality wherein critical thinking skills, communication skills, the ability to solve problems and even the philosophy of thought are explored and developed. The result is the discovery of a “finding.” It is my goal for each student to experience the scientific process in the most enticing way possible: to actually conduct an original research project that the student herself has brainstormed. Each student will investigate an area of interest to them and present a finding to their student colleagues, myself and an additional Beacon science teacher.

Please Keep in Mind: This capstone course in science meets twice a week (approximately 32 sessions total), and concludes at the end of the semester with the student’s presentation of her project as a PowerPoint slide-show, using a PC computer. The course has several milestones that must be completed in order to receive credit for graduation:

- 1) Derivation of a hypothesis (10%). *Due: early October.*
- 2) Participation in seminar meetings (10%). *Due: throughout.*
- 3) 3 page literature review (20%). *Due: early November.*
- 4) Final project paper (30%). *Due: early December.*
- 5) Final presentation and project. (30%) *Due: mid-November.*

The Science Gradfolio: This capstone course is approximately 75% of the science gradfolio grade; the remaining 25% is from the acid-base assessment in chemistry that each student completed as a junior (12.5%), and the biology lab practicum completed as a sophomore (12.5%). *Please ask your student to explain the science gradfolio rubric to you, they have a copy.* A student may pass the course but may not pass their presentation to another science teacher. In a few instances, this prevents a student from passing their gradfolio, which is needed to receive the Beacon diploma. Usually, if a student does well in the course, they will easily present their project to another science teacher.

Grading in Science Senior Seminar and the Science Gradfolio: If a gradfolio score of 86 or above is achieved, honors will be given. The Beacon standard to pass is 65%. A gradfolio score of less than 65% is not passing. If a student misses more than 4 seminar sessions (without a documented and well proven explanation), or is chronically late to this course, the student will receive an incomplete and must repeat the senior science seminar *during spring PM school only, not as a repeat course in the spring*, in order to graduate. The incomplete grade will be given even if the quality of the project and presentation are outstanding. In addition, electronic format of the presentation and literature review must be submitted for course completion. PowerPoint Presentations must be given to me in electronic format 2 days before the student will present, for loading onto the classroom computer.



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A successful project and presentation will include at least two data sets that have been properly analyzed, which “tell a story.” The more significant and relevant the story is to the needs and interests of mankind, the better, and each student can set their sights on such lofty endeavors!

Please feel free to contact me at the school phone number (212-245-2807), or by email at rschweba@beaconschool.org for any reason.

Sincerely,

Reid Schwebach
Science Seminar Teacher
rschweba@beaconschool.org

Attached: parental signature form.



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2004-2005 **Science Senior Seminar Parent Letter**

Dear Parents and student,

Please read the attached letter regarding science senior seminar completely, it is very important. This page must be returned to Reid Schwebach in a timely manner for each student to receive one percentage point on their final senior seminar course grade.

Science senior seminar is the student's final science assessment at Beacon. Their project and the supporting documents described in the letter need to be of good to excellent quality, and must be completed in a timely manner. It is imperative that each student attends and is on time to all senior seminar sessions, as failure to do so can result in a delayed time to graduate. The presentation of the science research project in the course and to another science teacher during assessment week is a necessary component of the senior seminar.

Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

Name of Parent: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Comments (*optional*):