



The Science Education
Partnership & Assessment Lab
San Francisco State University

Biol 654: PALS: Peer Assistants for Learning Science

Syllabus, Spring 2020

Instructors:

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Course Credit: 4 units, including a 1.5-hour seminar course each week. Attendance at all course sessions and completion of all homework is required to receive credit for the course. Grading may be + / - letter, CR/NCR.

Prerequisites: The course is open by invitation only to upper division undergraduate biology student leaders nominated by a faculty member. Congratulations!

Schedule: The seminar course will be held weekly, Wednesday from 2:00 - 3:40 pm

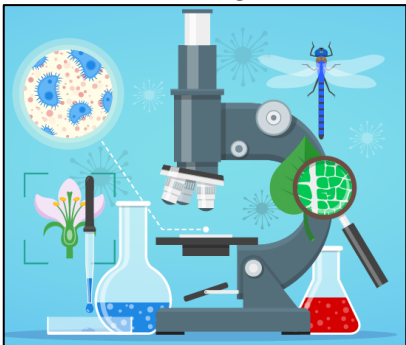
Location: SEPAL Classroom in Hensill Hall, Room 245, SFSU main campus

Course Description:

This upper division science course is intended for undergraduate biology student leaders selected to partner with biology instructors and serve as in-class **Peer Assistants for Learning Science (PALS)** in SFSU biology courses. As part of a larger biology department effort called *Biology FEST: Faculty Empowering Students in Transformations*, PALS will partner with faculty to support active and inclusive teaching in biology courses, as well as more extensive teaching innovations. PALS students will meet weekly to discuss issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion in science and science education, as well as share their own victories and challenges as peer learning assistants. Additionally, PALS students will learn and practice scientific teaching strategies – equity and inclusion, active learning, and assessment – that can support them in their role as peer learning assistants and in their future careers. All course activities aspire to engage biology students themselves as key leaders and partners for faculty in increasing inclusive teaching and integrating the importance of diversity in science into biology courses.



Student Learning Outcomes:



While we expect students to learn a host of different things during their time in Bio 654, we aspire for students to...

- Develop a personal science identity and a sense of belonging to a community of scientists
- Grow leadership and teaching skills as peer learning assistants in biology courses
- Practice strategies that amplify student voices and increase the flow of student-to-faculty communication
- Explore current research and interventions to address of equity, diversity, and inclusion in science

Class Culture:

Biology 654 is a community of student leaders and faculty increasing their understanding of and advocating for improved equity, diversity, and inclusion in science. Our classroom culture is designed to engage students as thought partners and collaborators in all our educational reform efforts. This means course time will involve cooperative learning, discussions, and collaborative problem-solving.

As such, we ask our student colleagues to:

- Attend and actively participate as a member of the Biology 654 community.
- In all situations display respect, tolerance, and patience when interacting with colleagues.
- Be open to learning in many different ways and trying new learning and teaching strategies.
- Approach us for help early and often, and provide us with feedback.
- Seek out and share additional resources that can help us all grow.
- Use assigned readings to clarify understanding and extend knowledge.
- Take responsibility for your own learning by staying attentive and organized.
- Avoid use of portable electronic devices for non-course activities.



Expectations and Grading:

Students enrolled in this course are expected to conduct themselves professionally at all times. Professional behavior includes:

- 1) Attentiveness to on-time arrival and preparedness for class and scheduled meetings
- 2) Clear and frequent communication in-person, by phone, and by email with their partner instructors and fellow SFSU students.

Percent

Course Activity

20%	• Serve once-a-week as a peer learning assistant in faculty partner's course
20%	• Participate in once-a-week planning meeting with faculty partner
15%	• Attend and actively participate in all our Wednesday PALS course sessions
15%	• Submit weekly reflective journal entries prior to our PALS course sessions
10%	• <i>Participate in classroom observation and coaching session</i>
10%	• Submit final reflection about your PALS experience
10%	• Complete final exam about your PALS experience

iLearn: Course documents and classroom handouts will be posted on iLearn (ilearn.sfsu.edu) under the course Bio 654. Students will post their weekly reflective journals and their periodic lesson plans directly to iLearn.

Disability access: Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email (dprc@sfsu.edu).” (<http://www.sfsu.edu/~dprc>).

Observance of religious and Cultural holidays Policy:

The faculty of San Francisco State University shall accommodate students wishing to observe religious and cultural holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class activities. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays during the first two weeks of the class each semester. If such holidays occur during the first two weeks of



the semester, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that they will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. This policy shall be included in the University Bulletin, appropriate websites, the Faculty Manual, and undergraduate and graduate student handbooks. Faculty are encouraged to include the policy statement in their course syllabi. Students wishing to be excused from class attendance for religious observances must submit a written request to their instructors prior to their absences, as stated in the policy above. (SFSU Policy S19-212).

<https://senate.sfsu.edu/policy/observance-religious-and-cultural-holidays-policy-current>

Statement on plagiarism and cheating: Students are expected to maintain academic integrity in all work pursued at San Francisco State University. Cheating on tests may, at the discretion of the instructor, result in the automatic disqualification of the test and the student receiving zero points for that test. Cell phone use (text messaging included) during a test for *any* reason (personal or otherwise) is considered cheating. Plagiarism, defined as either **1) direct copying or loose paraphrasing of text from a published work or from an online source without appropriate referencing, or 2) use of another student's work or ideas without appropriate attribution**, will result in zero points earned for that assignment.

Student disclosures of sexual violence:

SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:

The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/

Counseling and Psychological Services Center - (415) 338-2208; <http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/>

For more information on your rights and available resources: <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>

Food and Housing Insecurity and Support:

Students experiencing economic hardships resulting in food insecurity, housing insecurity, or homelessness are encouraged to reach out to us or other faculty and staff members. SFSU has programs & resources in place to provide support with housing, food & other emergencies. Please reach out to us. We are eager to support all of you! <https://basicneeds.sfsu.edu>

Departmental and University Procedures and Deadlines:

Credit/No Credit Option: Students are responsible for choosing this option. The ***deadline to request credit/no credit grading is -----***. The option cannot be reversed after the request.

Last Day to Drop/Withdraw Classes without a “W” grade: The student is responsible for dropping via the WEB or Touch Tone until the ***last day to drop, -----***

Withdrawal from a Course: After the first two weeks of instruction, withdrawal from a course is not permitted except for serious and compelling reasons. If the withdrawal is approved, the student will receive a “W” grade. Requests for withdrawal are reviewed by the Instructor and Department Chair. Students must submit their unofficial transcripts along with their petitions. ***Last day to withdraw is, ----***

Withdrawal by Exception: Withdrawals ----- *through* ----- are only accepted in cases of verified accident or serious illness where the cause of withdrawal is due to circumstances clearly beyond the student's control and where the assignment of an incomplete is not practical. Ordinarily, withdrawals in this category involve a total withdrawal from the University. All requests during this period must be reviewed by the Instructor, Department Chair, and Associate Dean. Students must submit their unofficial transcripts and appropriate documentations along with their petitions.

For more information: <https://registrar.sfsu.edu/spring>



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Class Topic Sequence

(The topic sequence is approximate and almost certainly will change.)

Week	Course Activity	Course Content
1	Class Topic:	<i>What is this course about? What are peer learning assistants?</i> Welcome, Expectations, and Introduction to PALS course and program
	Fieldwork:	<i>Informally observe your own courses, and reflect on how peer learning assistants could support student success and sense of belonging in biology</i>
2	Class Topic:	<i>How can we promote inclusion and value student perspective in biology courses?</i> Exploring the Cultural Wealth Model & Amplifying Student Voice in Biology Courses
	Fieldwork:	<i>Informally observe your own courses, and reflect on how peer learning assistants could support student success and sense of belonging in biology</i> Potential PALS Alumni Panel I: Strategies for Introducing Yourself
3	Class Topic:	<i>What course will I work with? Who will be my faculty partner?</i> Partnership Orientation: Meet Your Faculty Partner!
	Fieldwork:	<i>PALS Classroom Observation in your partner faculty member's course</i>
4	Class Topic:	<i>How can questions support PALS interactions with students?</i> Questioning Strategies and Open-ended versus Closed-ended Questions
	Fieldwork:	<i>PALS in-class #1</i> Role Play Practice Part I
5	Class Topic:	<i>How can we be reflective about classroom language and why it matters?</i> Instructor Talk and Micro-aggressions
	Fieldwork:	<i>PALS in-class #2</i> Role Play Part II
6	Class Topic:	<i>How can classrooms be unfair, and what can we do about it?</i> Mobiles and Structure Matters: 21 Practical Strategies for Promoting Inclusion
	Fieldwork:	<i>PALS in-class #3</i>
7	Class Topic:	<i>What have we experienced and learned so far as PALS in biology courses?</i> Reflection and Sharing through a PALS Poster Session
	Fieldwork:	<i>PALS in-class #4; Scheduling Classroom Observations</i> POSTER SESSION Potential PALS Alumni Panel II: Strategies for a successful PALS-Faculty partnership
8	Class Topic:	<i>What are examples of current research on inclusion and exclusion in science?</i> Jigsaw Journal Club Discussion on Implicit Bias, Stereotype Threat, & Mindset
	Fieldwork:	<i>PALS in-class #5; Classroom Observations</i>

----- **SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS, NO FIELDWORK, have a fun and safe break!**

- 9** **Class Topic:** *How can we increase visible diversity and cultural-responsiveness in courses?*
Exploring Scientist Spotlights and Their Impact on Students
Fieldwork: *PALS in-class #6; Classroom Observations*
- 10** **Class Topic:** *What advice do PALS have for PALS on being a peer learning assistant?*
Using Role Play and Classroom Scenarios to Share Advice
Fieldwork: *PALS in-class #7;*
Start Assessment
- 11** **Class Topic:** *How do we measure the impact of PALS on faculty and students?*
Exploring Assessment and Making Measuring with Humans
Fieldwork: *PALS in-class #8*
- 12** **Class Topic:** *What do we want to explore that we haven't yet?!?!?*
WILD CARD! Based on input from everyone in our course...
Fieldwork: *PALS in-class #9*
- 13** **Class Topic:** *What evidence did we collect in our PALS courses from students and faculty?*
Sharing Assessment Evidence Collected in our Courses
Fieldwork: *PALS in-class #10*
Start Assessment Analysis
- 14** **Class Topic:** **PALS Partnership Poster Session with Faculty Partners and Stakeholders**
Sharing PALS Classroom Experiences, Evidence, and Insights through Posters
Fieldwork: *PALS in-class #11*
POSTER SESSION
- 15** **Class Topic:** *How can we make PALS better in the future?*
Individual Reflections and Carousel Graffiti Feedback Session
Fieldwork: *PALS in-class #12*
- 16** **Class Topic:** Final Exam during regular class time; Final Reflection Due

ENJOY YOUR SUMMER!

**PLEASE TAKE WHAT YOU LEARNED HERE AND CHANGE
THE WORLD TO BE MORE FAIR, EQUITABLE, and INCLUSIVE!**

