

## BMB170c Finals Instructions

The final for BMB 170c will be an oral presentation from each student. Each presentation will be 20 minutes, including questions and answers. So please time your presentations, and try to leave ~ 5 minutes for Q & A.

Please identify a topic in biochemistry and molecular biophysics that you are particularly interested in and do some literature research. Identify an important question in that field and a set of key experiments and findings that together address the question. Since you have only 15-20 minutes for presentation, do not get overly ambitious. In general, summarizing the results of 2–3 studies that together form a coherent story will be the best way to put together a presentation of this length, although individual cases may vary. Do NOT try to summarize a whole field in 15 minutes. Our objective is to train you in critical thinking skills: the ability to identify an important question, understand the design and rationale of experiments that address the question, and critically evaluate the implication of the results.

Powerpoint presentations are encouraged but not required, you can use other means of presentation if you feel more comfortable with them and/or if that fits your topic better. In general, chalk talks can look deceptively simple but are harder to prepare and organize. If you decided to use chalk, rehearse at the board!

Here are some general guidelines for putting together a presentation:

### Introduction

1. What are the questions that you want to address?
2. Why are these questions important?
3. What are the existing models, if any?

### Body

4. How did scientists address the question? What were the designs and rationales behind the experiments?
5. What were the results?

### Conclusion/Discussion

6. How did the results improve our understanding of the field (e.g., did they support an existing model, or did they put forward new models or raise new possibilities?) Or if you disagree with the authors' conclusions, point out why.
7. Did the studies raise any new questions? What can be done next?

Some tips on presentation:

1. Spend at least a quarter or a third of your presentation time for introduction. Describe the big picture that the question fits in, and why it is important. That means if you have a ~15 minute presentation, spend at least 5 minutes setting up the stage.
2. Set your pace. A good rule of thumb is to have one slide per minute of talk.

3. Do not have too many things on each slide. Don't try to show every piece of data. Everything on each slide should be meaningful to your story. Chip away anything not directly relevant.
4. Time your talk, and rehearse. Nobody, even the professionals, manage to give a good talk without practicing. You need to know what you want to say for each slide. If you are still searching for the right words while you are standing up there before the screen, you will be surprised at how fast time flies!