

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL SCIENCES

Senior Thesis Syllabus - Fall 2025

Biology, Chemistry, EA, Neuroscience and Physics

188L, 189L, 190L, 191

Claremont McKenna College, Pitzer College, Scripps College

Coordinator:

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Registration:

1 Semester Thesis finishing in December ("1f"): Registered for 191L in Fall'25

2 Semester Thesis finishing in December ("2f"): Registered for 188L in Spring'25 and 190L in Fall'25

2 Semester Thesis finishing in May 2026 ("2s"): Registered for 188L in Fall'25 and 190L in Spring'26

2 Semester Summer Research Thesis: Completing first semester during Summer 2025 and second semester during the academic year:

- **2fR**: Completing the second semester Fall 2025: Registered for both 189L and 190L in Fall'25

- **2sR**: Completing the second semester Spring 2026: Registered for 189L Fall'25, and 190L Spring'26

Grading:

Senior Research in (Science) 188L

Participation (seminar summaries)	5%
Oral presentation	25%
Effort (1 st reader)	25%
Semester end progress report (1 st reader)	20%
Semester end progress report (2 nd reader)	25%

Senior Thesis in (Science) 190L

Participation (seminar summaries)	5%
Effort (1 st reader)	25%
Written thesis (1 st reader)	25%
Written thesis (2 nd reader)	20%
Poster	25%

Senior Thesis in (Science) 191

Participation (seminar summaries)	5%
Effort and Milestone Completion (instructor)	25%
Written thesis (1 st reader)	25%
Written thesis (2 nd reader)	20%
Poster	25%

Participation:

You are required to attend at least **six (6)** seminars in science, each semester of thesis program registration, of the many that are offered throughout Claremont Colleges. If you are completing the second semester of a two-semester summer research thesis this fall, you are required to submit 6 seminar summaries. There are a variety of seminar programs in biology, chemistry and physics. For six of these, write a one-page summary of the talk. Give these summaries to your first reader (or DNS reader if your first reader is off-campus). See Thesis Calendar for Deadlines.

191 Students: Students enrolled in any section of 191 (One Semester DNS Thesis Course) are expected to meet for their chosen meeting time.

Progress/Effort:

For 188L (**2s**) students, there will be a brief oral presentation early in the first semester. See Thesis Calendar for Deadlines.

For 190L (**2f, 2fR**) and 191L (**1f**) students, there will be a mandatory poster session at the end of the semester. Your presentation will be evaluated by a panel of faculty. See Thesis Calendar for Deadlines.

For 188L (**2s**) students, a substantial progress report is due to your first and second readers late in the first semester. This should consist of at least seven pages of literature survey and proposal as well as three pages of materials, methods and a description of progress to date. It should also include a bibliography. This is a minimum, as your first reader may want additional pages or materials.

Meetings with Thesis Readers:

Your readers are responsible for submitting your grade, so it is your responsibility to meet regularly with them and keep them informed about your progress.

Thesis Program Communications:

- Touch base with your first reader research advisor to schedule and attend meetings.
- DNS Thesis Program communication is sent via the DNS thesis database, so it is critical that you enter your thesis details and contact information via the DNS Thesis Form: <https://forms.gle/6Bxc1JGN1kuTmsce7>

Satisfactory Work and an Admonition:

Thesis is usually one-fourth of your academic load, and you should expect to devote 10-15 hours per week to the effort. Successful field or laboratory work often requires a significant amount of continuous effort – schedule your work week accordingly.

Students doing two-semester theses will be graded on their first semester work. A thesis project may be terminated and/or converted to a one semester thesis if, in the judgment of the thesis readers, an inadequate effort has been made, and successful completion is unlikely.

Animals:

Any and ALL theses involving experimental work with animals (including fieldwork) require formal approval from the DNS Animal Care and Use Committee, which in turn is bound by complex legal regulations. The faculty member you are working with will be the one to submit the application form for animal use.

Applications are due no later than September 19th. **There are no exceptions** – miss the deadline and you cannot use animals in your research.

See Thesis Calendar for further information.

Experimentation involving Humans:

Experimentation involving humans requires the approval of the appropriate “Institutional Review Board”; each college has its own.

See your first reader as soon as possible.

<https://www.pitzer.edu/irb/>

<https://www.scrippscollege.edu/academics/irb>

<https://www.cmc.edu/institutional-review-board>

Penalties for Late Theses:

- i. One grade point reduction (i.e., A to A-) for theses turned in up to 24 hours late.
- ii. Two grade point reductions (i.e., A to B+) for theses turned in from 24 to 72 hours late.
- iii. Three grade points (i.e., from A to B) for theses turned in from 3 days to one week (5 days) late.
- iv. Additional full letter grade (three grade points) for each subsequent week (5 days) of lateness (or part thereof).