



# SYLLABUS

## CHEM 4601 (Section B): Chemistry Seminar

Fall 2026

---

### Instructor

Dr. Mary E. Peek  
Principal Academic Professional  
School of Chemistry and Biochemistry

### Meeting Times

Fridays, 8:25 – 10:20 am, D.M. Smith Room 021

### Office Hours

Available on request

### Prerequisites

Students must have earned a minimum grade of “D” in the following courses:

- CHEM 3521: Biochemistry I
- CHEM 3522: Biochemistry II

### Course Description

Chemistry Seminar (CHEM 4601) is a 2-credit lecture course on reading, critically discussing, and presenting biochemical research.

### Course Objectives

CHEM 4601 is designed to teach students how to:

- Read the biochemical literature
- Give oral scientific presentations of biochemical research
- Present a scientific poster on biochemical research using an elevator pitch
- Engage in productive discussions about biochemical research

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Prepare and give oral scientific presentations
- Prepare and give a scientific poster presentation
- Critically review the biochemical literature

## Required Course Materials

Teaching materials will be provided to students via Canvas. Students are encouraged to select research articles that are publicly available through open access or the Georgia Tech Library. Posters may be printed at several locations on campus:

- School of Chemistry and Biochemistry – free of charge, facilitated by Dr. Peek
  - Georgia Tech Library – paid by the student: <https://library.gatech.edu/poster-request>
  - Paper & Clay – paid by the student: <https://studentcenter.gatech.edu/paper-clay>
- 

## Grading Policy

Final grades in CHEM 4601 will be computed based on the following scheme:

- 40% = Seminars
- 30% = Attendance & Class Participation
- 20% = Poster Session
- 10% = Homework

Final letter grades in CHEM 4601 will be assigned based on the following averages:

- 90-100% = A
- 80-89% = B
- 70-79% = C
- 60-69% = D
- <60% = F

## Description of Grading Components

**Seminars:** Each student will give a 4-minute “mini-seminar” and two 25-minute full seminars (20 min talk + 5 min for questions, answers, and audience feedback) during the semester. Guidelines will be provided on Canvas. As part of the class participation, students will have the opportunity to give and receive feedback on oral presentations.

**Attendance & Class Participation:** Students are expected to attend class in person and engage in class discussions during each class session. Students will need to share ideas openly and engage in class activities verbally and in writing. Given that we cannot feasibly offer make-up opportunities for missed class discussions, some participation activities may be made up to accommodate student absenteeism due to illness or emergencies. I plan to offer as much flexibility as I feasibly can, but real-time communication is essential.

In the event of an illness or medical emergency, please do not come to class! Contact me via email as soon as possible. Ongoing absences should be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students and will be addressed based on guidance from the Dean of Students’ Office and/or my discretion. Everyone in the Georgia Tech community is strongly encouraged to be vaccinated for SARS-CoV-2. Feel free to wear a face mask in class if you prefer, but masks are no longer required. Please follow Georgia Tech’s guidelines here: <https://health.gatech.edu/coronavirus/isolation-quarantine/>

**NOTE:** Canvas automatically imposes a **20-point deduction for tardiness** to class. It is important to arrive to class on time (i.e. before the first presenter) to avoid disruptions and distractions during student presentations. Please allot sufficient time for commuting to campus and to the classroom.

Institute-approved absences from class include conference presentations, representing GT at an event including some sports-related activities. Unfortunately, medical school interviews, graduate school interviews, weddings, or other personal endeavors are not considered Institute-approved absences. Please contact Dr. Peek as soon as possible to work out reasonable arrangements for handling any anticipated or unexpected absences from class. For more information, please consult the [Institute Approved Absences](#) site.

**Poster Presentations:** Students will prepare and present a scientific poster on an approved paper chosen by the student. A draft poster will be required for feedback prior to the final poster submission date. The School of Chemistry and Biochemistry will provide free poster printing by the advanced deadline. Any students who fail to meet this deadline must print their poster at their own cost. Students and faculty members of the School of Chemistry and Biochemistry are invited to the poster session. Students are welcome to invite their friends for moral support.

**Homework:** Reading comprehension assignments for assigned journal articles and video quizzes, and reflections on class presentations, and/or other types of assignments will be given.

---

## Course and Institute Policies

### Academic Integrity

All students are expected to follow the [Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code](#).

### Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Students should **not** use AI for generating presentations or poster drafts. AI may be used for brainstorming ideas, background research, and information gathering. AI should **not** be used for generating figures and/or final written content for any assignments in the course.

### Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. The Student-Faculty Expectations articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

One of the keys to success in academic courses is clear and timely communication. If you have any concerns, please email me or talk to me. It is easy for me to help students when I know about issues in real time. I am often unable to offer students meaningful support if you procrastinate until the end of the semester, though.

### Accommodations For Students With Disabilities

If you have learning needs that require special accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS: <https://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>) to register your documentation attesting to your disabling condition. Students who have registered should inform me during the first

week of classes about your approved accommodation. Your information must be published in Georgia Tech's new online portal called AIM.

## Extensions, Late Assignments, and Rescheduling

Extensions on homework assignments is possible when requested in a timely manner. Late assignments will have an automatic 10% grade deduction per day in Canvas. Due to the student-driven nature of CHEM 4601, rescheduling opportunities are limited. Attendance and participation on the day of events cannot be "rescheduled." Students are encouraged to manage your time and prepare in advance for presentations to avoid/minimize the need for rescheduling. Scheduling issues that arise from unforeseen circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

## Inclement Weather and Digital Learning Days

In the event of inclement weather, the Office of the Provost will notify faculty that campus will be closed and that we are to pivot to a digital learning day. Students will be able to join CHEM 4601 (Section B) virtually via Zoom. Student presenters are expected to be visible on camera and others should engage as well.

- Audience members should keep their microphones OFF during student presentations to avoid audio distractions.
- Audience members should keep their videos ON throughout the session to demonstrate attentiveness and engagement. Students should be dressed appropriately when on camera. Use of a virtual background is highly recommended to avoid displaying a personal environment (such as a messy dorm room or distracting background).
- Questions by students may be posed in the Chat throughout the presentations or by unmuting during the Q&A session. Students should feel free to turn their cameras ON during the Q&A.
- Comments in the Chat should remain professional and relevant to the course content.
- Zoom reactions should be used during the virtual class session including raise hand to ask a question, clap after student presentations, heart and thumbs up in response to useful feedback and/or comments.

I reserve the right to cancel class in lieu of pivoting to digital learning under the appropriate circumstances.

---

## Georgia Tech Resources

**Emergencies:** call GT Police at **(404) 894-2500**

### Academic Support

- [Academic Success](#): Tutoring and Academic Support
- [Naugle Writing and Communication Center](#)
- [Academic Advisors](#) for the School of Chemistry and Biochemistry

### Personal Support ([Student Life Assistance](#))

Students may request a meeting with the Dean of Students, report concerns using the online referral form, or verify class absences.

Student Life also has numerous departments including:

- [Center for Mental Health Care & Resources](#)
- Students' Temporary Assistance and Resources ([STAR Services](#)) which houses the Campus Closet, Klemis Kitchen, crisis housing support, and the Dean Griffin Hip Pocket Loan
- [Wellness Empowerment Center](#)

## **National Resources**

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline | 1-800-273-8255 | Free 24/7 support
- The Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386 | Online Chat | Text "START" to 687687