

Policies & Roles and Responsibilities of Grad Students in the Biology Department, Villanova University

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GRADUATE PROGRAM DIRECTOR
2016-17

WELCOME to the FAMILY

~21 full time faculty members

8 part-time faculty and post-doctoral fellows

12 wonderful staff

Undergraduate (~100) and graduate students (~20)

CLAS & rest of 

My contact information

- Contact me via e-mail
(anil.bamezai@Villanova.edu)

or stop by my office 120B Mendel

My Role as graduate director

- Advise all Biology graduate students who do not have a thesis mentor (starting M.S., M.A., and Certificate Students)
- Help you navigate university, college and departmental policies that affect you
- Act as your advocate on many forums
- Review and provide feedback on Teaching Assistant evaluations & more

Advice

- Familiarize yourself with graduate school policies
 - Animal use policy, biohazard safety policy etc.,
- Where can you find this information?
 - Posted Online
 - <http://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/artsci/biology/academics/graduate.html>
 - <http://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/artsci/graduate/policies-and-resources.html>
 - Paper copy (blue book)

Different Programs: overview

- Non-matriculated status: you may take a maximum of 8 credits (no more than two full courses) before you are re-evaluated and must matriculate or leave.
- Certificates: We offer Certificates (16 credits) and Advanced Certificates (24 credits) in two areas: Cell, Molecular & Developmental Biology and Ecology, Evolution & Organismal Biology.
- Master of Arts (2 yr.): 33 credits, capstone written and oral comprehensive exam.
- Master of Science (2 yr.): 30 credits, thesis required.

Master of Science: Thesis

- Write thesis proposal and present it to the department
 - ~30 minutes presentation
 - Evaluated by attendees (**New**)
 - Ideally in 1st year (2nd semester?)
 - Until your proposal you may only accrue 5 research credits, remaining 5 credits after you have successfully proposed.
- Meet with your committee & incorporate their suggestions
- Thesis defense
 - Attendees evaluate and committee submits a report (**New**)

What constitutes a full-time Course Load?

- 7-9 credits per semester for a full-time grad student (TA & RA)
- We are flexible about what constitutes “full-time”, but visa requirements for foreign students and requirements for student loans may mean that you must take at least 7 credits (often for loans) or 9 credits (some visa requirements). In your final semester you remain full-time as long as you are taking enough credits to complete your degree.
- Take an average of 8 credits per semester or 15–17 per year to stay on track for completing your Masters in the 2 years of the program.

Expectations

Everyone

- Be a good departmental citizen.
- Attend departmental seminars regularly, come to all of the thesis proposals and defenses that you can.
 - You will get to invite a seminar speaker (**New**)
- Be willing to fill in or help out when called upon — we are all in this together.

Expectations

TAs

- 20 hours per week (usually 8–10 in class, the rest in prep, grading, etc.)
- Expect that the load will be uneven – some weeks will be more work than others, but let me know if you are being required to routinely exceed 20 hours/week.
- Grade on time
- Participate in any necessary prep meetings, group set-ups, clean-ups, etc.
- Hold regular office hours

HEALTH INSURANCE INFO

- Health insurance (New)
 - 6 or more credits on campus may purchase an annual health insurance policy directly from www.firststudent.com.
 - The enrollment deadline is September 10, 2016 (hard deadline!!)
 - The cost for the policy is \$3,000 and must be paid in full.

Critical information

- GPA 3.0 or above
 - Will receive one warning letter
- TA and RA: Pay attention to the expectations & adjust and learn quickly
- As a TA you are not allowed to have another job (meet with me if you have specific questions)
 - Serving as dorm RA for free housing is ok – an exception by University policy

Finally: Policy

- If you forget any of this, or have other questions about Biology graduate related things ...
 - See (or email) me at anil.bamezai@Villanova.edu or Mrs. Joanne Prazenica at Joanne.Prazenica@Villanova.edu – best to use gradbio@villanova.edu
- For more general graduate issues contact the Office of Graduate Studies (Dean Christine Palus; Emily Hatcher (McCloskey); Susan Jacobs; Linda Buonanno, Sandra Essery, Suzanne Tobin, Katie Nadorlik)

General advice: my thoughts

- Be part of and Create “big family” atmosphere – this includes full and part-time students
- Immerse yourself in the creative process
 - Courses you take - assignments
 - Thesis work or Comprehensive exam
- Publish your data
 - What do you think is the readership of a thesis?
- Develop teaching skills while you are here