

Summaries of course readings
MICROBIAL DIVERSITY
January 2009

In Microbial Diversity, all reading assignments that are not explicitly listed as optional points are considered 'required reading' and will be **useful** for test preparation (in conjunction with lecture notes and in-class exercises). These readings also will help you gain a more comprehensive command of the dynamic areas of research in microbial diversity.

Please note that each student is required to write a one-page, single-spaced summary for each of five reading assignments throughout the term. Each summary is worth a maximum of ten points. These homework assignments should reflect your own reading, synthesis, and writing. Your reading summaries will **each** deal with one chapter of Brock, the ToL book, or supplemental readings handed out in class.

Guidelines

An ideal summary will serve as a study guide for you (highlighting the major points, defining vocabulary terms, etc.). Write in prose (sentences, paragraphs), as this is a written assignment for credit. Each summary should also include at least two questions that occurred to you while you read the assignment. These should go beyond 'definition'-type questions and, wherever possible, should connect to the lecture portion of the course.

I will assess your summaries for (1) thoroughness, (2) synthesis, (3) quality of writing, attention to spelling and grammar, etc., and (4) the quality of the questions you pose.

I will offer corrections/suggestions on each summary, and will highlight some of the best or most useful student questions in class.

Due dates

Our course includes a diversity of students from many different backgrounds, and with many different future plans. Therefore, I prefer to give you some flexibility in selecting the readings of special interest to you. These may include readings on topics that are challenging for you, or readings on topics that are especially exciting to you.

There are only two constraints:

(1) you must summarize 5 readings over the course of the term.

(2) One reading summary must be turned in before each mandatory exam. That is, one summary must be turned in before Exam 1, one must be turned in before Exam 2, and one must be turned in before Exam 3. Your remaining two summaries can be turned in any time, according to your preferences.

I look forward to reading your work!