

**FISH 498 SENIOR THESIS PROPOSAL
FALL, SPRING, AND SUMMER SEMESTER 2026-2027**

Instructor/Office Hours
Faculty/TBA

Meeting Location and Time
N/A

Course Credits
2 credits (for letter grade)

Contact Hours

Time spent with the faculty mentor in individual instruction will vary depending on the student's progress on the thesis proposal; however, at least 80 hours of supervised scholarly activity occur during the semester to complete a senior thesis proposal.

Course Prerequisites

Fisheries major with senior standing and a GPA of 3.2 or higher. Permission of a CFOS faculty mentor and the CFOS Internship Coordinator (the coordinator may also be a mentor). STAT 200, ENGL 414 (or an equivalent writing course). Recommended Courses: FISH 315 or 414, MBI 450, or STAT 401 or STAT 402.

Course Description

Under the supervision and mentorship of a CFOS faculty member, students will complete the first part of a year-long, self-designed scholarly project that is the capstone of a student's exemplary academic performance in the Bachelor of Science in Fisheries and Marine Sciences or Bachelor of Arts in Fisheries degree programs. For this component of senior thesis (FISH 498 Senior Thesis Proposal), the student will develop a proposal that will reflect a thorough understanding of the relevant and existing literature, study objectives and testable hypotheses, the methodology by which data will be collected through field and/or laboratory research, including data analyses, and a timeline by which the senior thesis will be completed. The student should also complete the collection of field and/or laboratory data and begin data analysis. A senior thesis project should be an original work that ideally makes a contribution to the fisheries and/or ocean sciences discipline.

Although not as broad in scope as a graduate research project, undergraduate research can serve as a launching pad to graduate school or a career in fisheries. Senior theses may stem from summer research experience as a student intern or take place entirely on campus in a fisheries or ocean sciences laboratory. Following the successful completion of this course, students will be allowed to enroll in FISH 499 Senior Thesis Project. Participation in this program will count towards the Experiential Learning requirement for either the CFOS B.S. or B.A. degree programs.

Course Goal and Student Learning Objectives

Hands-on research provides undergraduate students with an opportunity to enrich their educational experience, accelerate their development as young professionals, and hone skills that are needed to complete graduate- and career-level research. To become familiar with the process of scientific inquiry, including research goal definition, the scientific method, technical write-up, oral presentation of results, and publication of a manuscript, a senior thesis is an irreplaceable experience. The first part of the senior thesis experience, which will be completed in this course

(FISH 498), will focus on developing a research idea, composing a proposal by which that research idea will be explored through the scientific method, collecting field and/or laboratory data, and initiating analysis of the collected data.

The entire senior thesis process will improve the ability of students to find employment and additional educational opportunity after their CFOS B.S. or B.A. degrees have been completed. Employers and prospective graduate schools value research experience because it demonstrates the ability of a student to successfully complete a large-scale project that requires analytical, critical thinking, and oral and written communication skills. Undergraduate students frequently develop close and long-term professional relationships with their research mentors, and the example that mentors provide can be a lasting inspiration for students to become life-long learners in their field of choice. Specific student learning objectives associated with this course include the following:

- a. Become familiar with the process of scientific inquiry through research idea identification;
- b. Understand how to develop and complete a scientific research project through the proposal writing and data collection/analysis process;
- c. Learn how to search for and locate scientific literature and develop a comprehensive understanding of a specific research topic;
- d. Sharpen critical thinking, written communication, data collection, and analysis skills.

Support/ Disabilities Services

If students need accommodation because of a disability, please contact the faculty mentor and CFOS internship coordinator as soon as possible to make the necessary arrangements with the [Office of Disabilities Services](mailto:uaf-disability-services@alaska.edu) uaf-disability-services@alaska.edu

Instructional Methods

Students will learn from individual instruction from their faculty senior thesis mentor. In general, this course will require a significant degree of self-directed study.

Reading Assignments

There is no required text for this course; however, students will be required to conduct an extensive literature survey to develop their senior thesis proposal.

Course Calendar

The senior thesis experience is completed over two semesters. The first course in the sequence (this course), FISH 498 Senior Thesis Proposal, must be completed successfully before students will be allowed to enroll for the second course in the sequence, FISH 499 Senior Thesis Project. The scheduling and timeline should be agreed upon between the student and faculty mentor within the first month of the semester the student is enrolled in FISH 498. Below is an example of a general timeline that can be used as a template for a more detailed, specific timeline to be revised by the student and his/her senior thesis mentor for FISH 498.

Month 1: Identification of a research topic, submission of a research pre-proposal, selection of CFOS faculty mentor, creation of project timeline, and initiation of the project literature review;

- Month 2: Completion of the literature review and submission of a complete research proposal;
Month 3: Collection of field and/or laboratory data;
Month 4: Compilation of data, data analysis, and submission of a progress report to the faculty mentor.

Course Assignments

1. Timeline: The senior thesis timeline should provide major landmarks and deadlines for the entire duration of the senior thesis (both FISH 498 and FISH 499). This document will require contribution and confirmation from both the student and the faculty mentor.
2. Pre-proposal: The pre-proposal is a 1- to 2-page outline of the senior thesis that must be submitted to the faculty mentor and CFOS internship coordinator prior to enrolling for FISH 498. The pre-proposal should contain the project study goals and objectives, general methods to be used to address the study objectives, and expected outcomes.
3. Proposal: The proposal is a 10- to 15-page proposal of the research project to be conducted, including background information and justification, specific objectives and testable hypotheses, proposed methods, and data analysis approaches. The thesis timeline should also be included as part of this document.
4. Progress Reports: The progress report(s) should be submitted to the faculty mentor on a regular basis (to be determined at the time of timeline creation). The progress reports will detail progress in toward completing the literature review, proposal development, data collection and analysis, and manuscript development.

Grading

For senior thesis, failure to turn in any of the required assignments is grounds for a failing grade. Because the senior thesis is based on the individual experience, a grading curve does not apply. Assignments are as follows (details for each assignment are listed above): timeline, pre-proposal, proposal, and data collection and analysis.

Letter Grade Breakdown: (1) Faculty Evaluation of Timeline Completion 10%; (2) Pre-Proposal 10%; (3) Progress Reports 20%; (4) Proposal 30%; and (5) Data Collection and Analysis 30%. All letter grades will be based on an absolute 90-80-70-60 scale (e.g., $\geq 90\%$ = A, and so on).

Course Policies

1. Late Assignments: All assignments are due to the faculty mentor by the dates indicated on the senior thesis timeline. If a student cannot turn in an assignment on time for a legitimate reason, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the faculty mentor (not the CFOS internship coordinator) prior to the date in question to not to receive a penalty.
2. Academic Honesty: All assignments are to be entirely the student's own work, unless the student receives specific instructions to the contrary. All aspects of this course are covered by the UAF Honor system. Any suspected violations will be promptly reported and

appropriate action(s) will be taken. Honesty in your academic work will develop into professional integrity. The faculty, staff, and students of the UAF will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty.

Student protections statement: The university respects and upholds the principles of due process and a fair and equitable process as specified in the Board of Regents' Policy 09.02 Student Rights and Responsibilities. For more information regarding the rights and responsibilities of students, refer to the [Office of Rights, Compliance and Accountability website](#). You are encouraged to read the Board of Regents' policy carefully to fully understand your responsibilities to our community.

We strive to create a safe and respectful environment for all members of our community. If you have questions about expectations of you as a student or believe your rights are being violated, we encourage you to reach out to the Office of Rights, Compliance and Accountability for help. UAF reserves the right to suspend, expel or take other necessary and appropriate action in cases where a student is unable or unwilling to uphold community standards and campus safety.

For more information on your rights as a student and the resources available to you to resolve problems, please go to the following site: <https://catalog.uaf.edu/academics-regulations/students-rights-responsibilities/>.

Disability services statement: UAF is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you have a disability, or think you might have a disability, please contact Disability Services (DS) to request a reasonable accommodation. Accommodations are not retroactive, so students should request accommodations as early as possible, since they might take time to implement. Students should notify DS at any time during the semester if adjustments to their communicated accommodation plan are needed, and must request their accommodations each semester. More information is available online at <https://www.uaf.edu/disability>, and students can reach DS at uaf-disability-services@alaska.edu or 907-474-5655.

ASUAF Advocacy & Engagement: The Associated Students of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (ASUAF), UAF's student government, works to represent student voices and improve the student experience. Students are encouraged to get involved in shaping policies, sharing feedback, and helping address issues that impact campus life. ASUAF also offers support in navigating university processes and connecting with the right resources when challenges arise. To get involved or seek support, visit the ASUAF office or email asuaf.office@alaska.edu.

Student Academic Support:

- Communication Center (907-474-7007, uaf-commcenter@alaska.edu, Student Success Center, 6th Floor Room 677 Rasmuson Library)
- Writing Center (907-474-5314, uaf-writing-center@alaska.edu, Student Success Center, 6th Floor Room 677 Rasmuson Library)
- UAF Math Services (907-474-7332, uaf-traccloud@alaska.edu)
 - Drop-in tutoring, Student Success Center, 6th Floor Room 672 Rasmuson Library)
 - 1:1 tutoring ([by appointment only](#)), 6th Floor Room 677 Rasmuson Library
 - Online tutoring ([by appointment only](#)) available
 - <https://www.uaf.edu/dms/mathlab/>, available at the Student Success Center
- Developmental Math Lab (Gruening 406, <https://www.uaf.edu/deved/math/>)
- The Debbie Moses Learning Center at CTC (907-455-2860, 604 Barnette St, Room 102, <https://www.ctc.uaf.edu/student-services/student-success-center/>)

- For more information and resources, please see the Academic Advising Resource List <https://www.uaf.edu/advising/students/index.php>

Student Resources:

- Disability Services (907-474-5655, uaf-disability-services@alaska.edu, 110 Eielson Building)
- Student Health & Counseling [**free counseling sessions available**] (907-474-7043, <https://www.uaf.edu/chc/appointments.php>, Whitaker Building, Room 206, Health, Safety & Security Bldg - same building as Fire and Police)
- Office of Rights, Compliance and Accountability (907-474-7300, uaf-orca@alaska.edu, 3rd Floor, Constitution Hall)
- Associated Students of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (ASUAF) or ASUAF Student Government (907-474-7355, asuaf.office@alaska.edu, Wood Center 119)

Nondiscrimination statement: The University of Alaska is an equal opportunity/equal access employer, educational institution and provider. The University of Alaska does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, citizenship, age, sex, physical or mental disability, status as a protected veteran, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, parenthood, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation or belief, genetic information, or other legally protected status. The University's commitment to nondiscrimination, including against sex discrimination, applies to students, employees, and applicants for admission and employment. Contact information, applicable laws, and complaint procedures are included on UA's statement of nondiscrimination available at www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination.

For more information, contact:

UAF Office of Rights, Compliance and Accountability
1692 Tok Lane
3rd floor, Constitution Hall, Fairbanks, AK 99775
907-474-7300
uaf-orca@alaska.edu

Additional syllabus statement for courses that include off-campus programs and research activities:

University Sponsored Off-Campus Programs and Research Activities

We want you to know that:

1. UA is an Equal Opportunity/Equal Access employer, educational institution and provider and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual: <http://www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination>.
2. Incidents can be reported to your university's Equity and Compliance office (listed below) or online reporting portal. University of Alaska takes immediate, effective, and appropriate action to respond to reported acts of discrimination and harassment.
3. There are supportive measures available to individuals that may have experienced discrimination.
4. University of Alaska's Board of Regents' Policy & University Regulations (UA BOR P&R) 01.02.020 Nondiscrimination and 01.04 Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination Under Title IX, go to: <http://alaska.edu/bor/policy-regulations/>.
5. UA BOR Policies & University Regulations apply at all university owned or operated sites, university sanctioned events, clinical sites and during all academic or research related travel that are university sponsored.

For further information on your rights and resources [visit the student placement guidelines page of the accountability and compliance site](#).