

Course Specification

(Postgraduate Programs)

Course Title: *Special topics*

Course Code: *MBI591*

Program: *M.Sc. in Microbiology*

Department: *Botany and Microbiology*

College: *Science*

Institution: *King Saud University*

Version: *3rd*

Last Revision Date:



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A. General information about the course:

1. Course Identification:

1. Credit Hours: 2			
2 (2+0)			
2. Course type			
A.	<input type="checkbox"/> University	<input type="checkbox"/> College	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Department <input type="checkbox"/> Track
B.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Elective
3. Level/year at which this course is offered: (2nd level/ 1st year)			
4. Course General Description:			
<p>The course provides master's-level students with a selected contemporary topic aligned with current scientific developments and departmental expertise. Each semester, the Department approves a set of offered topic titles and announces them in the course offering syllabus (topic title, learning resources, and assessment tasks). Approved topic titles are offered within core microbiology domains including (but not limited to) Virology, Bacteriology, Mycology, Immunology, and Phycology.</p>			
5. Pre-requirements for this course (if any):			
None			
6. Pre-requirements for this course (if any):			
None			
7. Course Main Objective(s):			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide master's-level study of an approved contemporary topic aligned with current scientific developments. 2. Develop students' ability to search, select, and critically appraise recent peer-reviewed literature using appropriate scholarly databases and referencing tools. 3. Strengthen evidence synthesis and scientific writing skills through structured scholarly outputs (e.g., critical review/mini-review) with correct citation practice. 4. Develop oral scientific communication and scholarly discussion skills through seminars/journal-club participation and constructive peer critique. 5. Reinforce professional and ethical responsibility in academic integrity, accurate reporting, and appropriate attribution of sources. 			

2. Teaching Mode: (mark all that apply)

No	Mode of Instruction	Contact Hours	Percentage
1	Traditional classroom	30	100%
2	E-learning	NA	NA
3	Hybrid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional classroom • E-learning 	NA	NA





No	Mode of Instruction	Contact Hours	Percentage
4	Distance learning	NA	NA

3. Contact Hours: (based on the academic semester)

No	Activity	Contact Hours
1.	Lectures	30
2.	Laboratory/Studio	
3.	Field	
4.	Tutorial	
5.	Others (specify).....	
Total		28

B. Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), Teaching Strategies and Assessment Methods:

Code	Course Learning Outcomes	Code of PLOs aligned with program	Teaching Strategies	Assessment Methods
1.0	Knowledge and understanding			
1.1	Interpret key concepts and recent advances in the selected botany topic.	K4	Guided reading; short instructor inputs; discussion	Rubric-based evaluation; short synthesis tasks
1.2	Explain contemporary concepts, theoretical foundations, and current research trends within the selected botanical topic, based on informed understanding of recent peer-reviewed literature.	K1	Journal club; peer critique	Critique forms; peer review; rubric
2.0	Skills			
2.1	Apply scientific writing skills to produce a structured scholarly text (mini review/critical synthesis) with correct referencing.	S3 & S4	Writing workshop; feedback cycles	Draft + final paper; rubric



Code	Course Learning Outcomes	Code of PLOs aligned with program	Teaching Strategies	Assessment Methods
2.2	Communicate scientific ideas effectively through an oral seminar and written report, independently and collaboratively.	S4	Student seminar; group discussion	Presentation rubric; participation rubric
3.0	Values, autonomy, and responsibility			
3.1	Demonstrate ethical responsibility in research discussion and writing (integrity, citation, avoiding plagiarism).	V3	Case discussion; integrity briefing	Integrity checklist; rubric criterion

C. Course Content:

No	List of Topics	Contact Hours
1.	Orientation: approved topic title, key questions, and expected outputs (section syllabus)	2
2.	Foundations: landmark papers + conceptual framework of the topic	4
3.	Methods used in the topic (diagnostics, culture/omics, immunoassays, ecology/microbiome tools; topic-dependent)	4
4.	Journal club cycle: critical reading + discussion + peer critique (student-led weeks)	10
5.	Scientific writing workshop: synthesis structure, argumentation, citation management	4
6.	Research integrity & publication ethics within the topic	2
7.	Student seminars: presentation + Q&A + feedback; course wrap-up	2
Total		28

D. Students Assessment Activities:

No	Assessment Activities *	Assessment timing (in week no)	Percentage of Total Assessment Score
1.	Participation + preparedness (discussion quality; respectful critique)	2 nd -13 th	15%





No	Assessment Activities *	Assessment timing (in week no)	Percentage of Total Assessment Score
2.	Paper critique forms / short reflections (2–3 submissions)	3 rd -10 th	30%
3.	Student-led discussion facilitation (at least one session)	5 th -12 th	15%
4.	Oral seminar presentation + Q&A (rubric)	12 th - 13 th	20%
5.	Final written synthesis (mini-review / critical synthesis, ~1500–2500 words)	14 th	20%

*Assessment Activities (i.e., Written test, oral test, oral presentation, group project, essay, etc.)

E. Learning Resources and Facilities:

1. References and Learning Resources:

Essential References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department-approved recent review papers and primary papers (updated each semester by the instructor and attached in section syllabus). • Discipline databases available at KSU (e.g., Web of Science/Scopus/PubMed). • Research integrity / plagiarism guidance (KSU policy + program guidance used for postgraduate work).
Supportive References	S.S. Bhakar and Tarika Singh (2014) A Handbook for Writing Research Paper. Bharti Publications Delhi (India)
Electronic Materials	EndNote The Best Citation & Reference Management Tool https://library.ksu.edu.sa/en/node/1685
Other Learning Materials	

2. Educational and Research Facilities and Equipment Required:

Items	Resources
facilities (Classrooms, laboratories, exhibition rooms, simulation rooms, etc.)	Classroom / seminar room
Technology equipment (Projector, smart board, software)	Projector / smart board; LMS access; reference manager



F. Assessment of Course Quality:

Assessment Areas/Issues	Assessor	Assessment Methods
Effectiveness of teaching	The students	Indirect (course evaluation + mid-semester feedback)
Effectiveness of students' assessment	Faculty	Direct (rubric calibration; sample moderation)
Quality of learning resources	Faculty & students	Indirect (resource adequacy survey)
The extent to which CLOs have been achieved	Program Leaders	Direct (CLO mapping report + evidence samples)
Other		

Assessor (Students, Faculty, Program Leaders, Peer Reviewer, Others (specify))

Assessment Methods (Direct, Indirect)

G. Specification Approval Data:

COUNCIL /COMMITTEE	MICROBIOLOGY POSTGRADUATE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY AND MICROBIOLOGY
REFERENCE NO.	
DATE	1/17/2026

