

Final Project and Talk Evaluation

Many have asked about how to approach the final project and how it is evaluated. I thought the material below may be of help.

I. Final Project

Unlike all other course model evaluations, evaluation of the final project is done first on a letter grade basis (i.e. A, B, etc.) and the letter grade is then converted to its equivalent in points (A = 95%, B = 85%; B- = 82%, B+ = 88%, etc.).

In reading & running your final project I

- 1) **Load the model &** expect it to **run** perfectly with no debugging at all on my part.
- 2) Look over the printed **Lists** that are submitted and expect them to be perfectly self-explanatory (very clearly commented) and logically absolutely clear (what each section does, how it contributes to the model, etc.). I expect, at the minimum, to have to make none of the kinds of repeated suggestions that I have fed back to you at various times during the semester and penalize any such lacks more severely than I have in the past.
- 3) Read the “**bioreasoning**” section expecting to learn from it fully
 - what the model is about
 - how it behaves
 - what its' limitations are
 - what its' source(s) are and
 - what the larger biological context of the model is.

'Anemic' bioreasoning subsections are, in the case of the final projects, penalized substantially.

4) Point values

Final project	20 points*
Final talk	05 points*

*You can not pass the course with completing this

- 5) Feedback – as detailed previously, final project submissions (including disks or ZIPS, no CD's please) are not returned to you. You can, however, view the comments on your project at your leisure by merely dropping me a note to make an arrangement. I encourage you to do so.

II. Final talks

- Occur during the scheduled final exam period for the course.
- Are 10 minutes long with 5 minutes for setup/questions.
- Should aim at communicating to your audience what the model is about, what its biological context is and how it was constructed.
- Many use a combination of Visual BASIC (to demo their model) and a visual aid [to explain it (overhead slides or Powerpoint or Word)].

III. Reflections

Overall, let me take this opportunity to enthusiastically thank all of you who each, in their own unique manner, made this course an extremely enjoyable experience for me as a teacher.

Until last spring's edition (Biomod '01), this course had languished since its Spring 1997 Mac version and given the necessity of rewriting the modeling software in Visual BASIC 6, I myself had to "resolve" every model in VB just as you did. In the process I gained a more immediate feeling for the processes you went through in doing your models.

In addition, we are a quite diverse group with major's interests including, as I count them, biology, environmental science, neurobiology, biology with a concentration in ecology, evolution and behavior, biology with a concentration in molecular and cell biology and math and computer science plus some additional minors. So 'bending' the course content to meet the needs and abilities of a such a varying mix of student interests has also been a stimulating challenge for me.

And then, of course, there was our 'fun' 8 weeks long bout with CITS-created technical troubles. I guess just like you I 'worked' hard and, as a result of that work, learned much and enjoyed the process of working with you.