

**DATA, DISTRIBUTIONS AND HYPOTHESES:
EXPLORING DIVERSITY AND DISTURBANCE IN THE TALLGRASS PRAIRIE**

BIOL 585, Fall 2011

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OVERVIEW OF WEEKLY WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

As you progress through the BIOL 585 Prairie Module over the next four weeks, you will be introduced to fire disturbance and its known effects on prairie plant populations (Week 1), collect your own field data on restored prairie parcels with different season-of-burn treatments (Week 2), analyze that data (Week 3), and explore the implications and constraints of burning and other management techniques for prairie restoration and management (Week 4). Thus, each week builds on the activities from the week before and essentially addresses a different component of a scientific paper – the Introduction (Week 1), Materials & Methods (Week 2), Results (Week 3), and Discussion (Week 4).

Rather than requiring you to submit a single paper at the end of the module, you will be completing a *very brief* writing assignment each week that will be turned in to your TA at the beginning of the next lab. The goals of these assignments are to:

- (1) reinforce the key points from the lab that are central to the following lab activities
- (2) prepare you for the next stage of the module
- (3) develop skills writing a concise scientific paper as a project progresses.

These writing assignments are not meant to be particularly time-consuming. If you prepare for lab each week (i.e. read the lab handout and complete any pre-lab assignments) and pay attention during your lab session, it should take you only 15-30 minutes to complete each assignment. In addition to providing brief written comments, the TA's will select particularly strong examples to share with each lab so you can see positive examples of your peers' work (pending permission of the authors).