Oral presentation/final exam assignment

In the final week or class, everyone is required to do an oral presentation based on one of two articles selected by the class for in-depth analysis. Additionally, the final exam will be heavily weight towards these two articles and the related student presentations.

There are 6 possible articles, of which they class will choose 2, one from each of two categories that focus on human or animal experiments. We will choose the articles by class vote on Thursday July 25, 2013.

Extra Credit Assignment due before class on July 25, 2013: To facilitate selection of the best, most interesting articles, extra credit will be given for short evaluations of the target articles. By participating, you will probably also have a disproportionate influence in getting your favorites selected

Choose at least 3 of the 6 articles, and skim them. You can do them all if you want. You do not need to read them closely, unless you want to. For each one, indicate why it would be a good choice – cool questions, easy to fit the assignment, enough variation to remain interesting, etc or a bad choice. For those doing the extra credit assignment, I may ask you to present your case informally to the class on Thursday. As always, email me your comments at mgorman@ucsd.edu with Hormones Extra Credit in the subject line.

The assignment for the final presentations is as follows. **More specific details will be provided after the articles are chosen on Thursday**

In the final week, your job is to present and evaluate data that allow us to better consider the merits of the papers' main argument. For example, identify one specific, testable claim made by the authors. If you then go to the source(s), do the original data indeed support the claim? In a 15 minute powerpoint presentation, identify the importance of the claim in the review article; describe the core of the original experiment and show its results, consider the validity of the conclusions drawn, and indicate whether the in-depth analysis ultimate gives higher or lower confidence in the review article. The successful presentation, therefore, will have a number of components:

1. Identify a topic. In most cases this involves identifying a reasonably specific and substantial empirical argument raised by the authors. Do not pick random details that might be referenced. Instead, find a paragraph that has important information for one of the paper's main points. Usually, it will be a single study that purports to support a point cited in the review. It is ideal if there are 2 references on the same claim. I am happy to help you find a good empirical argument to choose, and I need to approve it to schedule the presentations and avoid duplications. A good topic is not too big nor too small.

2. Find the relevant source material cited in the review. Many, but not all, of the references are available electronically through the library website, via pubmed.gov. If there is a

3. Summarize the evidence for the class. Remember, we are trying to evaluate how valid the claims/conclusions are – not just summarize what the authors said. Decide what results in the paper are most critical, and show them to the class. Be judicious, don't overwhelm us with everything. What are the most important results?

4. Evaluate the overall pattern of results. Are they consistent? If not, is there a good reason for it? Do they support the claim being made? Can they be explained by an alternative view? Offer critical perspectives, but remember that no research project is definitive. Thus, be rigorous but be reasonable too!

In the final exam, you will be asked to write more about your topic, and the 2 review articles, so this is like a mini-research paper, but without a formal writing assignment.

Format
Feel free to adopt any format that you think will be informative and educationally effective. There are 19 of us presenting over 2 days, so we will plan on 9-10 on each day. If we run late, we may have to have 1-2 presentations during the final. According, presentation length should be 12-15 minutes (plus 5 minutes for questions and discussion).   You can work as a 2-person team, and tackle a larger problem (or two) and plan on a 30 minute discussion.

I would aim for 4-8 slides that illustrate the data/research findings that you will be presenting. If you bring a flash drive or email me the powerpoint, you can project it from my computer.