I would like to propose that we write an article together. I have mentioned this before, but I would like to make it an official part of your participation in this class. I cannot mandate your participation in this project, of course, and if there isn’t sufficient interest, we’ll pretend I never wrote this. BUT, if there is interest, I would like to figure out a way to make it happen.

I have done this once before with a seminar—it resulted in the BioScience article and, eventually, the Toolbox Project. My co-instructor, Sanford Eigenbrode, and I modelled that seminar on one offered annually by David Pimental, an instructor of Sanford’s at Cornell (http://vivo.cornell.edu/display/individual5774). We did it a bit differently—we devoted the entire seminar to article preparation, but the seminar was only worth one credit. Here, we are a month into the semester, so we are behind the curve we traced in that seminar; still, I think that if there is interest, we should be able to make serious progress by the end of the semester on something innovative and publishable.

If we do this, we will need to devote some class time to work on the project. I’m thinking that 1/3 of the class should be devoted to this, and we can work that time around the seminar period as is suitable. There may also be a need to arrange time outside of class during the semester, and almost certainly going through the spring.

As I indicated, I can’t mandate your participation. But if you are interested in being an author, that comes with certain responsibilities: (1) you will need to make time for manuscript meetings outside of class during the semester (should there be any) and beyond the semester, until the manuscript is ready to go; (2) you will need to contribute to the design of the paper; and (3) you will need to do some of the writing and then contribute to the revision stage(s) of the project. This will be a commitment of time, but I am confident that if we work on this, we’ll come up with something that we can be proud of and that will make it into print.

Here is what I am thinking for scope of work and timetable:

10/9/13 – Come to class with 2-3 article ideas that you can pitch to the group; we will discuss these and then make some initial decisions about which ones we are interested in working on; between classes, we will need to do a lit review to identify what literature there is on the topic

10/16/13 – Continue discussing our finalists and make a decision about our topic, aiming for a unanimous decision; discuss journal targets; between classes, we will need to create a Dropbox folder and begin locating and depositing literature on the topic we’ve selected
10/23/13 – Discuss the topic and divide the reading up among the group; begin brainstorming the kinds of claims we might be willing to defend as a group

10/30/13 – Continue reading and discussions; perhaps begin small writing tasks

November – Continue reading, discussion, and small writing tasks; work toward identifying the principal argument; work toward identifying outline of the paper; discuss journal targets

December – Get author commitments at the beginning of the month; lock down working outline; issue writing assignments; reading and planning toward initial draft of the writing assignments; identify journal targets

Spring – Continue writing and reviewing the idea(s) and revising the draft; aim to have a draft for review by friends of the authors on April 1; revise and prepare for submission to the journal by end of May