

GS21 1152 Scientific Writing
Course Director: William Mattox
Two semester hours
Tuesday/Thursday 2:00 – 3:30 PM
Grading System: Pass/Fail

1. Prerequisites: Students should be in their second year of training in their current degree program, have affiliated with a faculty advisor, and developed an idea for a specific thesis project. Registration requires permission of the course director.

This class meets the GSBS Scientific Writing Course Requirement for GSBS PhD students

2. Mode of Delivery: We expect this class will be offered in a combination of virtual and in-person sessions. Students who believe they will not be able to attend in-person sessions should notify the course director on the first day of class (September 4th) and provide rationale for the request. The course director will consider making any needed and reasonable accommodations to allow virtual participation in otherwise in-person sessions.

3. Weekly lectures: Thursday of weeks 1 and 2, and Tuesdays of each week thereafter. Time for all lectures is 2:00 – 3:30. See Schedule

Mode of Delivery and Location for Lectures: Due to the recent surge in Covid19, we will start the Fall 2021 semester with virtual lectures sessions via Zoom and plan to move to in-person lectures in the GSBS large classroom when conditions improve sufficiently. The change to in-person meetings will be announced during a preceding class session.

To join Zoom meeting:

<https://mdacc.zoom.us/j/81500297008?pwd=TVpaMTFXMjYreTZvUitDK1IRcU5HUT09>

Meeting ID: 815 0029 7008

Password: 447561

Zoom Etiquette – Please mute yourself whenever you are not speaking. Keep video on during lecture and discussions. Participate by adding questions in the chat or raising zoom hand.

4. Small group meetings – These required sessions will be held with a Faculty Moderator from your area of biology on Thursdays starting at a time determined by the moderator. The delivery mode of small group sessions (virtual or in-person) will also be determined by the moderator of each small group who will consult with students in the group regarding the most appropriate method.

5. Course Description

The objectives of the course are to teach critical thinking and the fundamentals of proposal writing that will help students write candidacy exam proposals, grants, papers, meeting abstracts, and theses/dissertations. Students will develop a research plan and write a 6-page grant proposal. Students will also learn to edit and critique their fellow students' proposals, which will help prepare the students for writing and editing their candidacy exam. Weekly meetings will consist of lectures from faculty/experts addressing how to compose grant proposal sections. In addition, students will meet weekly with faculty in small groups to critique/discuss writing assignments during which they will be given feedback on their proposal content/style by faculty and fellow students.

6. Grading: Pass/Fail. A passing grade requires that the student:

- A. Complete all assignments to the satisfaction of the instructor/moderator.
- B. Attend all lectures and small group sessions unless excused by the instructor/moderator.
- C. Satisfactory participation in each small group session as determined by the faculty moderator.
- D. Submission of a satisfactory and complete proposal at the end of the course as instructed.

7. Plagiarism and Originality

The goal of this course is to develop your ability to write an original scientific research proposal such as those submitted in fellowship and grant applications. To accomplish this, it is vital that all materials you submit during this course are your own original writing.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the ideas or words of others as you own and is a serious form of academic misconduct. Any student determined to have purposely committed plagiarism will be given a failing grade and may be subject to further disciplinary action including dismissal from the GSBS.

Please note that this means no part of the proposal, including specific aims, can be taken from the writing others. This includes the advisor's grant proposals.

THE PROPOSAL WRITTEN IN THIS CLASS MUST BE THE ORIGINAL WORK OF THE STUDENT.

8. A note on your proposal from this class and the candidacy exam

The proposal written for this course may be used in students' candidacy exam pending approval from each students' Advisor and Program Director. If your intention is to do so, then please obtain this approval prior to when you start your writing in this class.

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Class Schedule - Fall 2021

Lectures as below: 2:00 – 3:30 PM, 1.0-1.5 hours per class meeting

Thursday Small Group: Faculty Moderators meet with students for 1-1.5 hours each week during entire semester. Times are to be determined.

Schedule

- Aug 31 – **no class**
- Sept 2 – **Lecture:** Intro to Class & Basics of Writing (**PICUS**)

- Sept 7 – **no class**
- Sept 9 – **Lecture:** How to Organize What You Are Writing (**PICUS**)

- Sept 14 – **Lecture:** Developing & Clearly Stating your Hypothesis (**KOLONIN**)
- Sept 16 – **Small Group:** Topics/Hypothesis Presented

- Sept 21 – **Lecture:** Formulating Specific Aims (**GARSIN**)
- Sept 23 – **Small Group:** Specific Aims Presented

- Sept 28 – **Lecture:** How to write a Specific Aims Page (**MORANO**)
- Sept 30 – **Small Group:** Specific Aims Critique

- Oct 5 – **Lecture:** Figures/Graphical Abstracts (**MATTOX**)
- Oct 7 – **Small Group:** Specific Aims Page Critique 1

- Oct 12 – **Lecture:** How to write a Significance/Innovation, Section (**JUSTICE**)
- Oct 14 – **Small Group:** Specific Aims Page Critique 2

- Oct 19 – **Lecture:** How to Write a Research Plan, Section I (**GALKO**)
- Oct 21 – **Small Group:** Significance/Innovation Critique

- Oct 26 – **Lecture:** How to write a Research Plan, Section II (**GALKO**)
- Oct 28 – **Small Group:** Research Plan Critique 1

- Nov 2 – **Class Discussion:** Faculty Panel Q&A (**BERDEAUX, others TBD**)
- Nov 4 – **Small Group:** Research Plan Critique 2

- Nov 9 – **Lecture:** Fine Tuning Your Proposal (**NINETTO**)
- Nov 11 – **Small Group:** Final Proposal Critique

- Nov 16 – **Lecture:** Abstract Writing (**GOODOFF**)
- Nov 18 – **Small Group:** Final Proposal Critique

- Nov 23 – **Thanksgiving Week** – no class
- Nov 25 – **Thanksgiving Week** – no class

- Nov 30 – **Small Group:** Presentations/Mock Review Panels/Continued Feedback
- Dec 2 – **Small Group:** Presentations/Mock Review Panels/Continued Feedback

- Dec 7 – **Small Group:** Presentations/Mock Review Panels/Continued Feedback
- Dec 9 – **Small Group:** Presentations/Mock Review Panels/Continued Feedback

- Dec 14 – **Small Group:** Presentations/Mock Review Panels/Continued Feedback – **if needed**
- Dec 16 – **Small Group:** Presentations/Mock Review Panels/Continued Feedback – **if needed**