

EEB 701: Professional Development

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Meeting Time & Location: Tuesdays, 3:30 – 6 pm in Israel 302

Course Description: The primary aim of this course is to improve the grant-writing skills of graduate students, with the specific objective of helping students to submit a competitive... nay, a successful!, grant proposal. As such, each student is required to submit a major grant proposal (e.g., NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant; NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, EPA STAR proposal) or a series of smaller grant proposals during the course. The focus of the first part of the course will be the preparation and refinement of these proposals, including NSF proposal review panels; peer review; and writing workshops. The three top proposals from the course (as determined by peer review) will be competitively reviewed by faculty and the top award will receive a prize. The second part of the course will focus on professional themes necessary for successful graduate and post-graduate work in the field of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.

Structure of Course: The first two-thirds of the course will be focused on the elaboration and completion of a competitive grant application to the NSF, EPA, or equivalent funding source. This will include intensive peer review and multiple revisions. The second third of the course will focus on professional development skills and considerations likely to contribute to the success of your time in graduate school and beyond, including the following themes:

Relationships: The thesis advisor; Professors in general; Committee members; Collaborators; Donors and funding sources; Peers; Field and laboratory assistants; Mentors and mentoring

Communication. Speaking: Oral research presentations; Journal clubs and lab meetings; Teaching & TA-ing; The media, the public & public outreach; The “elevator talk”

Writing: Scientific writing; Reviewing a paper; Grantsmanship; Dealing with and responding to a negative review

Skills & practical considerations: Searching and managing the literature; The CV; The publishing process (how to submit a paper); The review process (what to expect, how to do it); The grant application process; Field research & International collaboration; Work habits: how to write a lot; How to make the most out of conferences

Stage specific considerations & next steps: The thesis defense; The horse latitudes; Finishing up your PhD; Applying for post-docs & jobs; Alternatives to academia; Doing good in the world vs. doing good science

Recommended Reading:

How to Write A Lot, by Paul J. Silva (ISBN-13: 978-1-59147-743-3)

Course Schedule (*NOTE: Assignments due on Sunday at noon or sooner*)

WK	DATE	IN CLASS	ASSIGNMENTS (DUE THE FOLLOWING WEEK)
1	8/28/12	<i>Hurricane Isaac...</i>	
2	9/4/12	<i>Introduction to the course</i>	Review sample proposals Short (<1 pg) review per proposal. Identify what grant you will apply to
3	9/11/12	<i>NSF-style Grant Review Panel</i>	Prepare project overviews. Print out RFP and study it; identify letter writers & deal with other logistics.
4	9/18/12	<i>3 min "elevator talks" & feedback</i>	Prepare Intro & Objectives
5	9/25/12	<i>Intro & Objectives 1 – Peer Review</i>	Revise Intro & Objectives Prepare Personal Essay Drafts
6	10/2/12	<i>Intro & Objectives 2 and Personal Essay Drafts – Peer Review</i>	Develop Full Proposal Draft
7	10/9/12	<i>Full Proposal 1 – Peer Review</i>	Revise Full Proposal Draft
8	10/16/12	NO CLASS	Revise Full Proposal Draft
9	10/23/12	<i>Full Proposal 2 – Peer Review</i>	Refine Full Proposal Draft
10	10/30/12	<i>Full Proposal 3 – Peer Review</i>	Finalize Proposal Draft
11	11/6/12	<i>NSF-style Grant Review Panel</i>	Re-refine Proposal Draft
		EPA STAR IS DUE (11/05-ish...)	
12	11/13/12	<i>Fine tune proposals, as needed. CV and general discussion</i> NSF GRF IS DUE (11/19)	Finalize & Submit Proposal
13	11/20/12	NO CLASS	Thanksgiving week
14	11/27/12	<i>Relationships; Publishing & reviewing; Public speaking</i>	Reading, TBA
15	12/4/12	<i>Skills and practical considerations; Stage-specific considerations; Engaged research</i>	None