

MCB 6937: Fellowship and Proposal Writing (1 credit)

Sections: _ **Class Periods:** Biweekly synchronous meetings (Thursdays 11:00 am – 1:00 pm)

Location: Online

Academic Term: Fall 2024 (Aug 22 – Dec 4, 2024)

Instructor:

Name: Kelly C. Rice, Associate Professor, Microbiology and Cell Science

Email Address: kcrice@ufl.edu

352-392-1192

Office Hours: Biweekly Thursdays 11 am – 1 pm, on Zoom

Zoom link for all live classes and open office hours:

TBA

Course Description

This 1 credit graduate seminar covers the basic principles of writing a competitive graduate fellowship application and oral qualifying exam research proposal, with an emphasis on strategies and format relevant for submission to a federal grant agency (NIH, NSF, NASA; focus will be customized to student enrollment).

Course Delivery

All course content is delivered through the Canvas course website. This course is taught online and consists of **synchronous biweekly LIVE ZOOM MEETINGS on Thursdays 11:00 am – 1:00 pm**. Please see the table on last page for schedule. Attendance and participation are required on the dates marked with *.

Lecture portion of the live bi-weekly lectures will be recorded and posted to our Canvas course website. Students will be informed at the beginning of each class which portion(s) (if any) will be recorded. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image agree to have their video or image recorded.

- If you do not consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded.
- If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and should communicate using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live.
- Weekly Zoom office hours and any other one-on-one meetings with students will never be recorded.
- As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Course Pre-Requisites / Co-Requisites

This course is geared towards graduate students entering their second year of a PhD program.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand the purpose of each element of a fellowship application (Specific Aims, Research Plan, Training Plan) and role of student and mentor in generating these elements.
2. Identify common mistakes, pitfalls, and "fatal flaws" of grant-writing.
3. Develop a hypothesis statement and two-three independent research objectives.
4. Understand the peer review process.
5. Incorporate objectives 1-4 above in writing of the Specific Aims, Research Plan and Training Plan of a fellowship application or research proposal.

Materials and Supply Fees -not applicable

Required Textbooks and Software -no textbook required

| Date | Topic | Readings/videos (all available through Canvas or other websites) | Assignment(s) |
|-----------------|--|--|---|
| *Aug 22 | Introduction/Overview of NSF GRFP *Attendance required* | https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/nsf-graduate-research-fellowship-program-grfp/nsf24-591/solicitation | |
| *Aug 29 | NSF Research Essay *Attendance required* | https://www.alexhunterlang.com/nsf-fellowship Links to an external site. (focus on research essay section) https://mitcommlab.mit.edu/broad/commkit/nsf-research-proposal/Links to an external site. Sample (funded) NSF-style research essay: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Dj_eCUPDQk7-nqHrYidklRA_Sht76rXg/view Links to an external site. Annotated NSF-style research essay: https://mitcommlab.mit.edu/broad/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2016/09/Broad_CommKit_NSF-Research_Proposal_AAE2.pdf Links to an external site. | |
| Sept 5 | Open Office Hours | | NSF research essay drafts due Sept 8 11:59 pm EST |
| *Sept 12 | 1. Peer review of NSF Research Essay Drafts 2. Personal statement (NSF) *Attendance required* | https://mitcommlab.mit.edu/broad/commkit/nsf-personal-statement/ https://mitcommlab.mit.edu/broad/commkit/fellowship-application/ https://www.alexhunterlang.com/nsf-fellowship https://mitcommlab.mit.edu/broad/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2016/09/Broad_CommKit_NSF_Personal_AAE1.png | |
| Sept 19 | Open Office Hours | | NSF personal essay drafts due Sept 22 11:59 pm EST |
| *Sept 26 | Peer review of NSF personal statements/Final discussions on NSF GRFP *Attendance required* | | |

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|---------|---|---|--|
| Oct 3 | <i>Open Office Hours</i> | | |
| *Oct 10 | <p>1. Introduction to NIH-style Fellowship components, RFAs</p> <p>2. Specific Aims Page Intro</p> <p>*Attendance required*</p> | <p>https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/draft-specific-aims</p> <p>https://www.biosciencewriters.com/NIH-Grant-Applications-The-Anatomy-of-a-Specific-Aims-Page.aspx</p> <p>https://mitcommlab.mit.edu/broad/commkit/fellowship-application/</p> <p>https://wassumlab.psych.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/12/How-to-write-a-strong-NRSA-b.pdf</p> | |
| Oct 17 | <i>Open Office Hours</i> | | NIH Specific Aims drafts due Oct 20 11:59 pm EST |
| *Oct 24 | <p>1. Peer review feedback and Specific Aims follow-up</p> <p>2. Training/mentoring plan, roles of student and mentor (NIH)</p> <p>*Attendance required*</p> | <p>https://postdocs.ucsf.edu/sites/g/files/tkssra2836/f/wysiwyg/NIH-Predoc-slides-5.24.18.pdf</p> <p>https://mitcommlab.mit.edu/broad/commkit/fellowship-application/</p> | |
| Oct 31 | <i>Open Office Hours</i> | | NIH Training plan drafts due Nov 3 11:59 pm EST |
| *Nov 7 | <p>1. Peer review feedback (Training/mentoring plan)</p> <p>2. Research Plan elements (NIH)</p> <p>*Attendance required*</p> | <p>https://postdocs.ucsf.edu/sites/g/files/tkssra2836/f/wysiwyg/NIH-Predoc-slides-5.24.18.pdf</p> <p>https://wassumlab.psych.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/12/How-to-write-a-strong-NRSA-b.pdf</p> <p>https://www.niaid.nih.gov/sites/default/files/nicoleputnamapplicationF31.pdf</p> | |
| Nov 14 | <i>Open Office Hours</i> | | NIH Research plan drafts due Nov 17 11:59 pm EST |
| *Nov 21 | <p>1. Peer review feedback (Research Plan)</p> <p>2. Navigating the Peer review process</p> | <p>https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/review-process</p> <p>https://postdocs.ucsf.edu/sites/g/files/tkss</p> | |

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|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| | *Attendance required* | ra2836/f/wysiwyg/NIH-Predoc-slides-5.24.18.pdf PA-21-051: Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Individual Predoctoral Fellowship (Parent F31) (nih.gov) | |
| Nov 28 | No class, Thanksgiving Break | | |
| Dec 5 | Open Office Hours | | |
| Final NIH style written assignments (Specific Aims, Training Plan/Personal Statement, Research Plan) all due on December 6, 2024 | | | |

Attendance Policy, Class Expectations, and Make-Up Policy

Attendance and participation in the weekly synchronous meeting is required for weeks 1-5, and optional for week 6. Attendance for weeks 1-5 will be taken 5 minutes after class begins. Unexcused absences will have points deducted from the attendance portion of the grade (5 points per unexcused absence). Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and require appropriate documentation. Attendance and make-up requirements for assignments are consistent with university policies ([Attendance Policies](#)).

Evaluation of Grades

| Assignment | Total Points | Percentage of Final Grade |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Required Attendance and Participation (10 points per class x 7.5 classes) | 75 | 25% |
| Peer review assignment (15 points x 5 assignments) | 75 | 25% |
| Final NIH Specific Aims page | 30 | 10% |
| Final Research plan (NIH style) | 75 | 25% |
| Final Training plan (NIH) | 45 | 15% |
| | 300 | 100% |

Grading Policy

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:

[UF Graduate Catalog](#)
[Grades and Grading Policies](#)

| Percent | Grade | Grade Points |
|----------------|--------------|---------------------|
| 90.0 - 100.0 | A | 4.00 |

| | | |
|-------------|----|------|
| 87.0 - 89.9 | A- | 3.67 |
| 84.0 - 86.9 | B+ | 3.33 |
| 81.0 - 83.9 | B | 3.00 |
| 78.0 - 80.9 | B- | 2.67 |
| 75.0 - 79.9 | C+ | 2.33 |
| 72.0 - 74.9 | C | 2.00 |
| 69.0 - 71.9 | C- | 1.67 |
| 66.0 - 68.9 | D+ | 1.33 |
| 63.0 - 65.9 | D | 1.00 |
| 60.0 - 62.9 | D- | 0.67 |
| 0 - 59.9 | E | 0.00 |

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here](#).

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” [The Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the [Notification to Students of FERPA Rights](#).

Campus Resources:

[Health and Wellness](#)

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: counseling.ufl.edu/cwc, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or police.ufl.edu.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu.

Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.

Library Support, Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints Campus

On-Line Students Complaints