Course Syllabus – COMM 431

Course Information

Course Number: COMM 431 SU/FA23
Course Name: Developing a Fellowship Proposal
Term: SU/FA 2023
Start Date: 06/29/2023
End Date: 10/27/2023
Credits: 1.0

Meeting Days / Times

See Calendar in Canvas for the most up-to-date schedule.

Course Managers

Role	Last Name	First Name	Email Address
Course Director	Deniz	Ashok	deniz@scripps.edu
TA			

Course Description

This course guides students in the preparation of a research proposal for submission to the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program or the National Institute of Health's F31 Predoctoral Individual Fellowship (as well as other funding agencies as requested by the student). The course has been designed for first-year students who plan to submit their proposals at the beginning of their second year. It consists of one informational lecture, proposal development by the students, and two sets of proposal review/feedback, with time in between rounds of review for the student to revise the proposal based on initial feedback. Proposal writing is an iterative process, as students develop both their project and the written presentation in the form of the proposal to be submitted. The course therefore will provide students with an opportunity and a few months to revise their proposals based on feedback from one round of review, and then provide another round of feedback with the revised proposals. They would then revise their proposals further as needed, and submit to NSF or NIH. The course will begin during **Summer 2023** and end in **Fall 2023**. Students are required to enroll in this course **for credit on a pass/fail basis only.**

Program Learning Outcomes

By the end of the program, students will have accomplished these objectives:
PLO1: Original Research – graduate students are expected to develop the skills critical for generating high-quality research output. This would include absorbing, recalling, and contextualizing scientific knowledge, evaluating scientific information and data, creating testable hypotheses and investigating hypotheses, mastering scientific tools and techniques, displaying ethical behavior, and receiving and giving feedback.
PLO2: Communication – graduate students are expected to demonstrate the oral, written, and media skills to effectively communicate the impact of a study or a body of work to the greater scientific community and to the public at large using a number of methods.
PLO3: Critical Thinking – graduate students are expected to develop a self-directed process to analyze information, form opinions or judgments, and use this process to improve the quality of their scientific thoughts, navigate problems, and make informed decisions.
PLO4: Intellectual Curiosity – graduate students are expected to acquire the capacity to build their intellectual curiosity and demonstrate problem solving approaches that serve their professional growth and ability to impact a field.
PLO5: Career and Professional Development – graduate students are expected to develop a variety of transferable skillsets throughout their graduate experience, including management and leadership, inclusiveness, resilience, scientific rigor, collaboration, accountability, time management, teamwork, networking, and career planning.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:
CLO1: Develop project, and outline, draft and submit a predoctoral NSF or NIH fellowship proposal.
CLO2: Provide effective, blinded feedback on fellowship scientific content to peers.
CLO3: Respond effectively to feedback in proposal revision.
CLO4: Experience peer review panels and understand the qualities of a successful proposal.

Background Preparation (Prerequisites)

This course is appropriate for first year (rising second year) students preparing to submit an NSF predoctoral fellowship application, as well as other students planning to apply to NIH or other funding agencies.

Course Logistics, Assignments, and Expectations

The initial class will provide information about the NSF and NIH proposal submission process and tips for writing a successful proposal. Students will also have the opportunity to brainstorm promising ideas and receive feedback. Students will then develop their project ideas and compose their proposal text. This will be followed by a first round of proposal review in late spring. Each round of review will consist of first completing and submitting written reviews (we

anticipate each student will submit 2 reviews of other students' proposals). We will then meet as a panel (consisting of the students and also a few faculty) to discuss the proposals. Students will revise their reviews based on the discussion, and collated blinded review feedback will be sent to each student. The students will then have a month to update their ideas and proposal based on this feedback and discussion with their mentors and colleagues. A second round of review will then take place, and the students will then finalize their proposals based on this feedback and submit to NSF or NIH.

Attendance Statement

Students are expected to attend all classes and complete all out-of-class assignments (proposal preparation and revision, and reviews of other students' proposals). Students who are unable to attend class must seek permission for an excused absence from the course director or teaching assistant. Unapproved absences or late attendance for three or more classes may result in a lower grade or an "incomplete" for the course. If a student has to miss a class, he or she should arrange to get notes from a fellow student and is strongly encouraged to meet with the teaching assistant to obtain the missed material. Missed extra-credit quizzes will not be available for re-taking.

Scientific and Professional Ethics

The work you do in this course must be your own. Feel free to build on, react to, criticize, and analyze the ideas of others but, when you do, make it known whose ideas you are working with. You must explicitly acknowledge when your work builds on someone else's ideas, including ideas of classmates, professors, and authors you read. If you ever have questions about drawing the line between others' work and your own, ask the course professor who will give you clear guidance. Exams must be completed independently. Any collaboration on answers to exams, unless expressly permitted, may result in an automatic failing grade and possible expulsion from the Graduate Program.

As a specific note, review assignments, contents of the proposals, and the discussion during the review panel meetings must be kept confidential to facilitate open and honest discussion/evaluation of the proposals, and to protect intellectual content. If you have a follow-up question about your reviews, please contact the TAs or Course Directors (we encourage you to set up a meeting with us to discuss points on the review and your plan for addressing this in revised proposals). Please do not directly contact any member of the review panel (who may or may not have played a role in reviewing your proposal) about your reviews.

Technology Requirements and Support

For issues related to Canvas, please contact the Graduate Office by email at: gradprgm@scripps.edu or by phone at: 858-784-8469.

Course Grading

Course grading will reflect a composite evaluation of participation in the various components of the class, and the quality and completeness of both the student's own final proposal for submission to NSF/NIH and the proposal review components. Note that the timely preparation of written reviews (of other students' proposals) and participation in the review panel discussions is an integral feature of the class (and therefore grading) that is important for both the reviewers and the students whose proposals are being reviewed. Late assignments (proposal drafts and reviews) will result in a penalty to the final grade.

Grading is in accordance with the academic policies of the Skaggs Graduate School.

Letter Grade	Percent	GPA	Description
A	93-100	4.00	Outstanding achievement. Student performance demonstrates full command of the course subject matter and evinces a high level of originality and/or creativity that far surpasses course expectations.
A-	90-92	3.67	Excellent achievement. Student performance demonstrates thorough knowledge of the course subject matter and exceeds course expectations by completing all requirements in a superior manner.
B+	87-89	3.33	Very good work. Student performance demonstrates above-average comprehension of the course subject matter and exceeds course expectations on all tasks as defined in the course syllabus. There is notable insight and originality.
B	83-86	3.00	Satisfactory work. Student performance meets designated course expectations and demonstrates understanding of the course subject matter at an acceptable level.
B-	80-82	2.67	Marginal work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete understanding of course subject matter. There is limited perception and originality.
C+	77-79	2.33	Unsatisfactory work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete and inadequate understanding of course subject matter. There is severely limited or no perception or originality. Course will not count toward degree.
C	73-76	2.00	Unsatisfactory work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete and inadequate understanding of course subject matter. There is severely limited or no perception or originality. Course will not count toward degree.

P	73-100	0.00	Satisfactory work. Student performance demonstrated complete and adequate understanding of course subject matter. Course will count toward degree.
F	0-72	0.00	Unacceptable work/Failure. Student performance is unacceptably low level of knowledge and understanding of course subject matter. Course will not count toward degree. Student may continue in program only with permission of the Dean.
I		0.00	Incomplete is assigned when work is of passing quality but is incomplete for a pre-approved reason. Once an incomplete grade is assigned, it remains on student's permanent record until a grade is awarded.
W		0.00	Withdrew from the course with Dean's permission beyond the second week of the term.

- All courses will be recorded and maintained in the student's permanent academic record; only courses that apply towards the degree will appear on the academic transcript. Non-credit or audited courses will not appear on the transcript.
- 4 core courses taken for a letter grade (pass = B- or higher for a core course)
- 2 elective courses taken pass/fail (pass = A, B, C for an elective)

Course Summary:

Date	Details
Thu Jun 29, 2023	**Lecture**
Thu Jul 6, 2023	**Submit proposal title/abstract/and additional information**
Wed Aug 2, 2023	**Submit first proposal draft**
Wed Aug 9, 2023	**Submit 2 proposal reviews**
Tue Aug 15, 2023	**Review Panel I**
Tue Aug 22, 2023	**Compiled feedback sent to students**
	Post-bacs only: submit title/abstract
Thu Sep 21, 2023	**Submit revised proposal**
Thu Sep 28, 2023	**Submit 2 proposal reviews**
Tue Oct 3, 2023	**Review Panel II**
Tue Oct 10, 2023	**Compiled feedback sent to students**
Fri Oct 20, 2023	**Submit final proposal**