Course Syllabus

Course Information

Course Number: COMM 432 SU/FA25
Course Name: Grant Writing and Research Proposal Development
Term: SU/FA 2025
Start Date: 07/14/2025
End Date: 07/31/2025
Credits: 1.0

Meeting Days / Times

<u>Week 1</u>: July 14, 15, 16, 17 (Mon, Tues, Wed, & Thurs), 10:00-11:30am PT / 1:00-2:30pm ET
<u>Week 2</u>: Independent writing; proposal due July 25
<u>Week 3</u>: Review peer's proposals; reviews due July 31
CA: Committee Lecture Hall (Molecular Biology Building) and Graduate Office Rooms (Hazen Theory Building)
FL: C212
See Calendar in Canvas for the most up-to-date schedule.

Course Managers

Role	Last Name	First Name	Email Address
Course Director	D'Silva	Natalie	ndsilva@scripps.edu
Course Director	Deniz	Ashok	deniz@scripps.edu
Course Director	Engle	Keary	keary@scripps.edu
Course Director	Lamia	Katja	klamia@scripps.edu
Course Director	Solt	Laura	lsolt@scripps.edu

Course Description

This course is designed to equip you with the tools, structure, and constructive feedback necessary to enhance your skills as a grant writer. Over the course of three weeks, including dedicated time for independent writing, you will learn how to develop original research ideas, formulate compelling proposal aims, and communicate them effectively to a funding agency.

Whether you are working on your Original Research Proposal (ORP) or preparing applications for fellowships such as the NIH F31, NSF GRFP, or foundation grants, this course aims to support your professional development and improve your prospects for securing funding. Enrollment is mandatory for credit (**pass/fail only**); please note that the course credits do not count toward your graduation requirements.

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: Identify and evaluate appropriate funding sources (NIH, NSF, and foundation grants).
CLO2: Develop hypothesis-driven aims and core components of a grant, including approach and contingency plans.
CLO3: Provide and receive constructive feedback through a structured peer review process.

Background Preparation (Prerequisites)

Pre-work: Develop two potential research ideas to explore during the course.
Guidelines for pre-work:

- Come prepared with **one prioritized idea** and **one backup idea**.

- Ideas should be independent and original, and not currently being pursued in advisor's lab.

- Proposals may remain within student's field of study.

- We recommend discussing ideas with the PI or lab mentors for feedback and feasibility.

Course Materials

Useful to consult: NIH The Grant Application Writer's Workbook

Expectations and Logistics

Course topics will be covered by a combination of lectures, discussions in class, and peer review. Students are expected to be on time, attend all sessions, prepare in advance of class, and be respectful of different opinions. The course may have some homework assignments to help you prepare for the in-class discussions.

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.

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.

Community Guidelines Statement

The instructors seek to cultivate a learning environment of inclusivity, safety, and community. Students from all backgrounds are encouraged to participate in this class. This course relies on a community of respect, trust, and willingness to share. Because of this, it is important that we work from a space of truly valuing the diversity and differences of all the participants and the lived experiences of each one of us. We do this by making sure we are engaging in inclusive practices that support each other's learning and growth. We recognize the multitude of students with intersectional and complex identities. For this reason, we welcome and appreciate suggestions from our students to enhance not only the curriculum but also any opportunities to learn from one another as scientists with unique cultures and individuality. We are committed to creating a space that is encouraging, empowering, and engaging. We will honor these community guidelines with integrity and request the students demonstrate the same for their instructors and peers.

Accommodations

If you require accommodations for this course, please communicate with the course directors to discuss a plan to best support your learning and engagement.

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

This course is pass/fail. Students must pass the class to receive a certificate of completion.

Pass: Satisfactory work. Student performance demonstrated complete and adequate understanding. Student attended all sessions. Student participated in discussions on a regular basis.

Fail: Unacceptable work/failure. Student performance is unacceptably low with low level of knowledge and understanding of the course subject matter. Student did not actively participate in or attend all sessions.

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)