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Course Objectives
In the rush to churn out scientific data, students rarely take time to work on improving their scientific writing and presentation skills. This course is designed to help students improve these skills. Over the course of the semester, we will meet once a week with the goal of learning what constitutes well-written sections of scientific manuscripts, grant proposals emphasizing the specific aims page, and publication quality data figures. Unlike many courses that focus on these topics, each student’s written assignments are reviewed by class peers as well as the instructor and importantly, students use this feedback to revise their original assignments to improve them.

In addition to writing, students will learn how to prepare digital figures that are suitable for publication. Information about resolution, layout, image types, and color will be provided to the students who will then use this information and programs available to them to create their own figures from their research data and write legends for these figures.

The instructor is a Professor of Neuroscience, currently serves on the editorial board for two scientific journals, served as the Director of the Neuroscience IDP graduate program from 2003-2010, and has successfully authored and published 48 peer-reviewed scientific manuscripts.

Prerequisites
Permission of the instructor

Catalog Description
Scientific Manuscripts and Presentations covers the practices of good scientific writing with an emphasis on introducing students to writing styles appropriate for biomedical research papers. Students will review the basics of sound writing and apply these writing principles to the construction of the primary sections of a biomedical research paper that will focus on the student’s chosen research area. In addition, we will cover the design and creation of publication quality data figures.

Textbook (suggested)

Grading
Evaluation of students (S/U grading) will be based on completion of all assignments, class attendance and active participation in classroom discussions. Failure to complete all assignments, to participate in classroom discussion, or to attend a minimum of 70% of the scheduled classes will result in an unsatisfactory evaluation.

Class Attendance
All students are expected to attend the weekly 1-hour classes. If a situation arises where attendance is not possible, the student should notify the instructor that they will not be attending the class prior to the class. Students must attend a minimum of 70% of the scheduled classes to receive a satisfactory evaluation.

Make-up Assignments
All students will be required to complete every assignment in a timely manner. Assignments assigned at the end of a class period are usually due two to three days prior to the next class period to permit the instructor and students sufficient time to complete and post their reviews.