

GS21 1152 Scientific Writing Course
Directors: Dr. Humam Kadara and Dr. Wassim Chehab
Wednesday/Thursday 2:00 – 3:30 PM
GSBS Large Classroom S3.8371
Two semester credit hours
Grading System: Pass/Fail

1. Prerequisites: Students should be in their second year of training in their current degree program, have affiliated with a faculty advisor, and developed an idea for a specific thesis project. Registration requires permission of the course director.

This course meets the GSBS Writing Course Requirement for PhD students.

2. Mode of Delivery: We expect all lectures for this class to be offered in-person in the GSBS Large Classroom. Students who are not be able to attend an in-person session due to health reasons should notify the course director prior to class. The course director will consider making any needed and reasonable accommodations to allow virtual participation in otherwise in-person sessions.

3. Weekly lectures: Required lectures will begin on January 14th. Time for all lectures is 2:00 – 3:30. See Schedule for details. Slides and updated course materials will be posted on the course site in Canvas <https://uth.instructure.com> prior to the lecture.

4. Small group meetings: These required sessions will be held with a faculty facilitator who is matched to the student's area of research as best possible. Sessions will be held on Thursdays at 2:00 or at a time determined by the facilitator and agreed to by all students in the group. The delivery mode of these sessions will also be determined by the facilitator who will consult with students in the group regarding the most appropriate mode.

5. Course Description: The objectives of the course are to teach critical thinking and the fundamentals of proposal writing that will help students write candidacy exam proposals, fellowship applications, grants, papers, meeting abstracts, and theses/dissertations. Students will develop a research plan and write a "6 +1" page proposal following the format used for NIH fellowship applications. Students will also learn to edit and critique their fellow students' proposals, which will help prepare the students for writing and editing their candidacy exam proposal. Weekly meetings will consist of lectures from faculty/experts addressing how to compose grant proposal sections, organize ideas and revise/polish writing. In addition, students will meet weekly with faculty in small groups to critique/discuss writing assignments during which they will be given feedback on their proposal content/style by faculty and fellow students.

6. Grading: Pass/Fail.

A passing grade requires that the student:

- a) Attend all lectures and small group sessions, unless excused by the instructor/moderator.
- b) Complete all assignments to the satisfaction of both the course instructor and group facilitator.
- c) Sign up and participate in at least two one-on-one feedback sessions during Office Hours.
- d) Participate satisfactorily in each small group session as determined by the faculty facilitator.

Submit a satisfactory and complete specific aims page **by March 7** and a complete research proposal **by May 5** as instructed. See **"Final Research Proposal Format Guidelines"** on **Canvas for details of formatting and expected content of your proposal.**

7. Use of ChatGPT and other large language model (LLM) AI sources: As this course is specifically intended to develop your research proposal writing skills, the use of LLM online aids is prohibited for producing

the text used in your written assignments submitted in this class. The final proposals, including specific aims pages, will be submitted for AI detection by Turnitin.

8. Plagiarism and Originality: The goal of this course is to develop your ability to write an original scientific research proposal such as those submitted in fellowship and grant applications. To accomplish this, it is vital that all materials you submit during this course are from your own original writing.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the ideas or words of others as your own and is a serious form of academic misconduct. Any student determined to have purposely committed plagiarism will be given a failing grade and may be subject to further disciplinary action including dismissal from the GSBS.

Please note that this means no part of the proposal, including specific aims, can be taken from the writing others. This includes your advisor's grant proposals.

9. A note on your proposal from this class and the candidacy exam:

The proposal written for this course may be used in students' candidacy exam pending approval from your Advisor and Program Director. If your intention is to use your proposal written in this class for the candidacy exam, then please discuss that with your advisor and program director prior to the first small group session on January 23.

GS21 1152 GSBS Scientific Writing

Class Schedule - Spring 2026

Wednesday Lectures: 2:00 – 3:30 PM, **Room** BSRB S3.8371. All lectures are intended to be 1 to 1.5 hrs in length

Thursday Small Group: Scheduled time is 2:00 – 3:30 Thursdays starting January 23. Location to be determined by the faculty facilitator. Groups may decide on a different time to meet if all agree.

Faculty Facilitators for small groups: MTB – Dr. Melvin Klegerman; CB – Dr. Gabriel Lopez; IMM – Dr. Jyotika Sharma, Dr. Seyed Moghaddam; MP – Dr. Kristy Brock; NS – Dr. Kartik Venkatachalam; QS: Dr. Tao Wang; G&E – Dr. Keila Torres.

Schedule

Jan 14 – Lecture: Class Organization Session & Why Write a Research Proposal? (**Kadara/Herzog**)

Jan 15 – no class

Jan 21 – Lecture: Developing & Clearly Stating your Hypothesis (**Mikhail Kolonin**)

Jan 22 – no class

Jan 28 – Lecture: Formulating Specific Aims (**Angela Ting**)

Jan 29 – Small Group: Topics/Hypothesis Presented

Feb 4 – Lecture: How to write a Specific Aims Page (**Angela Ting**)

Feb 5 – Small Group: Specific Aims Presented

Feb 11 – Lecture: How to write a Significance/Innovation Section (**Scott Evans**)

Feb 12 – Small Group: Specific Aims Critique 1

Feb 18 – Lecture: How to Write a Research Plan I (**Humam Kadara**)

Feb 19 – Small Group: Specific Aims Page Critique 2

Feb 25 – Lecture: Figures/Graphical Abstracts and Abstract (**Brian Taylor**)

Feb 26 – Small Group: Significance/Innovation Critique

Mar 4 – Class Discussion: Faculty Panel Q&A (**Humam Kadara, Yu Leo Lei, Valeria Vasquez Robaina**)

Mar 5 – Small Group: Research Plan Critique

Mar 6 – **SPECIFIC AIMS PAGE DUE (11:59 PM)** – upload to course Canvas site

Mar 11 – No Class – GSBS Spring Break

Mar 12 – No Class – GSBS Spring Break

Mar 18 – Office hours (**Humam Kadara**)

Mar 19 – Small Group: Research Plan Critique

Mar 25 – Small Group: Research Plan and Final Proposal Critique

Mar 26 – Small Group: Presentations/Continued Feedback

April 1 – Small Group: Presentations/Continued Feedback

April 2 – Small Group: Presentations/Continued Feedback

April 8 – Small Group: Presentations/Continued Feedback

April 9 – Small Group: Presentations/Continued Feedback

April 15 – April 30 – Small Group – Mock Study Section Reviews and finalize proposals

May 4 FINAL PROPOSAL DUE (5 PM) – upload as a single PDF file to course Canvas site

Course Directors

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