

BIOC 0003 – Scientific Writing

Fall 2023

Reuben Harris, PhD (Instructor)

Email: rsh@uthscsa.edu

SYNOPSIS: Being able to write in a cogent fashion and to clearly present one's ideas orally are critical skills that all our graduate students should acquire. This course is designed to help you fulfill both the writing and presentation objectives via personalized mentoring by a seasoned instructor.

- We will kick off with a 30-minute lecture and a review of course logistics by the Instructor, followed by a Q and A session.
- Over the course of the semester, students will write a 6-page proposal on their thesis project according to Biochemical Mechanisms in Medicine (BMM) graduate discipline guidelines (appended below).
- Students and instructor will meet one-on-one each week over the semester to critique components of the proposal and, later, the presentation material.
- The course will end with a 20-minute Powerpoint presentation of each student's proposal.

GRADING: Letter grade will be based on the quality of the proposal (60%), the quality of the oral presentation (30%), and adherence to deadlines (10%).

TIMELINE:

Week 1: Lecture, Course Logistics, and Q & A Session; July 10th, 9:00am-11:00am

Date and time for activities in subsequent weeks are to be determined.

Weeks 2 & 3: Critique of Specific Aims and Abstract

Weeks 4 & 5: Critique of Background and Significance

Weeks 6-10: Critique of Research Plan

Weeks 11-14: Critique of Presentation Material and Final Revisions of Proposal

Week 15: Presentation

PROPOSAL FORMAT: The Proposal will be based on your PhD thesis project. Students are expected to involve their thesis advisor in proposal development (hypotheses, specific aims, methodology, etc.), but must write the proposal in its entirety. The proposal will consist of the following elements:

- 1. Title page:** Title should be fewer than 20 words; list student and advisor names
- 2. Abstract:** Between 150-300 words
- 3. Specific Aims:** One page
- 4. Background:** One page
- 5. Preliminary Data:** One page recommended, two pages maximum
- 6. Research Plan:** Three to four pages
- 7. References:** Between 20-50 (*Cell* press style)

Use Arial 11 or Times 12 pt font with 0.75 inch margins in all directions, single-spaced throughout.

Note: Items 2, 3, and 7 do not count toward the six page limit.