Keck School of Medicine of USC

SCRM 555: Writing About Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine (1 unit)

Fall 2018—Mondays 3–5 p.m.

Location: Eli and Edythe Broad CIRM Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC (BCC), Seminar Room 101

Instructor: Dr. Joseph T. Rodgers
Office: BCC 301
Office Hours: After class or by appointment
Contact Info: jtrodger@usc.edu, 323-865-1549

Instructor: Cristy Lytal
Office: BCC 212
Office Hours: After class or by appointment
Contact Info: lytal@med.usc.edu, 332-442-2172

IT Help: Not applicable
Hours of Service: Not applicable
Contact Info: Not applicable

Course Description

This course provides instruction in writing and communication for lay and professional audiences on topics related to stem cell biology and regenerative medicine. The goal is to strengthen and broaden your writing and communication skills for your graduate course work and future career.

The course is intended for master's students in the Department of Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine, but is open to all USC graduate students interested in improving their abilities to write and communicate scientific and medical research.

Learning Objectives

This course will:

1. equip students with the skills required to write about stem cell biology and regenerative medicine for lay and scientific audiences, in preparation for graduate course work and a future professional career;
2. expose students to examples of good writing and effective communication;
3. train students to meet deadlines; and
4. develop students' critical thinking skills.

Prerequisite(s): None
Co-Requisite (s): None
Concurrent Enrollment: None
Recommended Preparation: None

Expectations

From students. Students are expected to *actively participate in class*. This means students should ask questions and participate in class discussions. In group workshops, students should read their peers' proposals prior to class and come prepared with constructive comments, critiques, suggestions, and input to help fellow students on their assignments. In writing assignments, students are expected to both present original ideas and content and appropriately cite works from which they have utilized for ideas or facts.

From instructors. The instructors are expected to promote a classroom culture that facilitates communication and improvement. The instructors will make the expectations of each assignment clear and will grade fairly. Students should expect that the instructors will be committed to helping every student in the class improve their writing and communication skills. Students should expect that the

instructors will provide helpful and constructive feedback and advice, will be responsive to questions in class and by email, and will treat all students fairly and respectfully.

Course Notes

None

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Not applicable

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

There is no textbook. Papers and reading materials will be available on blackboard.usc.edu, USC's e-learning platform.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

There is no grading curve. Final grades will be determined as follows:

A	93–100
A-	90–92
B+	87–89
B	83–86
B-	80–82
C+	77–79
C	70–76
D	60–69
F	0–59

Assignments will be evaluated on the merits of: organization, content and style.

Assignments must be your own original work. Use quotation marks for verbatim wording and citations for both quoted and paraphrased material. Do not submit work done for a previous research project or for another class.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	**% of Grade**
Personal statement draft	10 (C/NC)
Personal statement draft—group workshops (2 sessions)	4 (C/NC)
Personal statement revision	20 (letter grade)
Grant proposal pitch	6 (C/NC)
Grant proposal pitch—group workshops (2 sessions)	4 (C/NC)
Grant proposal draft	10 (C/NC)
Grant proposal draft—group workshops (3 sessions)	6 (C/NC)
Grant proposal revision	30 (letter grade)
Class participation, attendance, punctuality	10
TOTAL	100

Participation grade

This grade will be determined at the end of the semester based on attendance and punctuality (see below) and the overall level at which the student participated in class, discussions, and workshops (meaning: ask questions, provide feedback, make comments, pose suggestions).

Assignment Submission Policy

Completed assignments must be uploaded to Blackboard (blackboard.usc.edu) by the due dates listed on the below Course Schedule. Meeting deadlines is essential; late assignments will receive zero points.

Schedule: A weekly breakdown (subject to change, with notice)

8/20/18 Week 1
Topic: Course Introduction; explanation of personal statement, cover letter, and CV (lecture: Joe).
Reading assignment: Read "How to Write With Style" by Kurt Vonnegut (see Blackboard).
Assignment: Begin to write personal statement.

8/27/18 Week 2
Topic: Writing and revising basics (lecture: Cristy).
Discussion: "How to Write With Style"
Assignment: Personal statement draft. Submit to Blackboard by 11:59pm, Sunday, 9/9/18. Grading: 10 pts, C/NC

9/3/18 Labor Day, no class

9/10/18 Week 3
Workshop: Instructor feedback on personal statements.
Assignment: Make desired revisions of personal statement (no grade).

9/17/18 Week 4
Topic: Constructive criticism and feedback (lecture: Cristy).
Reading assignment: Read peers' personal statements.

9/24/18 Week 5
Group Workshop: Personal Statements. Half of the class will receive feedback from the entire class on their personal statements.
Grade: Provide in-class constructive feedback to peers (2 pts, C/NC).
Reading assignment: Read peers' personal statements.

10/1/18 Week 6
Group Workshop: Personal Statements. Half of the class will receive feedback from the entire class on their personal statements.
Grade: Provide in-class constructive feedback to peers (2 pts, C/NC).
Assignment: Revised personal statement. Submit to Blackboard by 11:59pm, Sunday, 10/7/18. Grading: 20 pts, letter grade.

10/8/18 Week 7
Topic: Explanation of grant and fellowship proposal (lecture: Joe).
Assignment: Choose a topic for your proposal, read background, and prepare in-class grant proposal pitch. Presenting grant proposal pitch. Grading: 6 pts, C/NC.

10/15/18 Week 8
Group Workshop: Half of the class will present grant proposal pitches.
Grade: Provide constructive feedback to peers on their pitches (2 pts, C/NC).

10/22/18 Week 9
Group Workshop: Half of the class will present grant proposal pitches.
Grade: Provide constructive feedback to peers on their pitches (2 pts, C/NC).
Assignment: Grant proposal draft. Submit to Blackboard by 11:59pm, Sunday, 10/28/18. Grading: 10 pts, C/NC.

10/29/18 Week 10
Workshop: Instructor feedback on grant proposal draft.
Assignment: Make desired revisions to grant proposal draft. Grading: no grade.

11/5/18 Week 11
Topic: Grant and fellowship proposal discussion and review.
Reading assignment: Read peers' grant proposals.

11/12/18 Week 12
Group Workshop: Grant and fellowship proposal.
Grading: Provide constructive feedback to peers on their proposals (2 pts, C/NC).
Reading assignment: Read peers' grant proposals.

11/19/18 Week 13
Group Workshop: Grant and fellowship proposal.
Grading: Provide constructive feedback to peers on their proposals (2 pts, C/NC).
Reading assignment: Read peers' grant proposals.

11/26/18 Week 14
Group Workshop: Grant and fellowship proposal.
Grading: Provide constructive feedback to peers on their proposals (2 pts, C/NC).
Assignment: Revised grant proposal. Submit to Blackboard by 11:59pm, Sunday, 12/9/18. Grading: 30 pts, letter grade.

Additional Policies

Attendance: Attendance is required. Each unexcused absence will lower your final grade by 3 percentage points. Each incidence of unexcused lateness will lower your final grade by 1 percentage point. If you do miss a class, contact your instructors to make up the material. If you have a commitment that conflicts with a class, notify the instructors before the class. In some cases, absences will be excused, but this is *far* more likely if students provide prior notice.

The USC Writing Center: The USC Writing Center is a student-centered, non-grading facility that employs graduate students to work one-on-one with writers at any stage of the writing process and conducts small-group workshops on a wide variety of writing skills.

The center is located in Taper Hall of the Humanities (THH) 216 and is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. It also holds evening hours in the basement of Leavey Library from 7 to 9 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

You can schedule an appointment for an individual 30-minute conference with a consultant by phone at 213-740-3691 or at the front desk in THH 216. Walk-in appointments are also accepted. A schedule of current workshops can be found at dornsife.usc.edu/writing-center.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP:
http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or http://scampus.usc.edu) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.