

**Instructors:**

Dr. Carly Kenkel  
 Office Hours: By appt.  
 Location: AHF 231A  
 Email: ckenkel@usc.edu

**Meeting times & Location: Wednesdays 1200-200pm, AHF 259**

Website: <https://blackboard.usc.edu>

**Course Description**

Multi-instructor course designed to introduce students to the breadth and depth of faculty interests within the MEB Section of Biological Sciences and the Natural History Museum.

Prerequisites: Admission to the MBBO program or permission from the instructors.

**Specific learning objectives. By the end of this course,** students will be able to:

- 1) Understand the research agendas of select MEB faculty.
- 2) Demonstrate basic public speaking skills
- 3) Analyze a scientific presentation and provide constructive feed-back to peers
- 4) Evaluate a seminar-style scientific presentation for content and clarity.
- 5) Prepare and present a research seminar on their early graduate lab work.

Schedule of lecture topics. *Note that the schedule is subject change.* Any schedule changes will be discussed in class and posted on Blackboard.

Date	Activity	Readings and Assignments
Jan 15	Faculty Seminar: Suzanne Edmands	In-class Questions
Jan 22	Faculty Seminar: Dave Hutchins	In-class Questions
Jan 29	Faculty Seminar: Naomi Levine	In-class Questions
Feb 5	Faculty Seminar: Alberto Robador	In-class Questions
Feb 12	Faculty Seminar: Cameron Thrash	In-class Questions
Feb 19	No class - Ocean Sciences Meeting	
Feb 26	Faculty Seminar: Wiebke Ziebis	In-class Questions
Mar 4	Faculty Seminar: Dave Caron	In-class Questions
Mar 11	Faculty Seminar: Eric Webb	In-class Questions
Mar 18	SPRING BREAK	
Mar 25	A Guide to Scientific Presentations	Style handouts
Apr 1	Faculty Seminar: Carly Kenkel	In-class Questions
Apr 8	Student Presentations	Content/Style feedback
Apr 15	Student Presentations	Content/Style feedback
Apr 22	Student Presentations	Content/Style feedback
Apr 29	Student Presentations	Content/Style feedback

## On-line Resources

Additional readings for specific lectures and/or links to on-line resources will be posted on Blackboard during the semester.

## Course Policies

**GRADES:** Any document associated with grading may be photocopied by the instructional staff. The final letter grade will be determined by the total number of points as follows.

	Points possible	Percent
In-class contributions (5 points ea.)	70	54%
Seminar Discussion Group Leads (15 points ea.)	30	23%
Individual Seminar	30	23%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100%</b>

**IN-CLASS CONTRIBUTIONS:** Good attendance is necessary but not sufficient to earn full marks for this component of the course grade. Students who earn full scores will participate in class discussions actively, thus helping lead their peers to think critically and analytically. This requires students to chime in, asking questions, and making relevant comments in response to the questions of others. Although contributions are important, students should refrain from monopolizing discussions and should aim to be succinct. The lowest in-class contribution score will be dropped, accommodating one unplanned absence with no grade penalty and no questions asked.

**STUDENT SEMINARS:** At the end of the semester you will give a 12 minute conference-style talk to the class on the research you have been conducting during your first year in the MBBO program.

On presentation days, those not presenting will be divided into two groups that will provide feedback on the (1) content and (2) style of the presentation. Each group will discuss its assigned topic and agree on a list of comments, both positive and negative. Further, the “content” group will phrase their comments as questions to the speaker. Each group will appoint a secretary to write down the comments, in order of importance, and serve as the speaker for the group. Each student will be required to present the summary for both the ‘Content’ and ‘Style’ discussion groups once.

While the groups are conferring, the speaker will receive private feedback from Carly on both content and presentation style. About 15 minutes after the end of the talk, the class will re-group and the ‘Style’ secretary will present the group’s presentation feedback. Then the “Content” secretary will begin by posing the most important content-related question, which the speaker addresses. They work their way through the other content-related questions in this fashion, and at the end the secretary will give any other (generally minor) content-related comments the group had that couldn’t easily be phrased as questions. At the end, the group notes will be given to the speaker, so the speaker doesn’t have to take their own notes.

**COMMUNICATION:** Email is the preferred form of communication with the instructors outside of class. Responses can be expected within 48 hours, though there may be an additional delay over weekends/holidays. If an in-person meeting is desired, please utilize office hours or email a request to set up an alternate meeting time.

**PLANNED ABSENCES:** Requests for absences should be made by email to the Instructors at least 2 weeks in advance, and preferably as early in the semester as possible. If the absence is approved, a reasonable accommodation will be provided, which may include coordinating remote participation or a make-up assignment.

## Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

### Support Systems:

*Student Counseling Services (SCS)* – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. [engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)* – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. [engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu)

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance* – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu)

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. [dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

*Student Support and Advocacy* – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

*Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. [diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

*USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

*USC Department of Public Safety* – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)