

Syllabus: MICB 570 — Student Seminar Series

Credit: 1 unit

Meeting time: no specific time set

Location: Laboratory of principal investigator (P.I.)

First meeting: as agreed upon with P.I.

Course Instructions: as arranged by P.I.

Course Director: individual P.I.

Course Coordinator: Axel H. Schönthal

Contact: schontha@usc.edu

Course Background

MICB 570 is a course that requires students to join a suitable lab and participate in lab activities, such as lab meetings, journal clubs, discussions with fellow lab mates, and interactions with the lab director/principal investigator (P.I.). In contrast to MICB 590 (Directed Research)—which gives credit for hands-on practical bench work (i.e., performing actual experiments)—MICB 570 gives credit for participation in theoretical aspects of laboratory research, i.e., intellectual exchanges, discussions, review of experimental results, presentations, shadowing and the like.

MICB 570 is a required course and students have to enroll in MICB 570 for at least 1 semester. It can be taken repeatedly, although students cannot enroll in more than 1 unit during each semester. Enrollment during the Summer semester is allowed (and recommended if students are spending regular hours in a P.I.'s lab over the summer). Students are encouraged to enroll in this course each and every semester they are spending time in a laboratory and regularly participate in theoretical aspects of lab activities.

MICB 570 is a graded course. The final semester grade is decided at the end of the semester, based on discussions between the P.I. (who hosts the student) and the departmental course coordinator (Professor Schönthal), who collects all grades and submits them to the Graduate School at the end of each semester.

Course Objectives

Participation in this course will provide the student with the following learning opportunities:

1. Gain first-hand insight into how a research group operates.
2. Become acquainted with the structural and procedural organization of a research group.
3. Participate in scientific discussions and learn scientific approaches.
4. Recognize opportunities for research and acknowledge their limitations.
5. Unleash creativity by providing ideas, suggestions, and input to ongoing or new studies.
6. Create and design approaches to test hypotheses and experimental ideas.
7. Develop and practice critical thinking, and apply this skill not only to academic research, but to all aspects of life outside of academia.

Grading

Students will be evaluated on the following 5 criteria:

- (i) Did the student participate in theoretical aspects of lab activities on a regular basis throughout the entire semester?
- (ii) Did the student make an effort to be pro-active, meaning: did the student show initiative, without having to be prodded and urged all the time?
- (iii) Did the student develop some interest and enthusiasm over time?
- (iv) Did the student “mature” over time, meaning: did the student display progress with regard to the Course Objectives?
- (v) Did the student show responsible conduct, attitude, appearance and manners? For example, did the student provide the P.I. (or a lab member) with a schedule of when s/he can be present in the lab; or did s/he promptly inform the P.I. (or a lab member) when an agreed-upon meeting had to be cancelled or postponed? Did the student display professional, courteous behavior and did s/he respect others? Did the student abide by USC’s policies of Academic Conduct and Behavior (see guidelines below)?

Attendance

Regular, consistent, predictable, on time presence in the lab is required. The specific details should be discussed with the P.I. and/or arranged with a lab member who will welcome and guide the student. In general, physical presence in the lab should not take a large amount of time, especially at the beginning.

At a bare minimum, the student should expect to consistently participate in weekly lab meetings of the group (1-2 hours). In addition, 2-4 hours per week should be spent shadowing, observing, and interacting with lab personnel. As the semester progresses and the student becomes more familiar with the lab environment and its people, additional hours can be added.

Academic Conduct

see next page

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STANDARDS

The University prides itself in maintaining high academic integrity standards. The entire academic community benefits from the adherence to such standards. An academic integrity overview, including descriptions of dishonest acts and consequences for students found responsible, is available online at: <https://sjacs.usc.edu/students/academic-integrity/>.

Further information, including a number of tutorials for students, can be found online at: <https://libraries.usc.edu/research/reference-tutorials>. This website has tutorials such as: how to avoid plagiarism, how to prevent academic dishonesty, how to manage your research, and other useful how-to tools and tutorials.

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 Section 11 of the *SCampus* publication (online at: <https://policy.usc.edu/student/scampus>).

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/>.

DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, ASSAULT

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://dps.usc.edu/>. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) Services at <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/> provide 24/7 confidential support, and the Sexual Assault Resource Center webpage <https://sarc.usc.edu/> describes reporting options and other resources.

OTHER SUPPORT SYSTEMS

A number of USC schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.