

**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](mailto:schontha@usc.edu)**

### **Course Background**

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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**

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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

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*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

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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.

## Content of the Following Pages

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- **Statements on Academic Conduct, Integrity Standards, Discrimination, Assault**
- **Support Systems Available to Students**

## ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STANDARDS

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- Members of the USC community are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors.
- To falsify the results of one's research, to present the words, ideas, data, or work of another as one's own, or to cheat on an examination corrupts the essential process by which knowledge is advanced.
- When students accept their offer to USC they are also accepting to abide by the Student Conduct Code.
- This is a higher standard of conduct than expected in the general community because we are TROJANS.
- When USC confers a degree, it is acknowledging students' academic success and their ability to be a positive, honest, and outstanding citizen within society.
- In failing to uphold academic standards students cheat themselves and others out of learning, degrade the value of their education, and diminish the prestige of the USC education.
- Ignorance of these expectations is not an acceptable justification for violating the Student Conduct Code.

The University prides itself in maintaining high academic integrity standards. The entire academic community benefits from the adherence to such standards. Among the violations of integrity standards is plagiarism. Plagiarism has to be avoided. It is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. When it occurs, the consequences for the student can be severe. For example, credit for a course may be denied and a grade of F is given, permanent notation on transcript, suspension or expulsion from the University, or revocation of admission or degree.

What is Plagiarism?

- Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.
- For example, if you use a sentence from somebody else's paper and insert it into your own paper without clearly marking the source, you are plagiarizing.

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.

Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism: Module 1 (What is plagiarism?)

<https://libraries.usc.edu/tutorial/understanding-and-avoiding-plagiarism-module-1-what-plagiarism-what-citation>

Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism: Module 2 (Citing to avoid plagiarism)

<https://libraries.usc.edu/tutorial/understanding-and-avoiding-plagiarism-module-2-citing-avoid-plagiarism>

Students should expect that their work (such as term papers, research proposals, presentations, written theses, etc.) will be checked for plagiarism with the use of appropriate software (Turnitin; iThenticate; Copyscape; PaperRater; etc.).

## DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, ASSAULT

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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 Sexual Violence Prevention Services at <https://sites.google.com/usc.edu/rsvpclientservices/home> provide 24/7 confidential support, and further help in emergencies can be found here: <https://studenthealth.usc.edu/emergencies/>

## OTHER SUPPORT SYSTEMS

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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](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.

**Counseling and Mental Health** - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call  
[sites.google.com/usc.edu/counseling-mental-health](https://sites.google.com/usc.edu/counseling-mental-health)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

**988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call  
[988lifeline.org](http://988lifeline.org)

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

**Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)** - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call  
[sites.google.com/usc.edu/rsvpclientservices/home](https://sites.google.com/usc.edu/rsvpclientservices/home)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

**Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX)** - (213) 740-5086  
[eetix.usc.edu](http://eetix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment* - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](http://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS)* - (213) 740-0776

[osas.usc.edu](http://osas.usc.edu)

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

*USC Campus Support and Intervention* - (213) 740-0411

[campussupport.usc.edu](http://campussupport.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* - (213) 740-2101

[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC:* (213) 740-4321, *HSC:* (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

[emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC:* (213) 740-6000, *HSC:* (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Office of the Ombuds* - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

[ombuds.usc.edu](http://ombuds.usc.edu)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

*Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice* - (323) 442-2850 or [otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu)

[chan.usc.edu/patient-care/faculty-practice](http://chan.usc.edu/patient-care/faculty-practice)

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

## **Beyond Academic Challenges**

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Balancing course work, midterms, finals, and laboratory research presents a challenge and at times can feel overwhelming. On top of that, many students are far away from home and family, perhaps even their country and their native language, which can feel quite depressing. Sometimes, relationship problems come up and make life miserable. But no matter the problem, USC offers resources to help students deal with depression, anxiety, and other types of distress. USC's services are not only geared toward helping students with academic challenges, but also with personal problems. Students in need should not hesitate to take advantage of the services that are listed above; there is no need to feel embarrassed or

ashamed. USC is offering these services and resources so that students are in the best position to meet their academic and personal goals.