

## BISC 193 (Introduction to Research I), Fall 2025

### Catalog Description

A series of lectures and discussions in which distinguished USC faculty members introduce their research to students. Instruction Mode: Lecture. Grading Option: Credit/No Credit. 1 Unit.

### Overview / Learning Objectives

One of the greatest advantages of studying at a research university is the opportunity to be taught, advised, and mentored by faculty members whose activities include research, i.e., creating new knowledge in their fields. This course will give students a chance to meet some of these faculty members, hear about their research, ask questions, and perhaps establish mentoring or advising relationships that will benefit students' career development. It is also designed to facilitate students' involvement in faculty-mentored research, i.e., finding positions in research laboratories. The course is intended for students at any level who are majoring in Biological Sciences, Human Biology, Quantitative Biology, Neuroscience, Health and Human Sciences, Health and Humanity, Environmental Science and Health, Human Development and Aging, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Studies, and other programs with a life science emphasis. It will be valuable for students interested in careers in the health professions.

### Instructor

Professor Albert Herrera, Neurobiology Section, Department of Biological Sciences

Contact Information: [aherrera@usc.edu](mailto:aherrera@usc.edu), telephone (213) 740-9177

Office hours: By appointment, via Zoom. Please email Dr. Herrera with times you would be available to meet.

### Course Format

The course consists of thirteen 50-minute seminars, on Tuesdays, 11:00-11:50 am (U.S. Pacific Time). All seminars will be presented in-person in SGM 124. **Because grading will be based primarily on students' participation (see below), attending and engaging the seminars are essential.** We will not meet on August 26 to give students time to acclimate to the new semester, nor on December 2 to give students extra time to prepare for final exams and assignments in other classes. Each meeting will consist of a seminar given by a faculty member. Most speakers will welcome questions and comments at any time during their presentations.

### Schedule (the schedule will be updated as necessary)

	Date	Speaker	Title ( <i>italicized titles are approximate</i> )
	Aug 26	----- no class -----	-----
	Sep 2	Albert Herrera	Introduction to undergraduate research, part 1
	Sep 9	Albert Herrera	Introduction to undergraduate research, part 2
	Sep 16	Albert Herrera	Introduction to undergraduate research, part 3
	Sep 23	TBN	
	Sep 30	TBN	
	Oct 7	TBN	
	Oct 14	TBN	
	Oct 21	TBN	
	Oct 28	TBN	
	Nov 4	TBN	

	Nov 11	TBN	
	Nov 18	TBN	
	Nov 25	TBN	
	Dec 3	----- no class -----	-----

*\*These titles are tentative.*

### Textbooks

- There is no assigned textbook. Supplemental reading material will be posted on Blackboard.

### Brightspace <https://brightspace.usc.edu/>

- All course materials, information, and announcements will be posted on Brightspace until the end of the semester. Brightspace is to be used only for appropriate, course-related activities.

### Grading

- Assigned grades will be Credit or No Credit. No letter grades will be assigned.
- **Grading will be based on each student's engagement with the lecture presentations. Engagement will be judged in two ways:**
  - 1. During the presentations, you may ask or answer questions or make comments. Most of our guest speakers will welcome your participation. If you choose this option, submit a summary of your questions/comments via Brightspace.**
  - 2. After the presentations, submit your questions or comments via Brightspace. Professor Herrera will review these submissions to judge their relevance. The most "interesting" submissions will be forwarded to the speakers, but you should feel free to contact the speakers directly if you wish. If you asked questions or made comments during the presentation, you do not have to submit new questions via Brightspace, but please submit a brief reminder of the question(s) you asked.**
- Of course, students can participate via both options if they wish. **In either case, the submissions via Brightspace will be due by 11:59 pm on the Friday after the presentation.**
- Credit will only be given for the items listed above. No extra credit will be given.
- While credit cannot be given for solely for attendance, attendance is obviously necessary for participation.
- A little after the midpoint of the semester, each student will receive a brief report on their class standing.
- There will be no exams.

### Impairments Affecting Your Performance

- Students occasionally encounter difficulties that affect their academic performance, such as illness, accidents, bereavement, depression, anxiety, learning disabilities, and other problems. If you encounter such difficulties, please contact one of the support services listed below, or bring them to the attention of one of the instructors. We may be able to offer accommodations. All such discussions will be confidential. Please seek help as soon as you feel your performance or well-being is affected.

### Support Services

- Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents as soon as possible. Reporting such incidents 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. A list of offices to which one can report such incidents, as well as sources of support for other issues, follows.
- Student Health Counseling Services (213) 740-7711 – on call 24/7  
<https://safety.usc.edu/resources/counseling/>. Free and confidential mental health treatment for

students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. See also <https://safety.usc.edu/resources/well-being/>.

- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) Call or text 988. On call 24/7, see also <https://988lifeline.org/>. Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.
- [Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services](#) (213) 740-4900 – on call 24/7. See <https://sites.usc.edu/clientservices/> or <https://dps.usc.edu/safety-tips/sexual-assault-and-violence/>. Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.
- [Office of Equity and Diversity - Title IX](#) (213) 740-5086 [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu). Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.
- [Campus Support & Intervention](#) (213) 740-0411, [campussupport.usc.edu](http://campussupport.usc.edu). Assists students, faculty, and staff in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues.
- [USC Culture Journey](#) (213) 740-8258, [culturejourney.usc.edu](http://culturejourney.usc.edu). Formerly known as Diversity at USC, this site now focuses on the university's "six unifying values." See the site for more information.
- [USC Emergency - UPC](#): (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000, available 24/7, [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, available 24/7, [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu). Non-emergency assistance and information.

#### **Resources on academic integrity standards, policies, and expectations:**

1. USC Student Handbook: [Living Our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#)
2. Tutorials on Academic Dishonesty: [Academic Dishonesty | USC Libraries](#)

#### **Policies Concerning Student-Athletes**

Student-athletes may not be penalized when University-sanctioned competitions conflict with course activities. When a class will be missed for a sanctioned competition, it is the student-athlete's responsibility to approach the instructor in advance. The student-athlete must provide the instructor with an official letter from Student-Athlete Academic Services (SAAS, <https://saas.usc.edu/academic-support-services/travel/>). The letter must certify that the competition is a University-sponsored event that deserves accommodation. Accommodations will not be made for other types of conflicting events. Details on the University's policy can be found at <http://www.usc.edu/admin/provostoffice/oaaaa/guidelines.html>. Arrangements for the accommodation must be agreed upon in advance of the event. If multiple team members will be absent, each must make an individual arrangement with the instructor.

#### **Email Communication**

To ensure privacy, only students' USC accounts (*usc.edu* domain name) can be used for email communications regarding confidential matters. Students are responsible for understanding the content of official messages sent to their USC accounts.

**Emergency Preparedness / Course Continuity**

If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* (<http://emergency.usc.edu/> or 213-740-9233) will provide information related to safety and course continuity. We expect that instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. Alternative assignments may be given if classes are canceled for prolonged periods. If you have not already done so, please register with TrojansAlert (<https://trojansalert.usc.edu/>) to facilitate communication during emergencies.