

BIO700: Skills for Success in Academia

The goal of this seminar is to discuss topics of interest to people pursuing careers in the life sciences (graduate students and postdocs who may target academic positions or other research jobs), with involvement by people at different career steps who have experience with a variety of topics associated with aspects of training and hiring of faculty and research scientists. **The emphasis will be on discussion, debate, and ideally, action (developing your own skills and materials).** End-products of this seminar are expected to be a set of resources to help graduate students and postdocs succeed at whatever they choose to do and an enhanced departmental infrastructure to help foster these outcomes.

Provided below is a preliminary outline of the topics to be covered which may be changed or revised depending on input from the participants and at the discretion of the instructor.

Grades will be based on attendance and participation.

Week 1: Organizational meeting

Week 2: Work-life balance

- Time management, balancing teaching and research
- Balancing work with the rest of your life, dealing with the two-body problem, what to do if you have/want kids

Week 3: Navigating tricky politics and ethically gray situations

- Authorship vs. acknowledgement
- Publishing and reporting practices
- Conflicts of interest
- Responsible conduct of research

Week 4: How to network

- Increasing your visibility
- Take advantage of resources
- Talking to people at meetings
- What do you talk about?
- How to foster and maintain collaborations

Week 5a: How to read scientific papers for yourself and a journal review

- Prioritizing information input
- Managing and synthesizing information
- Prioritizing information output

Week 5b: Writing a manuscript

- What's worth publishing?
- Where do you send it?
- Writing styles and strategies

Week 6: Communicating science to the public

- The 30 second, 2 minute, 5 minute spiels...
- for your mom, an elementary/middle school/high school class, your Congressman, a journalist
- How to interview with a journalist
- How to engage on controversial subjects

Week 7: Designing an effective poster, giving an effective talk

- Less is more, less is more, less is more

Week 8: Finding funding opportunities and applying for them

- Grant-writing strategies
- Apply for full grants to the NSF or NIH

Week 9: Is academia right for me? Faculty Q&A

- Exploring the different flavors of academia, from teaching colleges to R01's

Week 10: Finding a career outside academia

- Exploring government research, industry research, science policymaking, research support, grant-writing, science writing

Week 11: Putting together your CV and research statement

- A hands-on workshop

Week 12: Putting together a teaching statement and teaching portfolio

- A hands-on workshop, plus some talking

Week 13: Phone interviews

- It's not what you think. It's worse.

Week 14: Campus interviews

- How not to be yourself, and more

Week 15a: Negotiating your contract

- How to be effective without alienating your future department
- What you need to know to be an informed negotiator

Week 15b: Starting up and managing your own lab

- How to make your start-up last
- How to hire effective people
- How to be a mentor/advisor/boss