Course Description and Aims

The design of this course is that each week, one student will be assigned a recent or seminal paper related to parasitology research. The papers will be chosen by ‘guest’ faculty who will attend the class. One or both course directors will also attend every class.

The student will be required to provide a concise but comprehensive background on the field and present the paper in a ‘journal club’ style format. A key component will be to encourage the students not simply to understand the work, but to critically evaluate the studies, develop alternative hypotheses to explain the results, and outline what they view the next steps for this research should be. To ensure all students read the papers and are equipped to discuss them, all students will be required to provide a short [one paragraph] outline of the work and their view of what the future of the studies should be. This should be submitted two days prior to the class.

If the class size is large enough, two students will be appointed each week – one will review background, one will review the paper. This will encourage team work and scientific communication between students. All current Parasitology T32-supported students will be required to participate.

The specific aims of this course are designed to address these goals are:

I. The in depth review of recent manuscripts is intended to provide a greater knowledge in specific and timely areas of parasitology research. This will develop their ability to use the primary literature as the major source of information, evaluating it critically, and integrating it in to a cohesive body of knowledge.

II. A principal aim of the course is to develop the ability to think outside of the box and to cultivate the skills necessary for developing the ability to critically appraise one’s own research and that of others. It is not enough to simply understand the significance of a paper, but to develop alternative hypotheses to explain the results, determine what are the next steps for this research to move forward and integrate these studies into ‘the Big Picture’.

III. The course requires the development of oral presentation skills and the ability to concisely review the background of a research area and to critically evaluate published research and the ideas of ones peers. The ability to present and review work will be tested.
Class format

A paper-based seminar class lasting 90 minutes

Evaluation

The grade will be based on:

a. the paper presentation and general willingness to participate in the discussions of manuscripts.

b. The one-paragraph write-up demonstrating they have both read the paper and thought about future experiments

PIs will be required to select a paper, save as a PDF labeled “PI name CAMB696’ and send to Tina Stanton at least two weeks before their designated day.

Tina:
tinas@vet.upenn.edu

PDFs will be loaded onto blackboard.