Candidacy Exam Workshop Syllabus

Dates and Time: Tuesday: December 3, 3-4 PM
Tuesdays December 10, Jan 7, Jan 14, Jan 21, Jan 28, Feb 4 (at 3-4:30PM)

Location: Location 1-102 SCTR
Workshop Director: Michael B. Robinson, 502 Abramson
email: robinson@pennmedicine.upenn.edu Phone: 215-590-2205

Please note: Attendance at all of the sessions is expected. If there is an emergency that will prevent your attendance, please contact me by email prior to the class. Also, if there is homework, please bring a printed copy to turn in (remember to put your name on the material).

Homework for first class:
Read the guidelines, entitled “Candidacy Exam Guidelines” that were sent in the same email with this syllabus; come to class with questions. Read the sample Abstracts a few times and look for: 1) general topic/ introduction, 2) rationale, 3) hypothesis, 4) general approach being used (methods/models/techniques), 5) significance. Please be prepared to discuss these abstracts.

Class #1 – Dec. 3
- Introductions. I will ask each of you to briefly explain your planned research project (don’t worry I know this will change). You will each get 1-2 min.
- Review timeline for the process and discuss specifics of the proposal as described in Admission to Candidacy Exam.
- Discussion of abstracts- student led

Homework for next class:
Read Chapters 1 and 2 of “Writing in Science & Medicine”. Complete exercise for Chapter 2 and bring copy of your answers to class to discuss (turn in answers).

Class #2 – Dec. 10
- Presentation: Overview of the Candidacy Examination: Preparing and Defending Your Proposal
- Discussion of any questions regarding process
- General discussion of Chapter 2 worksheet

Homework for next class:
- Prepare your abstract (plan on being 2 or 3 drafts into it). Bring 4 printed copies to next class.
- Read Chapter 3 of "Writing in Science & Medicine". Complete exercises for Chapter 3 and bring copy of your answers to class to discuss (turn in answers).

Class #3 – Jan. 7
- Break into groups, read each other’s abstracts, give feedback
- Presentation on rigor and reproducibility
- General discussion of Chapter 3 worksheet

Homework for next class:
- Revise Abstract- Bring 4 printed copies to next class.
- Read Chapter 4 of "Writing in Science & Medicine". Complete exercise for Chapter 4 and bring copy of your answers to class to discuss (turn in answers).
• Read sample specific aims pages/proposals.

Class #4 – Jan. 14
• The scientific method: From hypothesis to data presentation. Group discussion.
• Break into groups, read each others’ abstracts, give feedback
• Group review and discussion of sample Specific Aim pages. Identify elements included in specific aims and discuss strategies for preparation of aims.
• Group review and discussion of sample proposals; Identify elements of effective proposal. Discuss strategies for preparation of proposal.
• General discussion of Chapter 4 worksheet

Homework for next class:
• Revise Abstract- should be just about ready for submission.
• Prepare draft of specific aims page- bring 4 printed copies to next class
• Read Chapter 5 of “Writing in Science & Medicine”. Complete exercise for Chapter 5 and bring copy of your answers to class to discuss (turn in answers).

Class #5 – Jan. 21
• Authentication of resources
• Break into groups, read each others’ specific aims, give feedback
• General discussion of Chapter 5 worksheet
• Opportunity for questions

Homework for next class:
• Revise specific aims page- bring 4 printed copies to next class
• Read Chapter 6 of “Writing in Science & Medicine”

Class #6 – Jan. 28
• Break into groups, read each others’ specific aims, give feedback

Homework for next class:
• Keep working on your documents. Prepare questions for students and faculty who will available at next class.

Class #7 – Feb 4
• During one half of class, 3-4 students who recently completed their candidacy exam will give insights into the process from their perspective. Potential points to discuss: What would they have done differently? What things helped them be successful? How did they budget their time? Did this work? How can one minimize the stress associated with the process?
• During the other half of class we will meet with a small group of faculty members who will share their thoughts on their expectations for the student’s seminar, the written proposal, and oral discussion of the proposal. Students should come to class with questions for the faculty.