Candidacy Exam Workshop Syllabus (Revised)

Dates and Time:  Tuesday: September 22, 4-5 PM
Tuesdays:  September 29, October 13, 20, and 27, November 3, and 10 (4-5:30PM).  Note: no class on October 6 to give an extra week to work on abstract/aims

Location:   Virtual Zoom (link to be sent separately
Workshop Director:  Michael B. Robinson, 502 Abramson
email: robinson@pennmedicine.upenn.edu Phone: 215-590-2205, Cell Phone 609-314-9698

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 send as an attachment to robinson@pennmedicine.upenn.edu (please try to remember to put your name on the material).

Homework for first class:
- Read the guidelines, entitled “Candidacy Exam Guidelines”; 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 – September 22 (4-5 PM)
- Introductions.  I will ask each of you to briefly explain your general area of research and potential research project (don’t worry we know this will evolve).  You will each have 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:
- Prepare your abstract (plan on being 2 or 3 drafts into it). Send drafts of your abstract to the others in your group no later than midnight October 11.
- Read the abstracts from the other students in your group and be prepared to provide feedback.
- Read Chapter 3 of “Writing in Science & Medicine”. Complete exercises for Chapter 3, have a copy of your answers available to discuss at group meeting, and send answers to Dr. Robinson.
Class #3 – October 13 (4-5:30 PM)

- Break into groups and give feedback on abstract
- Presentation on rigor and reproducibility
- General discussion of Chapter 3 worksheet

**Homework for next class:**
- Revise Abstract. Send it to the others in your group no later than midnight October 18.
- Read the abstracts from the other students in your group and be prepared to provide feedback.
- Read Chapter 4 of “Writing in Science & Medicine”. Complete exercise for Chapter 4, have a copy of your answers available to discuss at group meeting, and send answers to Dr. Robinson.
- Read sample specific aims pages/proposals.

Class #4 – October 20 (4-5:30 PM)

- The scientific method: From hypothesis to data presentation. Group discussion.
- Break into groups and give feedback on abstracts
- 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. They can submitted any time up to November 16.
- Prepare draft of specific aims page. Send them to the others in your group no later than midnight October 25.
- Read the specific aims pages from the others in your group and be prepared to provide feedback.
- Read Chapter 5 of “Writing in Science & Medicine”. Complete exercise for Chapter 5, have a copy of your answers available to discuss at group meeting, and send answers to Dr. Robinson.

Class #5 – October 27 (4-5:30 PM)

- Presentation on authentication of resources
- Break into groups and give feedback on specific aims
- General discussion of Chapter 5 worksheet
- Opportunity for questions

**Homework for next class:**
- Revise specific aims page. Send them to the others in your group no later than midnight November 1.
- Read the specific aims pages from the others in your group and be prepared to provide feedback.
- Read Chapter 6 of “Writing in Science & Medicine”

Class #6 – November 3 (4-5:30 PM)

- Break into groups and give feedback on specific aims
Homework for next class:
- Keep working on your documents. Prepare questions for students and faculty who will available at next class.

Class #7 – November 10 (4-5:30 PM)
- 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.