

Syllabus

Scientific Writing and Grantsmanship

Psy 683b

Alexandra L. Quittner, Ph.D.

Professor

Department of Psychology

University of Miami

Objectives of the seminar: The major purpose of this seminar is to foster the writing skills of advanced graduate students. Writing skills are critical for the professional development of social and behavioral scientists, and are particularly important for those who are conducting research. Despite the importance of writing and publishing for career development and the dissemination of research findings, the productivity of psychologists and other behavioral scientists has been less than optimal (Haynes, Lemsy, & Sexton-Radek, 1987; Norcross, Karg, & Prochaska, 1997).

There are a number of barriers behavioral scientists may experience in the writing domain, including lack of time, lack of specific skills, and lack of experience. In most graduate programs, the primary method of enhancing students' writing skills is individual mentorship in the preparation of master's theses and dissertations. Although this is an important component of training, it may not be sufficiently intensive or comprehensive to promote optimal development.

As a research mentor over the past 20 years, I have noticed that graduate students often find it difficult to develop writing products (e.g., grant proposals, publications), and may find the publishing and grant writing process mysterious, intimidating, and stressful. Greater experience with the writing process, opportunities to receive systematic feedback on writing products, and the chance to review the writing products of others may foster greater comfort with professional writing and enhance productivity. This course will also focus on ethical and professional issues related to scientific writing. Often, graduate students have questions about how to negotiate authorship on writing products and need guidance on the ethical principles that govern grants and publications.

Experience and practice will help you with both grant writing and publishing !

Purpose of the course:

- learn about various grant mechanisms available to graduate students (e.g., NRSAs) and professionals through NIH, private foundations and other sources
- review examples of successful applications

- gain experience in reviewing grants using the NIH criteria
- learn how to negotiate the grant review maze
- learn specific skills that will make your project clearer and more compelling to the reviewers
- learn how to pare down your research for publication
- discuss ethical issues related to authorship on grants and publications
- prepare manuscripts for publication; revise manuscripts after receiving feedback from reviewers

Structure of the Writing Seminar: The Writing Seminar will meet every week for 2-3 hours. All participants will make a commitment to contribute their own writing and to critique the writing products of their peers (including my writing if there is time!). At the beginning of the semester, participants will decide on the appropriate grant mechanism or publication outlet and outline the project they will work on. For each seminar, several participants (2 to 4) will agree to prepare drafts of their grant or manuscript for the upcoming seminar and will distribute them **one week prior** to the seminar. They do not have to be finished or polished pieces, but can be works in progress (even outlines of Specific Aims)!

Reviewers will prepare their critiques, be ready to discuss them, and will bring copies of their critiques for the seminar participants and **turn one copy in to me**. When your grant/manuscript is being reviewed, you might want to bring a tape recorder to audiotape the feedback! People have found it very helpful and it is hard to remember everything that was said. We can also appoint someone as note-taker so that the author can listen.

In order to make this as “stress free” as possible, we take turns bringing food and something to drink. This creates a more relaxed atmosphere and helps us all stay alert!!

National Institutes of Health

<http://www.nih.gov/>

- Grants and Funding Opportunities
 - Grants-OER Home Page
 - Funding Opportunities
 - Training, Fellowships and Career Development Programs
<http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm>

Career Award Wizard: <http://grants2.nih.gov/training/kwizard/index.htm>

Class Schedule:

Class will meet on Mondays from 12:30 to 2:30. Occasionally, we will need to change the day because of scheduling conflicts. We will meet in the Flipse Bldg. seminar room 302.

Requirements:

1. Sharing a minimum of 2 writing products with the group (40%).
2. Reading the papers/grants that are assigned each week and providing written critiques (40%). Your critiques must be turned in to me to receive credit for them.

3. Attendance is required; two absences are acceptable, however, if you have to miss more than two classes you will need the Instructor's permission (20%).
4. This seminar can also be taken pass/fail.