Topics In Biology: BSC 6926 (86876)

Fall 2017 Workshop in Biology: Readings in Long-Term Ecological Research

Syllabus

Instructors: Dr. Evelyn Gaiser  Dr. John Kominoski
Office: ECS 253, x6145  Office: OE 207, x2201
Time: Friday 4:00-5:30 pm
Location: CP 115
Credits: 2

Course Description:
This course is intended for students involved in the Florida Coastal Everglades (FCE) Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) program and others interested in keeping up with site and network LTER science. The FCE-LTER is funded by the National Science Foundation on a 6-year cycle, and is up for renewal in 2018. The program is in the proposal planning and writing stage, so this workshop will focus on that process. It will give unique and valuable insight into how large NSF grant proposals are coordinated and written. Students will hear from leaders in the FCE program and read and contribute to sections of the FCE proposal. The course will cover the breadth of topics in this multidisciplinary program, including ecology, biology, chemistry, geology, geography, hydrology and social and political sciences.

Anticipated Outcomes:
- Students will be more engaged in LTER science which will enable them to put their own projects in a larger context
- Students will contribute to the future of the FCE LTER program and creatively influence science directions
- Students will improve their own proposal writing and competitive grant writing skills
- Students will have a better understanding of the Everglades
- Students will have a better appreciation for long-term science and will more likely make LTER part of their futures
- Students will have a better appreciation for multi-disciplinary, collaborative science and include collaborative elements in their theses and dissertations
- Students will have an improved ability to critically evaluate science
- Academic careers will be enhanced through a sense of belonging to a supportive network of colleagues and friends

Responsibilities:

Regular readings: Each week students will be provided with a short section of the LTER renewal proposal document for review. Two additional supporting papers from the literature will be provided to aid understanding and discussion. All students will be responsible for thoroughly reading the proposal section and background papers. Each student will come to class with the short section marked with comments and edits. They will also come to each class with at least two questions written down on paper pertaining to each background reading to facilitate
discussion. These papers will not be collected but students will be marked as absent who do not come to class with questions on paper. Each student will be the “person in charge” for one week’s discussion. This student will come to class with a 1-page synopsis of the readings that includes a 1 paragraph summary of short proposal section and each paper and 2 discussion question/comments for each. They must bring enough copies for all students in the class. The person in charge will lead the discussion for that week.

*In-Class Discussions:* The class will be almost entirely open-group, informal discussion. Students are encouraged to freely express their opinions and at the same time be attentive, responsive and show respect to others.

*Grades:*
Weekly Participation – attendance: 50%
Weekly Participation – discussion: 15%
Weekly Participation – written comments: 10%
1-Page Summary of readings: 20%
Discussion Facilitation: 5%

Attendance is mandatory. Non-emergency absences must be excused at least 1 week in advance and a maximum of 2 are allowed. Each unexcused absence will result in a 10-point deduction on a 100-point scale. The 1-page summary on the “in-charge” day will be graded based on thoroughness and content. Grade scale: A=90-100; B=80-90; C=70-80; D=60-70; F<60.