

## **MCB 6937: Fellowship and Proposal Writing (1 credit)**

**Sections:** 23640, 23655 **Class Period:** Biweekly synchronous meetings (Thursdays 11:00 am – 1:00 pm) **Location:** Online (Zoom)

**Academic Term:** Fall 2025 (Aug 21 – Dec 3, 2025)

### **Instructor:**

Name: Kelly C. Rice, Associate Professor, Microbiology and Cell Science

Email Address: kcrice@ufl.edu

352-392-1192

Office Hours: Biweekly Thursdays 11 am – 1 pm, on Zoom

Zoom link for all live classes and open office hours:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/95025543428?pwd=9mp3aOHLjNmjoElytFGJxLAsPvmF5x.1>

### **Course Description**

This 1 credit graduate seminar covers the basic principles of writing a competitive graduate fellowship application and oral qualifying exam research proposal, with an emphasis on strategies and format relevant for submission to a federal grant agency (NIH, NSF, NASA; focus will be customized to student enrollment).

### **Course Delivery**

All course content is delivered through the Canvas course website. This course is taught online and consists of **synchronous biweekly LIVE ZOOM MEETINGS on Thursdays 11:00 am – 1:00 pm**. Please see the table on last page for schedule. Attendance and participation are required on the dates marked with \*.

Lecture/discussion portions of the live bi-weekly lectures will be recorded and posted to our Canvas course website. Students will be informed at the beginning of each class which portion(s) (if any) will be recorded. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image agree to have their video or image recorded.

- If you do not consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded.
- If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and should communicate using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live.
- Weekly Zoom office hours and any other one-on-one meetings with students will never be recorded.
- As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

### **Course Pre-Requisites / Co-Requisites**

This course is geared towards graduate students entering their second or third year of a PhD program.

### **Course Objectives**

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand the purpose of each element of a fellowship application (Specific Aims, Research Plan, Training Plan) and role of student and mentor in generating these elements.
2. Identify common mistakes, pitfalls, and "fatal flaws" of grant-writing.
3. Develop a hypothesis statement and two-three independent research objectives.
4. Understand the peer review process.
5. Incorporate objectives 1-4 above in writing of the Specific Aims, Research Plan and Training Plan of a fellowship application or research proposal.

<b>Date/Topic</b>	<b>Readings/videos (all available through Canvas or other websites)</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>*Aug 21:</b> <b>Course Introduction/</b> <b>Introduction to NIH-style</b> <b>Fellowship components, Peer</b> <b>Review</b>  <b>*Attendance required*</b>	<a href="https://youtu.be/WmtcX0nxiKE?si=6XYIAma-o2Dj9-FI">https://youtu.be/WmtcX0nxiKE?si=6XYIAma-o2Dj9-FI</a>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VybrDIQ1p4U&amp;t=3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VybrDIQ1p4U&amp;t=3s</a>  <a href="https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/revisions-nih-fellowship-application-review-process#">https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/revisions-nih-fellowship-application-review-process#</a>  <a href="https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/revisions-nih-fellowship-application-review-process/candidate-guidance">https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/revisions-nih-fellowship-application-review-process/candidate-guidance</a>	<b>*Watch assigned YouTube lectures through Playposit on Canvas (DUE Wed. Sept 3<sup>rd</sup>)</b>
<b>Aug 28</b>	<b>Optional Office hours (11 am – 1 pm EST)</b>	
<b>*Sept 4:</b> <b>Specific Aims page</b> <b>*Attendance required*</b>	<a href="https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grantscontracts/draft-specific-aims">https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grantscontracts/draft-specific-aims</a>  <a href="https://www.biosciencewriters.com/NIH-Grant-Applications-The-Anatomy-of-a-Specific-Aims-Page.aspx">https://www.biosciencewriters.com/NIH-Grant-Applications-The-Anatomy-of-a-Specific-Aims-Page.aspx</a>  <a href="https://mitcommmlab.mit.edu/broad/commkit/fellowship-application/">https://mitcommmlab.mit.edu/broad/commkit/fellowship-application/</a>  <a href="https://wassumlab.psych.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/12/How-to-write-a-strong-NRSA-b.pdf">https://wassumlab.psych.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/12/How-to-write-a-strong-NRSA-b.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.uab.edu/medicine/cfar/images/Specific_Aims_Examples.pdf">https://www.uab.edu/medicine/cfar/images/Specific_Aims_Examples.pdf</a>  <a href="https://ctsi.utah.edu/cores-and-services/triad/sdbc/resources/grants/writing-research-aims">https://ctsi.utah.edu/cores-and-services/triad/sdbc/resources/grants/writing-research-aims</a>	<b>NIH Specific Aims drafts due Sept 14 11:59 pm EST</b>
<b>Sept 11:</b>	<b>Optional Office hours (11 am – 1 pm EST)</b>	
<b>*Sept 18:</b> <b>Peer review of Specific Aims Drafts</b>  <b>Specific Aims follow-up discussion</b> <b>*Attendance required*</b>	<a href="https://support.ucsd.edu/research?id=kb_article_view&amp;sysparm_article=KB0034036">https://support.ucsd.edu/research?id=kb_article_view&amp;sysparm_article=KB0034036</a>  <a href="https://ras.mit.edu/document/nih-proposal-resources-and-updates-january-2025">https://ras.mit.edu/document/nih-proposal-resources-and-updates-january-2025</a>  <a href="https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/revisions-nih-fellowship-application-review-process#">https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/revisions-nih-fellowship-application-review-process#</a>  <a href="https://www.biosciencewriters.com/NIH-Grant-Applications-The-Anatomy-of-a-Specific-Aims-Page.aspx">https://www.biosciencewriters.com/NIH-Grant-Applications-The-Anatomy-of-a-Specific-Aims-Page.aspx</a>	
<b>Sept 25:</b>	<b>Optional Office hours (11 am – 1 pm EST)</b>	
<b>*Oct 2:</b> <b>Training Plan Components</b>  <b>*Attendance required*</b>	<a href="https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/revisions-nih-fellowship-application-review-process#">https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/revisions-nih-fellowship-application-review-process#</a>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VybrDIQ1p4U&amp;t=3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VybrDIQ1p4U&amp;t=3s</a>	<b>NIH Training plan drafts due Oct 12 11:59 pm EST</b>
<b>Oct 9:</b>	<b>Optional Office hours (11 am – 1 pm EST)</b>	
<b>*Oct 16:</b>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VybrDIQ1p4U&amp;t=3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VybrDIQ1p4U&amp;t=3s</a>	

<b>Training Plan Peer Review/follow-up Discussion</b> <b>*Attendance required*</b>		
<b>Oct 23:</b>	<b>Optional Office hours (11 am – 1 pm EST)</b>	
<b>*Oct 30: Research Plan</b> <b>*Attendance required*</b>	<a href="https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/revisions-nih-fellowship-application-review-process#">https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/revisions-nih-fellowship-application-review-process#</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VybrDIQ1p4U&amp;t=3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VybrDIQ1p4U&amp;t=3s</a>	<b>NIH Research plan drafts due Nov 9 11:59 pm EST</b>
<b>Nov 6:</b>	<b>Optional Office hours (11 am – 1 pm EST)</b>	
<b>Nov 13: Research plan Peer Review/Follow-up discussion</b>  <b>Navigating the Peer Review process</b> <b>*Attendance required*</b>	<a href="https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/revisions-nih-fellowship-application-review-process#">https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/revisions-nih-fellowship-application-review-process#</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VybrDIQ1p4U&amp;t=3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VybrDIQ1p4U&amp;t=3s</a> <a href="https://lions-talk-science.org/2025/01/29/third-times-the-charm-my-f31-fellowship-journey/">https://lions-talk-science.org/2025/01/29/third-times-the-charm-my-f31-fellowship-journey/</a>	
<b>Nov 20:</b>	<b>Optional Office hours (11 am – 1 pm EST)</b>	
<b>Nov 27:</b>	<b>THANKSGIVING (No class)</b>	
<b>Dec 3:</b>	<b>Final NIH style written assignments (Specific Aims, Training Plan/Personal Statement, Research Plan)</b> <b>all due on December 3, 2025</b>	

### **Attendance Policy, Class Expectations, and Make-Up Policy**

Attendance and participation in the weekly synchronous meeting is required for the dates indicated in the table above. Attendance to office hours is optional. Unexcused absences will have points deducted from the attendance/participation portion of the grade (4 points per unexcused absence). Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and require appropriate documentation. Attendance and make-up requirements for assignments are consistent with university policies ([Attendance Policies](#)).

### **Evaluation of Grades**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Total Points</b>	<b>Percentage of Final Grade</b>
Required Attendance and Participation (4 points per class x 7 classes)	28	14%
Peer review and Lecture Assignments (15 points x4 assignments)	60	30%
Final NIH Specific Aims page	28	14%
Final NIH Research plan	42	21%
Final NIH Training plan	42	21%
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Grading Policy**

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:

[UF Graduate Catalog](#)

## Grades and Grading Policies

<b>Percent</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grade Points</b>
90.0 - 100.0	A	4.00
87.0 - 89.9	A-	3.67
84.0 - 86.9	B+	3.33
81.0 - 83.9	B	3.00
78.0 - 80.9	B-	2.67
75.0 - 79.9	C+	2.33
72.0 - 74.9	C	2.00
69.0 - 71.9	C-	1.67
66.0 - 68.9	D+	1.33
63.0 - 65.9	D	1.00
60.0 - 62.9	D-	0.67
0 - 59.9	E	0.00

### ***Students Requiring Accommodations***

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

### ***Course Evaluation***

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here](#).

### ***University Honesty Policy***

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." [The Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

### ***Software Use***

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

### ***Student Privacy***

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the [Notification to Students of FERPA Rights](#).

### ***Campus Resources:***

## Health and Wellness

### **U Matter, We Care:**

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:** [counseling.ufl.edu/cwc](http://counseling.ufl.edu/cwc), and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

### **Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)**

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

**University Police Department** at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or [police.ufl.edu](http://police.ufl.edu).

## Academic Resources

**E-learning technical support**, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu).

**Career Resource Center**, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.

**Library Support**, Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

**Teaching Center**, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

**Writing Studio**, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

**Student Complaints Campus**

**On-Line Students Complaints**