Special Topics Seminar Course BY871 and PH841

Goals for the FALL semester

All Students learn how to:

• Read and critically analyze papers,
• Present orally/visually the essential points of the paper,
• Ask questions and answer them,
• Learn the basics of scientific writing (papers and grants).

These skills are essential for success in science and will help you:

• Pass PhD qualifying exams,
• Present at lab meetings, thesis committee meetings, conferences, etc.
• Become a good teacher.

Advanced Students

• Provide a role model for students by giving one presentation on the paper of their choice that is related to their research
• Serve as Discussion Leader for presentations of other students
• Improve skills needed for written and oral presentations
• Helps preparation for pre-thesis committee meetings.

Format of oral presentations by the students:

Each week ALL students will carefully read one selected paper. The paper will be given 2 weeks in advance.

Each student presents a paper in a 40 min talk using laptop + video projector
Advanced students present first, 1st time students present next.
After each presentation, there is a ~20 min question & answer period where EVERYONE should ask questions and express their opinion on the paper.
Prepare your questions for each paper!

Paper selection:
1st time students – papers are selected by the instructor or in consultation with the instructor
Advanced students select their own papers (may ask their advisor's for input) and show it to the instructor > 2 weeks in advance.

Presentation:
   • Purpose of study (brief)
   • Background biology / biophysics / biochemistry (10-15 min)
   • Technical approach – basics h Key observations (15-20 min)
   • Summary, Strengths / Weaknesses / Importance (10 min)

Pace yourself: on average present 1 slide per min
Grade:

1st time students
  50% Presentation
  50% Class Participation

Advanced students
  35% Presentation
  35% Class Participation
  30% Writing Assignments

Ground rules
  • Attendance is mandatory
  • Everyone should be prepared to ask questions
  • The presenter is responsible for the laptop setup
  • Bring your own lunch
  • Feel free to ask the instructor any questions about the paper that you are planning to present, but do it well in advance!