Syllabus

Scientific Writing, Editing, and Revising
BIOL/WLF 694, Spring 2008

Instructor: Abby Powell
Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 1-4 PM, 208 Irving I
Office: 209B Irving I, 474-5505

This course is geared toward the graduate student who is ready to start writing a thesis chapter. Students will learn skills needed to write, review, and edit manuscripts in the biological sciences. We will focus on all aspects of writing a paper for a peer-reviewed journal including, but not limited to: organization, clarity, scope, authorship, submittal and review processes, and editing. Each student will participate in writing, editing, and reviewing manuscripts. A completed draft of one thesis chapter is the expected final product.

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend and participate in all class sessions.

Assignments and Grading: Students will be writing their own thesis/dissertation chapters and reviewing/editing each other’s work. For each writing assignment, please bring in two hard copies to class – one for the instructor, and one for another student to edit and review.

We will not be using “Track Changes” in Word in this class for editing (although it will be demonstrated and discussed at some point).

Grading will be based on assignments (writing, reviewing, editing; 50%) and your final product (one manuscript/thesis chapter; 50%). Straight letter grades will be assigned (no plus/minus). Because this class will involve extensive editing and reviewing on a tight schedule, penalties for late assignments will be substantial.

Suggested References:

Schedule/List of Topics (subject to change)

January
30 Authorship, Journals, how to start writing, organization

February
6 Writing style, Results (Figures and Tables) and Methods
   due today – a working title for your chapter, a brief outline of your paper
13 Introduction and Discussion, Abstract, Acknowledgments, Literature Cited, Appendices
   due today – Figures and Tables
20 Writing style, more on organization
   due today – first draft of Results and Methods
27 Review of work to date, discussion

March
5 Ethics of reviewing, writing reviews, responding to reviewers
   due today – first draft
19 Review of work to date, discussion
   due today – reviews/editing
26 Review of work to date, discussion

April
2 Review of work to date, discussion
   due today – revised draft
9 Guest speaker, submitting to journals
16 Review of work to date, discussion
   due today – reviews/editing
23 Review of work to date, discussion
30 Final Product Due (manuscript/thesis chapter)