Syllabus

Scientific Writing, Editing, and Revising
BIOL/WLF 694, Spring 2007

Instructor: Abby Powell
Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 1-3 PM, 332 Irving II
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%). 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
17 Authorship, Journals, how to start writing, organization
24 Writing style, Results (Figures and Tables) and Methods
   due today – a working title for your chapter, a brief outline of your paper
31 Editing and formatting
   due today – Figures and Tables

February
7 Writing style, more on organization
   due today – first draft of Results and Methods
14 Introduction and Discussion
   due today – reviews of Results and Methods
21 Review of work to date, discussion
   due today – first draft of Introduction
28 Review of work to date, discussion
   due today – revised Results and Methods, reviews of Introduction

March
7 Review of work to date, discussion
   due today – revised Introduction, first draft of Discussion
21 Ethics of reviewing, writing reviews, responding to reviewers
   due today – reviews of Discussion
28 Abstract, Acknowledgments, Literature Cited, Appendices
   due today – revised Discussion

April
4 Review of work to date, discussion
   due today – draft of whole chapter/manuscript
11 Review of work to date, discussion
   due today – reviews of whole chapter/manuscript
18 Oral presentations
25 Final Product Due (manuscript/thesis chapter)

May
2 Wrap-up, Final Reviews