Syllabus
CTPS 6104
Practical Scientific Writing

Mardelle Susman, M.A., Instructor
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5-6 pm, Room 4.145 MRB

Purpose: This 8-week, 16-session course is designed to help postdoctoral fellows and senior graduate students prepare and/or improve a manuscript featuring their research findings. Fall term focuses on non-native English speakers; Spring term focuses on native English speakers; Summer term, on hiatus.

Required for maximum participation in class: A manuscript (or equivalent writing project) that is in its early stages of preparation. Participants will work on parts of the manuscript over an 8-week period. The instructor will be happy to discuss variances from the suggested manuscript project.

Course Description:
Participants will receive in twice weekly, one-hour lectures:
- An overview of the scientific manuscript writing and submission processes
- Pointers for getting started (i.e., organizing to write the manuscript)
- A focused review of punctuation/grammar issues and a brushing up of skills in this area
- An understanding of the role of revision in their early drafts
- A one-on-one critique of their manuscript

Grading: This is a pass/fail course based on participation by going through the steps in preparing a manuscript/equivalent writing project. As lectures are closely linked to preparation of the parts of the manuscript, attendance is mandatory and will be considered in determining if a participant passes the course. Accordingly, if a participant is absent for more than a few sessions, he/she should consider withdrawing from the course.

Course Evaluation—A message from the Graduate School: “As part of the overall course grade, students also are required to complete an evaluation form at the end of each term. If the evaluation form is not received, an “I” or incomplete grade will be reported to the Office of Enrollment Services. The Evaluation is designed to monitor the effectiveness of the lectures and other course activities. The results will be used to make any needed modifications for the following year of the course. This information also will be relayed to a separate committee that oversees the course. ALL STUDENTS are required to complete the evaluation forms. Anonymity will be preserved with this online survey.”

Week 1:
The Stages of Writing (planning, audience, approaches)
The Groundwork (literature search, journal selection, authorship)
Grammar/Punctuation Update: Six comma rules; the functions of the various forms of punctuation

Required: One-sentence description of content of paper (thesis sentence)

Week 2:
Organizing to Write (assembling literature, arranging for statistical analysis, designing a checklist/outline)
Writing the Introduction
Grammar/Punctuation Update: Problems at sentence level

Required: Outline of paper submitted via email
Week 3
The Materials and Methods Section
Samples of what reviewers say about manuscripts
Grammar/Punctuation Update: Sentence structure
Required: Very rough version of abstract and introduction submitted via email

Week 4
The Results section
Grammar/Punctuation Update: Issues (e.g. active/passive constructions, awkward/wordy sentences, parallel construction)
Required: Methods section submitted via email

Weeks 5-6
Writing the Discussion
Required: Results sections submitted

Weeks 7-8
Finalizing the manuscript
Introduction to grant application preparation
Required: Discussion section

Weeks 9-10
These weeks are considered independent work weeks as students will submit their completed manuscripts by email during this period, and, accordingly, no formal lectures are planned. The instructor will return edited manuscripts to participants in as timely a manner as possible.

Prerequisites: None

Required Texts: None

Disability/Special Accommodations Statement: It is the policy of the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) at Galveston to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and state and local requirements regarding students and applicants with disabilities. Under these laws, no otherwise qualified and competitive individual with a disability shall be denied access to or participation in services, programs, and activities of UTMB-Galveston solely on the basis of the disability.

The University of Texas Medical Branch is committed to equal opportunity for students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability or would like to obtain information regarding services for students with disabilities, a complete copy of the “Student with Disabilities: Guidelines for Compliance” may be obtained from the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity.
UTMB Honor Pledge
On my honor, as a member of the UTMB community, I pledge to act with integrity, compassion and respect in all my academic and professional endeavors.

Student Conduct and Discipline
Student Conduct and Discipline policy in the Institutional Handbook of Policies and Procedures (IHOP), Section 7.1.3 (http://www.utmb.edu/policy/ihop/search/07-01-03.pdf). “General Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of every student, faculty member and administrative official to initiate a disciplinary complaint when scholastic dishonesty or other misconduct is involved” UTMB IHOP Section 7.1.3. Student Conduct and Discipline: General Responsibilities.