

## Course 01:447:415 Thesis Writing and Communication in Genetics

Instructor Dr. Chris Rongo

- 1) Please provide a brief overview of how the course will be run.

The course will use a “**synchronous remote instruction**” format. This means that students will need to log into the online class using Zoom at the scheduled course time. There are some lectures, mostly early in the semester. Attendance is required, but the instructor will use Zoom’s record function and upload a recording to the course’s Canvas site. There will be student presentations in the latter half of the semester, with the expectation of student discussion and feedback in real time. The size of the class is small enough that it will not require the separation of students into Zoom’s “Breakout Rooms;” rather, the instructor will facilitate discussion in a single Zoom session comprising the full class.

- 2) What does synchronous/asynchronous mean for this course? When are students expected and/or required to be online?

Students are expected to attend all live Zoom session meetings for the course, which meets every Monday from 5PM to 6:20PM. Students are expected to participate in discussion via Zoom, and without the use of blocked video.

- 3) Will there be regular deadlines for assignments/quizzes/etc. during the week?

Yes. Assignments will include the submission of thesis drafts, the submission of edits of student drafts, practice Powerpoint presentations, and practice posters. Deadlines and instructions will be provided through the course Canvas site.

- 4) When and how will help be provided to the students by the course instructor and/or TAs?

The instructor will supervise and guide Zoom session discussions. The instructor will provide feedback on written assignments through rubrics and direct editing of Word docx documents, which will be returned to the student. The instructor will be available to meet virtually with individual students through Zoom sessions by appointment.

5) Any specific advice for students to be successful in the course?

Yes:

First, let go of your ego. Writing is personal, and it is easy to take feedback and criticism of one's writing personally. Don't. The only way to become a better writer is (1) to listen to critiques, (2) to appreciate that readers (including your student colleagues and the instructor) provide an honest and unfiltered assessment of the clarity and strength of your writing, and (3) to not be afraid to make changes that address their concerns and fix the problems.

Second, don't be afraid to ask questions during class, especially about the science presented by your colleagues. Didn't understand something? Chances are that others did not understand it either, so raise your hand and ask a question or ask for clarification (or even challenge a point made!). In a high-level scientific seminar, the only stupid question is the one that doesn't get asked.

6) What technology is required?

Students will need high-speed internet so that they can participate in the Canvas/Zoom class. The instructor needs to be made aware if any students have technology issues with connecting during class time. If so, they should contact the instructor ASAP.