

BIOL 8310: Career Design for Life Sciences

Instructor

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Office hours may be arranged by appointment.

Course Description

This course will use a student-centered approach to explore diverse careers available to life science PhD students. Students will identify how their skills and experiences match a variety of professional opportunities, and they will develop an individual development plan (IDP) to guide their career planning. This class is open to all 3rd & 4th year life science PhD students in A&S and BIMS and is part of the PhD Plus Career Design Series and the NSF NRT EXPAND program.

Course Objectives

In this course, you will develop the skills to explore diverse careers that will serve as options for you as a life sciences PhD. Specifically, we expect that you will be able to:

- Research the world of career opportunities that align with your values, skills, and interests
- Identify valuable skills and experiences for diverse careers
- Develop a SMART goal for strategic professional development that will prepare you for your top career(s) of choice within a realistic timeframe
- Learn strategies to build a community of peers, mentors, allies, and advocates for your career development.

Your Role

Class participation in discussions and activities is critical to making the most of this class. Please know that we are teaching this course because we want to guide your exploration of career options and to help you identify and achieve your career goals. We want this to be your course, and we want to shape this class based on your interests and questions. If you have interests in exploring topics that are not on our syllabus, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Attendance

Class attendance is required, and classes should only be missed for extraordinary circumstances. As the material in this course is cumulative, your attendance is essential to build an understanding of the stages of career development. If you miss more than 2 classes, you will not receive credit.

Assessment

Your grade will be based on class preparedness/participation, completion of assignments, and your final IDP. Participation in a pre-, mid-, and post-course assessment is required, but please know that these assessments will be strictly anonymous.

Course Schedule

This schedule may be modified as we move through the semester. Please visit the course Canvas site for links to course details, readings, and homework assignments.

| Date | Topic | Assignment Due in Class |
|--------------|--|--|
| August 24 | Course Introduction | |
| August 31 | Self-Assessment: Identifying Skills, Interests, and Values | Read “The Need for Self-Knowledge” |
| September 7 | Researching PhD Careers | Job description mining exercise |
| September 14 | Informational Interviewing | Watch Informational Interview video , read handout |
| September 21 | NO CLASS | |
| September 28 | Networking Strategies Online & In-person (remote) | Create list of potential contacts |
| October 5 | Informational Interviews – Outcomes | Conduct at least one informational interview |
| October 12 | Experiential Learning & Skill Building – Identifying Opportunities | |
| October 19 | Career Panel I (remote) | Prepare questions for panelists |
| October 26 | Career Panel II (remote) | Prepare questions for panelists |
| November 2 | Career Panel III (remote) | Prepare questions for panelists |
| November 9 | Interviewing Skills | Schedule mock interview by 11/30 |
| November 16 | Individual Development Plan for Your Career | |
| November 23 | NO CLASS – Thanksgiving | |
| November 30 | Course Conclusion | Submit IDP Worksheet |