



**Population Health Sciences 820  
Graduate Research Seminar  
Spring 2016**

**Instructors:**

Ajay K. Sethi, PhD, MHS  
Associate Professor  
*Office:* 601 WARF  
*Phone:* (608) 263-1756  
*Email:* [ajay.sethi@wisc.edu](mailto:ajay.sethi@wisc.edu)

Marguerite E. Burns, PhD  
Assistant Professor  
*Office:* 760A WARF  
*Phone:* (608) 265-5282  
*Email:* [meburns@wisc.edu](mailto:meburns@wisc.edu)

**Course Website:**

<https://learnuw.wisc.edu>

**Time and Location:**

12:00 to 12:50 PM Wednesdays in 1420 WARF, January 20 to May 4, 2016

**Course Objective:**

The goal of this class is to improve your skills in scientific communication and your ability to evaluate and discuss population health research.

**Course Format:**

You will be required to make professional presentations of your work to a diverse audience, attend presentations of other students' work, and participate in discussions of issues commonly related to successful performance and presentation of research. The basic format for this class is a series of seminars along with panel discussions.

**Responsibilities:**

There are four tasks you will be responsible for completing in this class:

1. Providing a title and abstract for your seminar
2. Composing and presenting your seminar
3. Providing feedback on other students' seminars
4. Regularly participating in discussions and asking questions

**Course Outline:**

In the first class, we will review the syllabus, discuss the course objectives, and set the schedule for the seminars. For the remainder of the course, you will give seminars (one or two student per session), attend talks by other students, and participate in discussions led by students and/or faculty. You should present your thesis or dissertation research proposal, or research that you are carrying out related to your thesis or dissertation, challenges and/or findings. Consult one of the instructors or your advisor if you need guidance.

Your first task will be to submit a preliminary title (and preliminary abstract, if you have it) for your seminar, due January 25, 2016 via a Dropbox folder set up on Learn@UW. You may submit the formatted abstract following the instruction for authors for *JAMA* (<http://jama.ama-assn.org/site/misc/ifora.xhtml>).

Alternatively, you may use another abstract format for a suitable journal or conference in your field.

On the Wednesday before your seminar, you should submit an updated title and abstract through Learn@UW to reflect any changes since the initial abstract submission.

Your second task will be to compose and present your seminar. Students will begin their seminar by posing one to three questions that they would like to address.

Your seminar is an opportunity to improve your presentation skills in front of a friendly audience. Practice your presentation (preferably multiple times) before giving your seminar and consider the following:

Time: Allow adequate time for presentation and follow-up Q&A and discussion. Your seminar should be approximately 40 minutes long for a 50-minute session or 18 minutes long for a 25-minute session. As a general rule of thumb, you should have no more than one slide for each minute of presentation (i.e., no more than 40 slides for a 40-minute talk).

Realize that your audience will not have seen your slides before your seminar and most will be unfamiliar with your area of research. Therefore, spend an adequate amount of time presenting important background slides, focusing specifically on setting up the rationale for your research question. However, the emphasis in your presentation should be placed on your planned or accomplished work. Most substantive questions will be held until the end of the prepared talk.

Content: Avoid small font sizes (e.g., less than 16- or 18-point), fonts with serifs, animation that is more distracting than useful, and cluttering a slide with too much content. Choose color schemes and templates that will be visible under the room conditions. Simple black and white slides are not a bad choice and even recommended. No more than 6-7 lines of text per slide.

Audience: The audience will be primarily comprised of fellow students and the course instructors. Students are encouraged to request in advance that their thesis or dissertation advisor attend their seminar along with any other faculty, staff, or guests that may be appropriate.

Before your seminar, you are expected to check out and setup the laptop projector and LCD projector from the Department of Population Health Sciences (Room 707 WARF), and return the equipment afterwards. Also, after each seminar given by other students, you must complete a comment/feedback sheet that will be collected and given to the speakers.

**Resources:**

Alley M (2002) [The Craft of Scientific Presentations: Critical Steps to Succeed and Critical Errors to Avoid](#). Springer.

Morgan S, Whitener B (2006) [Speaking about Science: A Manual for Creating Clear Presentations](#). Cambridge University Press.

Anholt R (2005) [Dazzle 'Em With Style: The Art of Oral Scientific Presentation](#). Academic Press. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

Day RA, Gastel B. (2006) [How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper](#). Greenwood. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition.

**Grading and Evaluation:**

The course grade will be based on providing a title and abstract for your seminar (25%), composing and presenting your seminar (50%), and regularly participating in class discussions, asking questions, and providing feedback to other presenters (25%).

**Academic Policies:**

Nondiscrimination Policy. The UW Madison is committed to creating a dynamic, diverse and welcoming learning environment for all students and has a non-discrimination policy that reflects this philosophy. Disrespectful behaviors or comments addressed towards any group or individual, regardless of race/ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion, ability, or any other difference is deemed unacceptable in this class, and will be addressed publicly by the professor.

Disability Reasonable Accommodation Policy. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to the course director that outlines your request in a manner that is timely and consistent with established university policies for making such request so that your needs may be addressed. Policies for accommodating disabilities are available through the McBurney Disability Resource Center, 903 University Ave., 608-263-2741 (phone), 263-6393 (TTY), 265-2998 (Fax), [mcburney@uwmadmail.services.wisc.edu](mailto:mcburney@uwmadmail.services.wisc.edu)  
For additional information, please see <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>

Religious Reasonable Accommodation Policy. Every effort shall be made to reasonably and fairly accommodate all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance, provided advance notification of the conflict is given. Whenever possible, students should give at least one week advance notice to request special accommodation.

Student Honesty and Rules of Conduct. Academic honesty requires that the course work (e.g., quizzes, papers, exams) a student presents to an instructor honestly and accurately indicates the student's own academic efforts. These policies are available at <http://www.studentaffairs.wisc.edu/>. UWS 14 is the chapter of the University of Wisconsin System Administrative code that regulates academic misconduct. UW-Madison implements the rules defined in UWS 14 through our own "Student Academic Misconduct Campus Procedures." UWS 14.03 defines academic misconduct as follows: "Academic misconduct is an act in which a student:

- a. seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- b. uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- c. forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- d. intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- e. engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- f. assists other students in any of these acts."

If you are accused of misconduct, you may have questions and concerns about the process. If so, you should feel free to call Student Advocacy & Judicial Affairs (SAJA) in the Offices of the Dean of Students at (608) 263-5700 or send an email to [dos@bascom.wisc.edu](mailto:dos@bascom.wisc.edu)

Civility Policy. Members of the University of Wisconsin-Madison community are expected to deal with each other with respect and consideration. The civility policy for this course promotes mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among the faculty, teaching assistants, and students. We do not intend this policy to deprive any person of his or her right to freedom of expression. Rather, we seek to maintain a safe, harassment-free workplace for the students, faculty, and teaching assistants. Positive communication is encouraged and volatile, hostile, or aggressive actions and language will not be tolerated. If the civility policy for this course is violated, the individual is subject to removal from the class and possibly the course altogether. In addition, the proper authorities at the UW Departmental, School, and University levels will be notified of such behavior accordingly and further action may be taken if necessary.