

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
CHEM 290 01/COGS 290 01/EECS 289 01/ES 290 01/MATH 290 01/ME 290 02/PHYS 290
01/POLI 289/PSY 290 03 - Graduate Professional Development (1 Credit)
Fall 2021

Instructor: Prof. Asmeret Asefaw Berhe | Professor of Soil Biogeochemistry, Department of Life and Environmental Sciences | Falasco Chair in Earth Sciences and Geology | Interim Associate Dean of Graduate Education
E-mail: aaberhe@ucmerced.edu

Class hours: Fridays 2:30 – 3:45PM
Class location: Student Services Building 130

Office hours: By appointment

Prerequisites: Graduate standing or approval of instructor.

Course Description. This one-credit seminar is designed to provide graduate students skills and knowledge they need for making the transition to successful post-graduate careers. The seminar will expose students to diversity of career options. We will discuss the role of postdoctoral positions among disciplines, the importance of networking, managing your online presence, and differences between mentors and sponsors. Participants will learn about preparation of application packets for post-graduate careers, interviewing and negotiating skills, ethics, and practice time-management skills. As part of this course, students will produce a working resume or CV and professional website.

Most graduate training is aimed at preparing students to contribute to scholarship in specific disciplinary and interdisciplinary areas of academia. This type of focused graduate training happens in courses, labs, seminars, fieldwork, and various other academic activities in each of the graduate programs on campus. These activities are designed primarily to foster the academic development of graduate students, although some professional development is often fostered as well. Professional development encompasses the skills and knowledge associated with academic and related careers, as opposed to conducting research or teaching specific subjects in one's field. Professional development happens implicitly through interactions with peers and mentors that occur in classes, meetings, conferences, and various other professional contexts. However, a recent Council of Graduate Schools report on professional development (Denecke, Feaster, & Stone, 2017) found that graduate programs often focus on academic research skills to the point that they may neglect training professional skills such as finding and applying for fellowships and jobs, interviewing, career paths for graduate students, social media presence, etc.

Course Goals: This course was created to make general training in professional development available to all graduate students at UC Merced. Because the course is available to students in all three schools—Engineering, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts—it covers skills that apply to all graduate programs. The majority of seminars are on graduate student careers, but other topics such as fellowships, teaching, and communication skills are also covered.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of each semester, students will be better prepared to do some number of the following: Find and write fellowship and grant proposals; write effective CVs and resumes; research and identify both academic and non-academic career opportunities; be better prepared to interview for postdoctoral fellowships, and academic and non-academic jobs; lead and assist in classroom instruction; and give academic and professional presentations.

Course Requirements: The course is structured as a weekly seminar, and students will be graded based on attendance and exercises. The graded exercises will include completing an individual development plan and mentor map; preparation of a 3 minute pitch on your work; and preparation of professional CVs /resumes and website. In addition, students who complete the work will be better prepared to go into academic and non-academic job markets, pedagogical best practices, and social media best practices. Students may also do a simple mock interview, cover letter, or other brief exercises designed to engage in the topics covered.

To earn a passing grade of B, students do not need to attend all seminars or complete all exercises. Instead a passing grade is earned with at least 10 of 15 seminars attended and the associated exercises satisfactorily completed by the deadline (to be determined). A letter grade of A is earned with at least 12 of 15 seminars attended and exercises satisfactorily completed. The amounts of coursework are based on one course credit = about 40 hours of effort for the semester, including class instruction time, reading time, and time for exercises. There is no final exam or final paper.

My Expectation: I expect students to: show up to class on time, be attentive and engaged during presentations and discussions, read all assigned readings at least before the Tuesday seminar time, seek help when appropriate, and refrain from engaging in unnecessary distractions during class time.

Academic Integrity: Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of California, Merced's Academic Honesty Policy. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Students are encouraged to study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in lecture and the sections with other students. However, cooperation should not involve one student possessing work done by someone else. If copying is brought to the attention of the instructor, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied may not receive credit for the associated class meeting or professional development exercise. Penalty for violation of the Academic Honesty Policy may also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The University of California Merced is committed to ensuring equal academic opportunities and inclusion for students with disabilities based on the principles of independent living, accessible universal design and diversity. I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances. Students are encouraged to register with Disability Services Center to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

COVID-19 RELATED ADJUSTMENTS

In this seminar, we will always treat each other with **respect** and **dignity**. We are here to learn. There is no such thing as a “stupid” or “basic” question. I will address each student’s needs and concerns to the best of our ability; and I am committed to providing accommodations that students need to succeed in the class and development of the assignment materials.

In addition, we should all acknowledge that this is not a normal year. There is a lot going on that we have to deal with. I want you to know that I recognize the gravity of the situation that many of you find yourselves in. I want to remind you to be kind to yourself and others you interact with. Don’t hesitate to reach out to me if you have any concerns.

Principles

1. Nobody signed up for this.
 - Not for the sickness, not for the social distancing, not for the racial violence, not for the fires, not for the sudden end of our collective lives together on campus
 - Not for an online class, not for teaching remotely, not for learning from home, not for mastering new technologies, not for varied access to learning materials
2. The humane option is the best option.
 - We are going to prioritize supporting each other as humans
 - We are going to prioritize simple solutions that make sense for the most
 - We are going to prioritize sharing resources and communicating clearly
3. We cannot just do the same thing online.
 - Some assignments are no longer possible
 - Some expectations are no longer reasonable
 - Some objectives are no longer valuable
4. We will foster intellectual nourishment, social connection, and personal accommodation.
 - Accessible asynchronous content for diverse access, time zones, and contexts
 - Optional synchronous discussion to learn together and combat isolation
5. We will remain flexible and adjust to the situation.
 - Nobody knows where this is going and what we’ll need to adapt
 - Everybody needs support and understanding in this unprecedented moment

(gratefully adopted from Brandon Bayne; UNC - Chapel Hill)

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Fall 2020	Topic	Assigned reading (on Catcourses, read before seminar)	Assignments (due at the dates in the corresponding date)
8/27/21	How to win at grad school	10 Tips to Help You ‘Win’ at Graduate School; What not to do in graduate school	
9/3/20	Imposter Syndrome and Personal assessments: individual development plan	Feeling like a fraud; You need a game plan; IDP	
9/10/20	Funding your graduate education, research, postdoc, and more	Tips on creating a winning application; Writing strong Essays and Personal statements; Getting strong letters of recommendation; Enhancing your fellowship application	Submit a completed IDP http://mvidp.sciencecareers.org
9/17/20	Mentoring, Mentor Map	Glessmer et al. Taking ownership of your own mentoring; the power of peer mentoring	
9/24/20	Time and data management. Remaining productive and effective in graduate school	Ten Simple Rules for Finishing Your PhD	Submit a completed mentor map
10/1/20	Ethics and Equity in graduate education	Freidman Research Ethics; Ten Simple Rules for Building Anti-Racist Labs	
10/8/20	Interpersonal communication, and Advisor-Advisee relationships	Invited speaker Maria Nishanian, Graduate Division	
10/15/20	Job applications – CV and cover letter	Little add ons for a standout CV; Dos and Don't for writing cover letters	
10/22/20	Job applications – research, teaching, and diversity statements	Writing teaching statements: Essay on how to write research statements	Submit draft CV
10/29/20	Interviewing for your dream job and 3MT pitch/experience	3MT pitch tip and example; Interview prep is key to hitting your job search target; Informational Interviewing https://career.berkeley.edu/Info/InfoInterview	
11/5/20	Negotiating for the job you want	How to negotiate a job offer effectively	Submit a taped version of your 3MT pitch
Fall 2020	Topic	Assigned reading (on	Assignments (due at

		Catcourses, read before seminar)	the dates in the corresponding date)
11/12/20	The postdoc experience - discussion	Choosing your postdoc position, Science https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2015/06/choosing-your-postdoc-position	
11/19/20	Careers for PhD holders - discussions	Ten Simple Rules for landing on the right job after your PhD or postdoc	
12/3/20	Managing your digital/internet profile in the 21st century - discussion	Digital tattoos; PLUS Do some cyber sleuthing and find five websites to serve as good examples of what you would like to have on your own, and three websites that you think are not as effective	Submit draft of website
12/10/20	Scholarly Communication – discussion	Scientists’ incentives and attitudes toward public communication	
12/17/20	No class during final exam week		Submit final versions of CV and Website

Additional resources:

Basalaa, S. and Debelius, M. 2007. So what are you going to do with that? Finding careers outside academia. Revised edition. University of Chicago Press

Chapter 1: Will I have to wear a suit? Rethinking life after graduate school.

Chapter 2: How do I figure out what else to do? Soul-searching before job searching

Chapter 4: This might hurt a bit. Turning your cv into a resume.

Going in with your eyes open: What to ask before accepting a U.S. postdoctoral position. By C. Giamberi and D. Scholes, NPA. 2004.

How to present your weaknesses? By D.G. Jensen. Science Careers November 13, 1998: http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/print/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/1998_11_13/nodoi.6324139505850382630

National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) website career planning resources: <http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/careers-24/career-planning-resources>

Not qualified for your job? Wait, you probably are. By A. Friedman. Pacific Standard Magazine. October 22, 2013 [http://www.psmag.com/navigation/business-economics/qualified-job-wait-probably-imposter-syndrome-psychology-68700/;](http://www.psmag.com/navigation/business-economics/qualified-job-wait-probably-imposter-syndrome-psychology-68700/)

Ten simple rules for selecting a postdoctoral position. By P.E. Bourne and I. Friedberg. PLOS Computational Biology 2006. Vol 2: 1327-1328.

The Current state of the postdoc experience. Higher Ed Jobs. Interview of C.J. Phillips Executive Director of NPA by A. Hibel.
<http://www.higheredjobs.com/HigherEdCareers/interviews.cfm?ID=184>

Tooling up: Conducting an authentic job search. By D.G. Jensen. Science Careers September 15, 2006:
http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/2006_09_15/nod.oi.11010453407613197841

Tooling up: The dreaded phone interview. By D.G. Jensen. Science Careers March 17, 2006:
http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/2006_03_17/nod.oi.18014245280175588167

Versatile PhD <http://versatilephd.com/about/> a website with career resources. Especially check out the PhD Career Finder, where you can select either Humanities or STEM fields and then scroll down and pick any job type and you have access to biographies of people working in those fields with different backgrounds, and even better, access to a *complete job application* of someone who successfully was hired in that area as a sample.

Online networking tools: <http://www.linkedin.com/>; <https://www.researchgate.net/>;
<http://www.academia.edu>

Exploring career trajectories: <http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs/2014/07/14/academia-industry-or-non-profit-an-interview-with-carrie-leonard#more-3855>

For academic jobs, check out On the Cutting Edge's amazing web resources associated with their highly successful workshops: <http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/careerprep/index.html>
Much of the specific content is targeted to the geosciences, but most of the information is applicable to a diversity of academic STEM jobs in the US.