Course meeting times: Mondays 3:35-4:25

Room: 241 Rosenau Hall (NUTR Kitchen)

Instructors:
June Stevens, MS, PhD
2207 McGavran-Greenberg
june_stevens@unc.edu
Office hours by appointment

Susan Smith, PhD
3104 NRI, Kannapolis
Susan_Smith@unc.edu
Office hours by appointment

Prerequisites: Doctoral student in NUTR (or Masters student with approval of the course instructors)

Credits: 1

Purpose of course: To critically evaluate literature in the field of nutrition and gain skills in presenting and discussing scientific research

Course Goals/Key Learning Objectives:
The Nutrition doctoral seminar series spans 4 semesters and is designed to develop critical thinking skills necessary for evaluation of scientific literature and for presentation of scientific research. Gaining practice participating in discussions focused on evaluation of scientific investigations and building leadership skills is also a major course focus.

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:
1. Create and deliver an effective scientific presentation using Power Point.
2. Describe study aims and key design elements of a published scientific investigation.
3. Identify how the results from a published manuscript contributes to the greater literature.
4. Describe and interpret scientific results presented in figures and tables.
5. Identify strengths and limitations of research studies related to design, methods and implementation, and evaluate the impact on study results.
6. As an audience member, ask thoughtful questions at a scientific presentation.
7. As a presenter, address and respond to audience questions regarding a scientific presentation.
8. Form a framework to apply critical standards to their own written and oral presentations of research.
Course Resources:
There is no required text for this course. Resources for the course (including handouts, papers to be discussed, course schedule, instructions for course presenters, etc.) will be posted on the NUTR 885 site within Sakai.

Grading Scale: High Pass/Pass/Low Pass/Fail

Participation Grade (All students):
Due to the importance of audience participation in this course, all students are expected to attend each class session. Instructor permission is required if a student misses more than one scheduled class session. Attendance is monitored using the honor system.

Students should come to class having read the manuscript to be presented and be ready to actively engage in discussion. Gaining practice asking questions about the material and contributing thoughtful feedback is a key goal of this class and is therefore required. The quality and consistency of class participation will contribute to the overall class grade.

Presentation Grade (Second year PhD students):
Second year students will create and deliver a presentation using Power Point that includes a summary and critique of a published research paper (see document for “Instructions for Presentation and Critique of Research Investigation” for more details). Each second year student has been assigned a full class period for their presentation and Q/A period. In addition, after the presentation, students will receive feedback from course instructors. Please allow 30 minutes for this post-class discussion on the day of your presentation.

Manuscript Peer Review Grade (First year PhD and Masters students):
Write a critical review of the paper to be presented by a second year PhD student on your assigned date (check schedule). The review should follow the structure of a typical peer-review that would be written as a reviewer for a scientific journal. Although many peer-reviews focus on areas for improvement, it will be helpful for the instructors to understand your thinking if you comment on positive features of the manuscript as well. The review should begin with a short summary of the purpose/scientific objective of the article and proceed to discuss strengths as well as areas for improvement. It is often helpful to divide the review into major and minor criticisms. Where appropriate, page and paragraph numbers should be indicated for each major and minor point made in the critique. Using the same type of judgement you would use if reviewing the paper for potential publication in a prestigious journal, finish with one of the 4 following recommendations: Accept as is/accept with minor edits/accept with major edits/reject. The review should be no more than 1 page.

The written review is due by 10 am the Friday before the scheduled date of the presentation, and the word document (with the title “NUTR885review_your name_date”) should be uploaded to Sakai, and emailed to Dr. Stevens and Dr. Smith with the subject line “NUTR885review_your name”.

Grading

Class participation (all students, 50%)
The instructors will evaluate each student on their classroom participation on a scale of 0-5 (5=highest), based on the consistency and quality of participation.
Presentation (second year PhD students only, 50%)
Presentation grades will be based on 6 components:
1. Background, relevance: background information, purpose of study, importance in the field, study question and hypothesis
2. Explanation of methods: study design, target population, exclusion/inclusion criteria, exposure definition, outcomes, statistical analysis, subgroup analysis
3. Summary of results and discussion: results of statistical analysis, summary of discussion and author conclusions
4. Critical evaluation of the manuscript: strengths and limitations of the study (including sample size, study population appropriate for question, quality of measures, potential for bias and generalizability), evaluation of author conclusions, presentation of the student’s conclusions, consideration of further studies/next steps, impact of study findings
5. Ability to answer questions: answers logically, demonstrates an understanding of the manuscript, ability to consider extensions of the findings
6. Presentation quality and delivery: presentation is orderly and logical, slides are visually appealing, and talk covers relevant points; talk is delivered with confidence, appropriate rate and volume of speech, and good transitions

Component #4 will determine 50 points, with the remaining components scored at 10 points each for a total of 50 points.

Manuscript peer review (first year PhD and Masters students only, 50%)
Manuscript peer reviews will be graded on their accuracy, thoughtfulness, and comprehensiveness. Students should include a succinct, one paragraph summary of the scientific objective and overall strengths and weaknesses of the study. This paragraph should be followed by a numbered list of criticisms, including reasonable suggestions to resolve each identified weakness. The critique usually focuses on methods but can vary depending on individual studies. Criticisms should be constructive and the suggestions should be within realistic expectations of what can actually be accomplished scientifically. For example, it may not be feasible to “perfectly” answer the question posed with current technology and possible levels of funding. End the document by giving theThis document should be no more than one page in length.

Honor Code:
Students are encouraged to freely discuss their presentations and written peer reviews with other students and faculty. Course activities follow UNC honor system guidelines and expectations of academic integrity.

Syllabus Changes:
The instructors reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including presentation dates when unforeseen circumstances occur. These changes will be announced as early as possible so that the students can adjust their schedules.
Time Table:

If this class achieves the total enrollment expected, we will have student presentations at 10 of the classes scheduled.

Second Year PhD Students: If you are interested in giving one of the first two presentations, please contact Dr. Smith immediately to volunteer. We ask that by January 10 all students who will present send both Dr. Stevens and Dr. Smith an email giving your 1st and 2nd choices for presentation date. We will try to accommodate your request if possible. We will send out the schedule as soon as it is completed.

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Oral presentations</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/15/18</td>
<td>No Class - MLK Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/22/18</td>
<td>Introduction –</td>
<td>How to ask a smart question. By Snyder</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1/29/18</td>
<td>Lecture – Guidelines for publications</td>
<td>See 3 email attachments</td>
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<td>2/ 5/18</td>
<td><strong>First Student Presentation</strong></td>
<td>Reading to be posted on Sakai</td>
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<td><strong>No Class – Spring Break</strong></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>4/16/18</td>
<td><strong>Final Presentation</strong></td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>4/23/18</td>
<td><strong>Wrap-up</strong></td>
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