



**PCB 7922 JOURNAL COLLOQUIUM:  
THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS - A CHALLENGE FOR EARLY-CAREER SCIENTISTS**

**SPRING 2017**

**COURSE REGISTRATION**

1 credit, departmentally controlled

Request registration with Eliana Kampf ([elianak@ufl.edu](mailto:elianak@ufl.edu))

**MEETING TIME AND PLACE**

Wednesdays, from 1:00 to 2:00 pm, beginning January 4, place TBD.

**COURSE SUMMARY**

Peer review is a very important element of the process of research. However, this process is not intuitive and requires training and experience. Surprisingly, there is little training and discussion of the best practices of the peer review process in order to ensure that early-career researchers are able to efficiently provide a good review.

Many graduate programs don't have courses on how to review papers on their curriculum. Instead, the young scientists have to learn how to review scientific papers under the guidance of mentors, or simply by trial and error, which is not the easiest or most systematic method.

The goal of this journal club is to help demystify peer review of scientific manuscripts by reviewing some relevant studies and describing some helpful guidelines of this process.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Introduce students to the process of peer review.
- Gain familiarity in best practices of the peer review process.
- Practice critical thinking in reviewing scientific manuscripts.

**INSTRUCTORS**

Matias Kirst, Ph.D.

[mkirst@ufl.edu](mailto:mkirst@ufl.edu)

352- 846-0900

Office hours on an individual basis by appointment

Kelly Balmant, Ph.D.

[balmant@ufl.edu](mailto:balmant@ufl.edu)

352-273-8193

Office hours on an individual basis by appointment

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

DATE	TOPIC	INSTRUCTOR(S)
01/04	Overview of the course	Kelly Balmant and Matias Kirst
01/11	What is a peer review?	Kelly Balmant and Matias Kirst
01/18	Bias and Anonymity in the Peer Review Process	Kelly Balmant and Matias Kirst
01/25	What do editors want from reviewers?	Kelly Balmant and Matias Kirst
02/01	How to deal with plagiarism	Kelly Balmant and Matias Kirst
02/08	The issue of fake reviewers	Kelly Balmant and Matias Kirst
02/15	The peer-review scam - The case of John Bohannon	Kelly Balmant and Matias Kirst
02/22	Retraction of Scientific papers	Kelly Balmant and Matias Kirst
03/01	Is peer review in crisis?	Kelly Balmant and Matias Kirst
03/15	The future of peer review process – Is there a need for post-publication peer-review in plant science?	Kelly Balmant and Matias Kirst
03/22	Some words from a scientific journal's editor	To be announced
03/29	The other side – how to reply to reviewers comments	Kelly Balmant and Matias Kirst
04/05	Let's get down to business	Kelly Balmant and Matias Kirst
04/12	Presentation	Kelly Balmant and Matias Kirst
04/19	Presentation	Kelly Balmant and Matias Kirst

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Students are expected to fully engage in all activities and assignments. Students must participate in class discussions and come prepared with questions. Active participation is required. It is not enough to just listen.

Students are also required to prepare and present a peer-review of a scientific paper.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings. If you must miss a class, please inform the instructor in advance. Two or more absences from the class will constitute a failing grade for the course unless there are clear extenuating circumstances.

## **GRADING**

Grades will be assigned based on quality of presentations (50%), attendance and active participation in discussions (50%). Information on current UF grading policies can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

## **PROFESSIONALISM STATEMENT**

Scientists are professionals guided by specific values and behaviors. These values and behaviors include respect, cooperation, active participation, intellectual inquiry, integrity, timeliness, and attendance. In addition to your performance on the graded materials, you will be evaluated on your growth as a professional. Professional characteristics include punctuality, attendance, participation, collegial attitude, and willingness to help others learn. Your attendance at all classes is a firm expectation, but if you are ill or an emergency occurs, contact your instructor PRIOR TO the scheduled class time.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: *"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."* You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: *"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."*

It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/SCCR/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

## **SOFTWARE USE**

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

## **CAMPUS HELPING RESOURCES**

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

- *University Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575, [www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc)*
  - Counseling Services
  - Groups and Workshops
  - Outreach and Consultation
  - Self-Help Library
  - Training Programs
  - Community Provider Database
- *Career Resource Center, First Floor JWRU, 392-1601, [www.crc.ufl.edu](http://www.crc.ufl.edu)*

## **SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

- *Dean of Students, 001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc)*