PHYSL 600 - Colloqia in Physiology

Course Manager:
Klaus Ballanyi, PhD
Professor of Physiology
Medical Sciences Building 7-50
Email: klaus.ballanyi@ualberta.ca
Phone: 780 492-8235

Summary: This course will provide an opportunity for PhD and MSc students to study, present and critique publications in areas relevant to their own research, but not directly related to it.

Prerequisites: This course will provide an opportunity primarily for (provisional) PhD and MSc students in the Department of Physiology. It is also open to students from other departments, depending on availability. The maximum student number is 12.

Grading: on a pass/fail basis.

Time and Location: weekly in MSB 7-53 (14:00-16:50)

Details: Each student will study, present and critique 2 publications in areas relevant to their own research, but not directly related to it. This means, for example, that the papers can deal with methodologies to be used in the research of the student, but in a different topic area. Or, the topic is close to the research of the student, but the methodologies differ.

The first publication should be rather short (up to 6 figures) and will be shown as in a 10 min PowerPoint slide presentation at a scientific meeting. The second paper should contain 8-15 figures (including supplemental web material) and will be shown as in a 30 min PowerPoint slide presentation of a prospective PhD thesis research project such as typically preceeds a candidacy. Students may wish to choose instead of the second paper a published PhD or MSc thesis.

Students will learn to select the most important data for the presentation of either type of paper. This might mean that complex figures are simplified or relabeled using PowerPoint or Photoshop tools. For each presentation, the other students will have read the paper to be able to contribute to discussing its content after the presentation. Presenters will also receive feedback on stylistic features of their presentations, such as speed of talking, delivery, engaging the audience, and design of individual PowerPoint figures and the entire presentation. For example, it will be discussed whether the hypotheses and/or experimental procedures presented were clear.

As the major aim of this course, students will learn how to communicate effectively the scientific content of a publication in a clearcut PowerPoint presentation to judge what were the most important data in that work and to critically discuss the scientific content. This, in turn, will enable them to apply these strategies to identify the most important data of their own research and present them to a scientific audience.