

SLUkurs

Syllabus

PFG0058 PhD Writing Seminar, 3.0 credits

Syllabus approved

2018-01-18

Subjects

Forest Management

Education cycle

Third cycle

Grading scale

Pass / Failed

The requirements for attaining different grades are described in the course assessment criteria which are contained in a supplement to the course syllabus. Current information on assessment criteria shall be made available at the start of the course.

Language

English

Prior knowledge

Admission to a PhD program. Postdocs are also welcome. All enrolled students should have some writing project (manuscript, proposal, kappa, etc.) that they are actively working on.

Objective, including learning outcomes

To provide students with an opportunity to benefit from mutual feedback to make progress on their own pressing writing projects and build a supportive community

around the writing process. How to produce clear and concise scientific writing, including organization of a scientific paper, producing compelling arguments and narratives around research results, structuring sentences and choosing words to communicate effectively with the widest possible audience. Understanding the scientific publishing process, including how to write and respond to peer reviews. How to write scientific proposals.

Content

Each meeting will include a brief lecture, discussion, or student presentations. Most meetings will also involve a short (typically ~30 minute) out-of-class assignment to promote creative thinking about the writing process or practice newly discussed skills. Most meetings will also have a ~1 hour round-table discussion of one student's ongoing writing project. Each student will have their work critiqued during one class meeting. Detailed contents can be seen in the syllabus below. Students will be able to (1) explain and describe the parts of a scientific paper and organize their own work into the relevant sections, (2) structure a compelling argument about why a question or hypothesis is interesting and why particular results address it, (3) understand how to structure sentences and choose words for maximum clarity, including knowing when technical language should and should not be used, (4) write and respond to peer reviews, and (5) write a basic research proposal.

Requirements for examination

Pass/fail. It is understood that PhD students will have some scheduling conflicts, and 100% attendance may not be possible. A grade of pass will require attendance of 80% of class meetings and completion of assignments. Attendance of less than 80% of meetings is possible, for instance if students have fieldwork or other scientific activities that cannot be rescheduled, but must obtain prior approval from the coordinator and complete a substitute writing assignment about the material covered in the missed classes, to be agreed upon in advance.

Additional information

The meetings will take place every 1-2 weeks between January and May 2018 and will be scheduled to maximize student attendance. The exact number of meetings will depend on the number of students enrolled to make sure each student has a full session for critique of their own writing. The goal is for 10-12 students to take the course. Priority goes to PhD students at the forest faculty. Learning by doing. Most learning will take place by practicing the tasks discussed in class.

Some activities will push students beyond the normal bounds of scientific writing to better understand its reasonable limits. Lectures will be minimal and serve primarily to introduce students to new topics they may not yet be familiar with (how to write a review, what editors look for in manuscripts, etc.).

Responsible department

Department of Southern Swedish Forest Research Centre