

Pathology 827- Research Project in Pathology – 2014-2015 - Coordinator – Peter Greer greerp@queensu.ca;

This course is taken by all MSc students or those directly entering into the PhD program. Exceptions may be made with permission of the Graduate Program Committee. The course will normally be completed in the second term, so **students beginning in September should register for the course in January, the beginning of their second term.** In exceptional circumstances, where English proficiency or academic background might be an issue (such as the need to take remedial course work), it may be extended beyond two terms. The student and supervisor will first establish a supervisory committee consisting of the supervisor and two other faculty members; neither of which needs to hold a primary Pathology appointment. The supervisory committee members and the course coordinator will evaluate the required course work. **The coordinator (Peter Greer) and Graduate Assistant (Mark Andrews) must be officially informed of the composition of the supervisory committee by the student by the beginning of the 4th week of study.**

The first part of the course will involve **three essays, each based upon a key research paper (not a review article) provided to the student by the supervisor. These research papers should highlight central themes related to the research program of the students thesis work. Supervisors are requested to provide each of these three papers six weeks prior to the respective essay due date (see below).** The student will evaluate each research paper, read the related literature and write a concise summary essay for each of these research papers using the **format of a News and Views article in Nature.** Please read some of these in Nature to get a clear idea of the style and format. The essay should consist of a **concise summary paragraph**, followed an **overview of the field**, a **brief description and critical assessment** of the work, and a discussion of its **relevance/significance** to the field and what it means in terms of **future directions.** Ideally, a **concise figure** capturing the key points of the work should be included. The essay will be a **maximum of 5 double spaced pages** (Times Roman, 12 font, 1 inch margins all around; not including figures and references). Be sure to properly cite the primary literature using the format of **Cancer Research** or a comparable format which **includes titles in the cited literature.**

On the **due dates for these three essays (Oct 27, Dec 8, and Jan 19)**, the student will provide **hard copies of the essays and associated research papers** to their supervisor and supervisory committee members; and they will **email an electronic file copy of the essay (in Word, not PDF; figures may be sent as a PDF) and PDF files of the research article to the course coordinator (greerp@queensu.ca).** **Late assignments will be penalized.** The coordinator will email each member of the supervisory committee a **“Path 827 essay evaluation form” (see attached).** Committee members will send their completed evaluations to the coordinator, who will tabulate the marks and send the feedback and an averaged mark back to the student. In addition to carefully considering feedback provided in these evaluations, students are encouraged to discuss these research articles and their essays with their supervisor and supervisory committee members to solicit feedback to assist in refining their writing skills in subsequent assignments. The **objective of these essays includes developing skills in scientific writing and critical evaluation of published research papers**, as well as beginning to **build a bibliography of relevant literature to draw on in future writing commitments** (eg. research proposal, mini-master, comprehensive, manuscripts and thesis).

The second component of the course is a **written research proposal and oral presentation.** The ideas for this proposal will be developed in consultation with the supervisor. Students may solicit verbal feedback from their supervisors on drafts of this proposal, **but supervisors should not edit these drafts.** In the case of students intending to graduate with an MSc degree, it is encouraged that this proposal be developed in such a way that it will form the foundation of the students' eventual thesis research. However, for direct entry PhD students, or those intending to convert to the PhD stream, it is understood that this proposal might be largely an exercise, and may or may not closely conform to their eventual PhD thesis research project. **The written research proposal is due March 9.** It is to be written in the form of a grant proposal and will contain the following sections: 1) One page summary with hypothesis and bullet point aims; 2) Background, concluding with restated hypothesis and experimental aims; 3) Detailed experimental aims and approaches, including preliminary data and discussion of observed or expected outcomes and potential caveats; and 4) Significance and future perspectives. The **maximum length of this document will be 10 double spaced pages** (Times Roman, 12 font, 1 inch margins all around; not including figures and references). **An oral presentation of this proposal will take place in late November.** The student will give a **20 minute** oral presentation structured in the format intended for their Department seminar. The presentation will be followed by a question and discussion period of approximately one hour.

Students will be evaluated on their three essays (20% each), the written research proposal (20%) and on their research proposal presentation/discussion (20%).

Path 827 essay evaluation form

Student: _____

Email address: _____

Due date: (Oct 27, Dec 8, Jan 19) _____ **Date submitted:** _____

Essay # (1, 2, 3) _____

Essay title: _____

Supervisory committee members are asked to provide critical feedback to the student to assist in refining and improving writing skills. Please use this form to comment on the indicated points and return by email to Peter Greer at (greerp@queensu.ca). I will forward the comments and averaged mark to the student.

Summary paragraph (Comment on how well the student has captured the content and significance of the paper in a concise “abstract like” opening paragraph):

Overview (Comment on the student’s description of the background and relevance of the primary publication to the research field; as well as their integration of these finding with current knowledge in the field):

Description (Comment on accuracy of the student’s description of the research findings and the conclusions of the publication):

Critical assessment (Comment on the student’s critical discussion about the findings and conclusions reached by the authors):

Significance and Future Perspectives (Comment on the student’s demonstrated understanding of the significance of the paper and the next most important questions to consider in light of these findings):

Mark out of 100:

Please return completed form to Peter Greer greerp@queensu.ca