

Streamlined Syllabus: BIOL 420: How to Apply to Graduate School

Instructor: Dr. Paulyn Cartwright

1 credit hour

Fall 2023

Course Description

This course is designed to provide structure and a timeline for the completion of competitive graduate school applications.

Course Learning Outcomes

During the process, students will:

1. Develop a graduate school application with a timeline of completed activities.
2. Select graduate programs best suited for their interests and background.
3. Identify letter of recommendation writers and techniques to manage the timely submission of the letters.
4. Write compelling grad school admissions statements (e.g. personal statement, research statement).
5. Practice campus interviews.

Course Requirements

Active class participation is an integral part of this course. The course format centers around class discussions, and attendance is required for all classes. Excused absences include illness, injury, or family emergencies, should be cleared with me in advance if possible.

Written assignments: All written assignments are worth 10 points. The assignment should be submitted typed as MS Word documents unless otherwise specified.

Write-Ins: There will be three “write-ins” during this course. These are in-class free-writing times for you to work on your graduate school applications. I will be present during all of the write-ins to answer questions, and other ODST faculty/staff may also be available. You will get the most out of the write-ins if you have a specific goal in mind at the beginning (i.e. know what you want to get out of each session and have the necessary materials available when class starts).

Presentations: You will give a brief powerpoint presentation about the graduate programs you have chosen to apply for, and you will receive feedback from your peers.

Mock interviews: The final activity of the course will consist of a series of mock grad school interviews, where students will take turns interviewing one-on-one with KU faculty/staff volunteers.

Evaluation Criteria with Grading Scale

Your grade in the course will be determined by the percentage of points that you accumulate and will follow the standard scale: A = 90% - 100%, B = 80% - 89%, C = 70% - 79%, etc. The percentage of points will be assigned in the following way: Writing Assignments (4 total) 40%, Class presentations 10%, Class participation* 50% *(Including attendance)

Course Calendar

Date	Topic	Homework Assignment
Aug 21	Introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course structure and timeline - Elements of the graduate school application - Overview and timeline of admissions process 	
Aug 28	Identifying Graduate Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The “graduate programs spreadsheet” - Reaching out to prospective mentors - Factors to weigh when choosing schools 	Assignment 1: Fill in the posted document describing your career goals, what you are looking for in a graduate program. Due next week
Sep 11	Crafting a Curriculum Vitae (CV) Soliciting Rec Letters	Assignment 2: CV draft
Sep 18	Faculty Panel: <i>Putting together a competitive graduate program application</i>	Assignment 3: fill in grad schools spreadsheet
Sep 25	Writing a Compelling Personal Statement	Assignment 4: Personal statement first draft
Oct 2	Grad Program Presentations I	
Oct 8	Grad Program Presentations II	
Oct 23	Other Application Materials: research statement, diversity statement, phone interview	
Oct 30	Write In #1: Dr. Cartwright and ODST staff available to answer student questions	
Nov 6	Write In #2: Dr. Cartwright and ODST staff available to answer student questions	
Nov 13	Write In #3: Dr. Cartwright and ODST staff available to answer student questions	
Nov 20	Navigating Campus Interviews	
Dec 4	Mock Interviews with Dr. Cartwright and ODST staff	