

updated 9/22/20

## **First Year Graduate Seminar, EARTH 531 (1 credit) – Fall 2020**

**Instructor:** Dr. Naomi Levin - Associate Chair of Graduate Studies  
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**Time and class meeting mode:** 9:00-10:20am; meetings will either hybrid (both in person and zoom options) or fully remote. Students can participate in-person or via Zoom.

**In-Person:** outside (1st 3 weeks), then in NUB 1528 lecture hall

**Zoom link:** <https://umich.zoom.us/j/95261668694>, Meeting ID: 952 6166 8694

**Course Objectives** This course is intended to be an introduction to the department, graduate school and a launch pad for your professional career. Graduate education gives you the opportunity to develop new skills, which can be broadly applied to multiple career paths. In this course, we'll establish basics in several "core" areas of competency and break down these topics into a series of skills and action steps in order to provide you with a strong foundation on which to build your graduate career. See end of syllabus and slides for examples of these core areas and topics that fall in each.

**Class schedule:** Many of these core areas require overlapping skill sets and areas of competency. Rather than proceeding through the topics "in order", we'll start with some foundation topics, like expectations, developing good research habits, mentoring needs, and proposal writing. We will review practical knowledge about the ins and out of grad school, including a review of the formal requirements and regulations. Near the end of the course, we will touch on networking, time-management, mental health, work-life balance and getting to know the department. Throughout the course there will be visits from faculty, graduate students and staff. The course schedule will be updated on [this google sheet](#).

**Assignments:** Assignments will include reading, writing, participating in discussion and short oral presentations. We will also have some out-of-class opportunities, such as meeting with alumni and attending certain professional development seminars that will also be required by this class. All assignments will be submitted through Canvas and are due 9am the morning of the next class except those for which you have all semester to complete. The assignments are intended to help scaffold the work of your graduate studies and be seen as a complement to your research and other coursework.

**Late assignments will not be accepted.** Exceptions to this policy for extenuating circumstances require approval of the instructor.

**Grading and Attendance:** This class is graded S/U (satisfactory/unsatisfactory). Grades are determined from the percentage of assignments completed. You will get 1 point for each assignment completed. You must do "B" level work to receive a passing grade in graduate school, which means that assignments and attendance needs to be completed at an 85% or above. Exceptions to this policy for extenuating circumstances require approval of the instructor.

Attendance at every meeting is required. If you need to miss a class, contact me.

**Canvas** (<https://canvas.umich.edu>) This course will use the Canvas website for class announcements, posting of assignments, the syllabus, links to presentations, readings, and any other course-related materials. Familiarize yourselves with the Canvas system and ensure that your Canvas notifications are turned on so you are notified when announcements are posted.

**Academic Integrity:** All Rackham students are expected to take personal responsibility for understanding and observing the following standards of academic and professional behavior that safeguard the integrity of the academic mission of the University. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the policies therein, which can be reviewed at the following website:

<http://www.rackham.umich.edu/current-students/policies/academic-policies/section11>

**Student Recordings:** This course is synchronous and will not be recorded. Students are prohibited from recording/distributing any class activity without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

**Accommodations:** If you need or think you may need accommodations for reasons relating to learning differences and/or learning disabilities, physical disabilities, religious or cultural practices, or other reasons recognized by the office of Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) (<https://ssd.umich.edu>), please reach out to Naomi. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation (VISA) form. Please present this form to Naomi at the beginning of the term, or at least two weeks prior to the need for the accommodation.

### **Health and Safety in the Classroom and on Campus**

Your safety, health, and well-being, and that of our community is my priority this semester. If you encounter difficulties during the semester that make it difficult to attend or participate in the assignments, please reach out as soon as you identify the need and we will work together on accommodations.

Our entire community is responsible for protecting the collective health of all members by being mindful and respectful in carrying out the guidelines laid out in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#) and the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#). Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#). All students are expected to adhere to the required safety measures and guidelines of the State of Michigan and the University of Michigan, including sanitizing their work areas, maintaining 6 feet or more of personal distance, wearing a face covering that covers the mouth and nose in all public spaces, and not coming to class when ill or in quarantine. This course will limit group gatherings while being thoughtful about classroom activities and exercises that require collaboration.

Any student who is not able and willing to comply with campus safety measures for this hybrid course should participate in the course remotely. For additional information refer to the LSA Student Commitment to the Wolverine Culture of Care and the OSCR Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities on the OSCR website.

For up to date information on COVID resources relevant to our department, including what do if you feel sick or have been in contact with someone who has been sick, see the [EARTH DEPT COVID RESOURCE PAGE](#).

If you have concerns about compliance with COVID-19 guidelines, you can [make a report here](#), anonymously.

**Virtual learning environment expectations:** I expect you to join class on time and attend with your mic muted, except for when you are speaking. I encourage you to join the class with your video on to facilitate more interactions if you can and feel comfortable. When you are projecting your video please do in a space that is not distracting or use a virtual background to help achieve this. Please limit your phone and computer use during class time to class related activities (note taking, completing assignments, etc.) and that social media is not used during class.

**Harassment Policy:** Please refer to [this website](#) for an up to date Discrimination and Harassment policy for the University of Michigan.

**Student Mental Health and Wellbeing:** If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 734-764-8312 or <https://caps.umich.edu/>. For a listing of other mental health resources available to students both on and off campus, visit <http://umich.edu/~mhealth/>

**Statement of Inclusion and the Classroom Community:** It is my goal to foster a strong and respectful community through our interactions and this requires participation from all of us. I want to build our class as a space where you will be treated with respect. I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this cohort (and class) are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every member of the class. Any discriminatory statements or behavior that threatens our community will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

## **CORE AREAS of FOCUS**

### **PROFESSIONALISM**

- Grad school expectations
- Self-evaluation (strengths, areas to develop)
- Goal setting
- Time management
- Deadlines
- Cultivating colleagues
- Network
- Job/internship hunting
- Imposter syndrome
- Self-care
- Work-Life Balance

### **ADVANCED SUBJECT MATTER**

- Building from coursework to research work
- Skill development (writing workshops, statistics and computing short courses, etc)
- Preparing for candidacy exam
- Self-teaching
- Information gathering
- Information management

### **RESEARCH**

- Scientific design and thinking
- Identification of questions/problems
- Articulate ways to address research ?s
- Information gathering
- Information management
- Writing

### **LEADERSHIP**

- Research collaboration
- Community engagement
- GSI
- Mentoring
- Professional ethics (EARTH 495, Niemi W21)
- Disciplinary and department leadership
- Supervising undergrads
- Outreach

### **COMMUNICATION**

- Writing skills
  - abstracts
  - proposals
  - scientific papers
  - qualifying exams (prelims)
- Speaking skills
  - presentations
  - teaching
  - elevator pitches
  - public interactions
- General communication skills (email!)
- Networking (including social media presence and webpages)

### **COMMUNITY**

- Geoclub
- Finding your people
- Peer support and learning
- Intellectual communities
- Being part of a safe, inclusive space

### **PROJECT MANAGEMENT / LOGISTICS**

- Budgets
- Schedules
- Stakeholders
- Organization
- Fundraising (grants)
- Coordinating people
- Event planning
- Safety (lab safety training, developing a field safety plan, safety at Camp Davis)
- Administrative tasks – computer support, reimbursements and travel support (Concur, travel, IT support)