'396' Undergraduate Research Project Application Form

Version: 200603

Office for Undergraduate Research in Science
Tel.: 514-398-5964 / Fax: 514-398-8102 / Dawson Hall, Room 211
Email: victor.chisholm@mcgill.ca Web: www.mcgill.ca/science/ours/

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS

- **All fields are required, unless indicated otherwise.**
- Download and print this form. Complete Section C and sign.
- See "How students can apply" instructions in Section B.
- Your supervisor or department will tell you if you are selected for this project. If so, you will receive a code to register for a '396' course on MINERVA.

SECTION A: SUPERVISOR INFORMATION

Name: Linda Cooper
Email: Linda.Cooper@mcgill.ca
Phone: 514-398-8545
Website:
Supervisor's Unit: Redpath Museum, Faculty of Science
Course Number: REDM396

SECTION B: PROJECT INFORMATION

Term: Fall 2006
Project start & end dates: Sept. 5 - Dec. 5, 2006

Project title: Developing guidelines for clear writing of scientific manuscripts

Project description:

With the increasing specialization in all scientific domains, many published research articles are difficult to understand – for those in the field and non-specialists alike. What are the issues that confound the scientific literature; is it the assumptions that writers make about what their readers know, or lapses in logic, the overuse of specialized terminology, or poor editing techniques?

To address whether there has been a consistent and general loss of understanding in the scientific literature, the student researcher will apply criteria for clear writing in science developed by Prof. Cooper and others. Using these criteria, the student will analyze papers from *The Journal of Neuroscience*. She will identify the main factors that confuse readers and prepare guidelines to improve scientific writing. In so doing, the student will learn the language of science, how professional scientists communicate with each other, in particular, how neuroscientists communicate. Neuroscience is chosen as the model discipline because of its highly interdisciplinary nature and because the need to communicate across sub-specialties is critical. This project is flexible, and the student researcher will be encouraged to develop her own insights into the parameters that measure confused writing in science as well as possible solutions.

Prerequisites: 1 term completed at McGill + CGPA ≥ 3.0; or permission of instructor.

Grading scheme: Project Proposal: 10% ; Interim Reports: 30% ; Final Report: 60%

Other: I can be reached by email or by phone.

Status: Mark with an x. This project is…
[ ] Open to applicants
[ ] Already taken; no more positions available this term
[x] Taken, but contact me for other possible projects this term

Ethics, safety, and training Which of the following, if any, is involved? Mark with an x.
[ ] Animal subjects
[ ] Human subjects
[ ] Biohazardous substances
[ ] Radioactive materials
[ ] Handling chemicals
[ ] Using lasers

For undergraduate students, ethics and safety compliance is the supervisor's responsibility.

How students can apply: Bring this application form and your advising transcript to me during office hours.

SECTION C: STUDENT INFORMATION. (1) PRINT LEGIBLY AND SIGN. (2) SEE "HOW STUDENTS CAN APPLY" IN SECTION B.

Name:
McGill ID:
Email:
Phone:
Program:
Level (circle one): U0 / U1 / U2 / U3

I have not applied for another 396 course in this term.

Student signature:
Date:

SECTION D: APPROVALS. (1) PRINT NAMES & SIGN. (2) NOTIFY OFFICE FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH IN SCIENCE. (3) GIVE STUDENT CODE TO REGISTER FOR COURSE ON MINERVA.

Supervisor: Linda Cooper
Date: 8/14/06

Unit Chair, Director, or designate - I certify that this project conforms to departmental requirements for 396 courses.
Date: