

BCHM 39000 Professional Development Seminar
CRN 50724
Syllabus
Fall 2025
1 cr. Hr.

INSTRUCTOR: Heidi Fornes

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of this course is to help biochemistry students with professional development and career planning. The course will explore career possibilities for biochemists. In the context of professional development, students will create a resume and cover letter or personal statement, participate in a mock interview, and develop a career plan.

DEPARTMENTAL LEARNING OUTCOMES ADDRESSED BY THIS COURSE

BCHM 39000 students will understand the contributions of our discipline to society, including improvements to medicine, agriculture, the economy and the environment.

BCHM 39000 students will acquire information literacy: the ability to locate, evaluate, and utilize information in the disciplines of biochemistry and molecular biology that is required for research, data analysis, and communication

TEXTBOOK

No textbook is required, but the CCO Handbook (<https://www.cco.purdue.edu/Students/WhatWeOffer?tab=CCOHandbook>) is an excellent free resource!

LECTURE TIME AND PLACE

All lectures will be recorded, and will be available for students who miss a class or who would like to review a lecture. They can be downloaded at <http://www.itap.purdue.edu/learning/tools/boilercast/>

LEARNING RESOURCES, TECHNOLOGY AND TESTS

- **Tutoring support**
The [Academic Success Center](#), located in Wiley Hall, Room C215, provides a variety of proactive, practical and approachable academic support services for undergraduate students. Visit [Ask a Librarian](#) to connect with helpful resources and services provided by the Purdue Libraries and School of Information Studies for course assignments and projects.
- **Brightspace learning management system**
Access the course via Purdue's Brightspace learning management system. Begin with the Start Here tab, which offers further insight to the course and

how you can be successful in it. It is strongly suggested that you explore and become familiar not only with the site navigation, but also with content and resources available for this course. See the Student Services widget on the campus homepage for resources such as Technology Help, Academic Help, Campus Resources, and Protect Purdue.

The syllabus for the course, lecture notes, and grading keys for quizzes and exams will be available via the Purdue University Brightspace site at:

<https://purdue.brightspace.com>

OBTAINING EXTRA HELP

Ms. Fornes will be available to answer your questions immediately after class or during office hours by appointment (arranged by e-mail or at <https://purdue.campus.eab.com/home>). Alternatively, you can submit questions by e-mail.

ASSESSMENT

The grading for this course will be as follows:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Resume (draft)	75
Resume revised	25
Personal Statement or Cover letter (draft)	75
Revised Resume and Personal Statement or Cover letter	25
Interview reflection	75
Career development plan	75
<u>Class participation</u>	<u>50</u>
Total	400

There is a 10% penalty for late work.

The cutoff values for letter grades are as follows:

A>=93%, A-=90, B+=86, B=83, B-=80, C+=76, C=73, C-=70, D+=66, D=63, D-=60, F<=59

The final date to withdraw from the course with a W for Fall 2025 is Tuesday, November 25.

EXTRA CREDIT

Extra credit (maximum 20 points) may be obtained by attending a career or grad/professional school fair and submitting a one-page report on companies/universities represented and providing proof in the form of business cards or fliers that you interacted with at least three representatives. Reports must be turned in **no later than 2 weeks after** the career/grad fair that is attended. Recommended fairs are:

- Lilly Day – Wednesday, August 28 Memorial Mall and Stewart Center;
<https://www.opp.purdue.edu/events/2025/lilly-day-at-purdue>
- Industrial Roundtable - September 9, 10 and 11 from 9 AM to 4 PM Memorial Mall

- Ag Career Fair - October 7, 10 AM to 3 PM France Cordova Recreational Sports Center
- Purdue Life Science and Pharma Career Fair – September 15 from 2 PM to 6PM. PMU ballrooms

-The full calendar of career fairs can be found on the CCO website at:
<https://www.cco.purdue.edu/Calendar>

CLASS PARTICIPATION

As a seminar course, your participation in discussions is critical. Therefore, each week there will be a participation assignment worth 2 points for a total of 30 points. The assignment will consist of short questions about that week's presentation. It will be due before class the following week. The remaining 20 participation points will be earned by "hosting" one of our guest speakers by providing an introduction or asking a well-thought-out question during the presentation. Each student will be assigned to a group and week for "hosting" a speaker.

ATTENDANCE

This course follows the [University Academic Regulations regarding class attendance](#), which state that students are expected to be present for every meeting of the classes in which they are enrolled. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class and lateness will be noted. When conflicts or absences can be anticipated, such as for many University-sponsored activities and religious observations, you should inform me of the situation as far in advance as possible. For unanticipated or emergency absences when advance notification is not possible, contact me as soon as possible by email or phone. For absences that do not fall under excused absence regulations (see below), this course follows the following procedures:

1. Do not come to class if you are feeling ill, but DO email me at hforbes@purdue.edu with the subject line: BCHM 390 absence. I do not need details about your symptoms. Just let me know you are feeling ill and cannot come to class. If it is an emergency situation, please follow the University regulations on emergent medical care (see below).
2. Unless it falls under the University excused absence regulations (see below), any work due should be submitted on time via our course Brightspace.
3. If that day's class involves assessed work such as a test or presentation, you and I will plan if and how you can make up the work, following the assignment guidelines. This plan must be done before the next class period, so again, email me immediately when you know that you will miss class.
4. The most important consideration in any absence is how it will affect your achievement of the assignment objectives and the course learning outcomes.

For cases that fall under **excused absence regulations**, you or your representative should contact or go to the [Office of the Dean of Students \(ODOS\) website](#) to complete appropriate forms for instructor notification. Under academic regulations, excused absences may be granted by ODOS for cases of grief/bereavement, military service, jury duty, parenting leave, or emergent medical care. The processes are detailed, so plan ahead.

USES OF AI IN THE COURSE

Unless otherwise directed, students are not permitted to use artificial intelligence (AI) language models, such as ChatGPT, to complete assignments. Students who use AI in

any of their assignments in this course will be deemed to be in violation of the academic integrity expectations for this course. Violations can include a failing grade on the assignment in question or a failing grade for the course. All suspected incidents of academic dishonesty will also be referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for further review of the student's status with the University as described below. **There will be times in the course where we will explore AI tools and how they can be used effectively and appropriately.**

PROTECT PURDUE

Any student who has substantial reason to believe that another person is threatening the safety of others by not complying with Protect Purdue protocols is encouraged to report the behavior to and discuss the next steps with their instructor. Students also have the option of reporting the behavior to the [Office of the Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). See also [Purdue University Bill of Student Rights](#) and the Violent Behavior Policy under University Resources in Brightspace.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated in any course offered by the Department of Biochemistry. Information on Purdue's policies with regard to academic misconduct can be found at http://www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/student_conduct/regulations.html

Any incidence of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. Academic misconduct may result in disciplinary sanctions including expulsion, suspension, probated suspension, disciplinary probation, and/or educational sanctions. In addition, such misconduct will result in punitive grading such as:

- receiving a lower or failing grade on the assignment, or
- assessing a lower or failing grade for the course

Punitive grading decisions will be made after consultation with the Office of the Dean of Students. Please note reported incidences of academic misconduct go on record for reference by other instructors. Further, a record of academic misconduct is likely to influence how current/future situations are handled.

To provide you with an unambiguous definition of academic misconduct, the following text has been excerpted from "Academic Integrity: A Guide for Students", written by Stephen Akers, Ph.D., Executive Associate Dean of Students (1995, Revised 1999, 2003), and published by the Office of the Dean of Students in cooperation with Purdue Student Government, Schleman Hall of Student Services, Second Floor, 656 Oval Drive West Lafayette, IN 47907-2050.

"Purdue prohibits "dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty." [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, *Student Regulations*] Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that "the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest." [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972]

More specifically, the following are a few examples of academic dishonesty which have been discovered at Purdue University.

- substituting on an exam for another student

- substituting in a course for another student
- paying someone else to write a paper and submitting it as one's own work
- giving or receiving answers by use of signals during an exam
- copying with or without the other person's knowledge during an exam
- doing class assignments for someone else
- plagiarizing published material, class assignments, or lab reports
- turning in a paper that has been purchased from a commercial research firm or obtained from the internet
- padding items of a bibliography
- obtaining an unauthorized copy of a test in advance of its scheduled administration
- using unauthorized notes during an exam
- collaborating with other students on assignments when it is not allowed
- obtaining a test from the exam site, completing and submitting it later
- altering answers on a scored test and submitting it for a regrade
- accessing and altering grade records
- stealing class assignments from other students and submitting them as one's own
- fabricating data
- destroying or stealing the work of other students

Plagiarism is a special kind of academic dishonesty in which one person steals another person's ideas or words and falsely presents them as the plagiarist's own product. This is most likely to occur in the following ways:

- using the exact language of someone else without the use of quotation marks and without giving proper credit to the author
- presenting the sequence of ideas or arranging the material of someone else even though such is expressed in one's own words, without giving appropriate acknowledgment
- submitting a document written by someone else but representing it as one's own"

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is one of the highest values that Purdue University holds. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breaches of this value by either emailing integrity@purdue.edu or by calling 765-494-8778. While information may be submitted anonymously, the more information is submitted the greater the opportunity for the university to investigate the concern. More details are available on our course Brightspace under University Policies and Statements.

NOTICE OF COPYRIGHT PROTECTION OF COURSE MATERIALS

Among the materials that may be protected by copyright law are the lectures, notes, and other material presented in class or as part of the course. Always assume the materials presented by an instructor are protected by copyright unless the instructor has stated otherwise. Students enrolled in, and authorized visitors to, Purdue University courses are permitted to take notes, which they may use for individual/group study or for other non-commercial purposes reasonably arising from enrollment in the course or the University generally.

Notes taken in class are, however, generally considered to be "derivative works" of the instructor's presentations and materials, and they are thus subject to the instructor's copyright in such presentations and materials. No individual is permitted to sell or otherwise barter notes, either to other students or to any commercial concern, for a course without the express written permission of the course instructor. To obtain permission to sell or barter notes, the individual wishing to sell or barter the notes must be registered in the course or must be an approved visitor to the class. Course instructors

may choose to grant or not grant such permission at their own discretion, and may require a review of the notes prior to their being sold or bartered. If they do grant such permission, they may revoke it at any time, if they so choose.

ON-LINE COURSE EVALUATIONS

During the last two weeks of the semester, you will be provided an opportunity to evaluate this course and your instructor(s). To this end, Purdue has transitioned to online course evaluations. On Monday of the fifteenth week of classes, you will receive an official email from evaluation administrators with a link to the online evaluation site. You will have two weeks to complete this evaluation. Your participation in this evaluation is an integral part of this course. Your feedback is vital to improving education at Purdue University. I strongly urge you to participate in the evaluation system.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted onto the course website or can be obtained by contacting the instructors or TAs via email or phone. You are expected to read your @purdue.edu email on a frequent basis.

A link to Purdue's Information on [Emergency Preparation and Planning](#) is located on our Brightspace under "University Policies and Statements." This website covers topics such as Severe Weather Guidance, Emergency Plans, and a place to sign up for the Emergency Warning Notification System. I encourage you to download and review the *Emergency Preparedness for Classrooms document (PDF) or (Word)*.

The first day of class, I will review the **Emergency Preparedness plan for our specific classroom**, following Purdue's required [Emergency Preparedness Briefing](#). Please make note of items like:

- The location to where we will proceed after evacuating the building if we hear a fire alarm is in front of the Food Science Building.
- The location of our Shelter in Place in the event of a tornado warning is in the basement of the biochemistry building.
- The location of our Shelter in Place in the event of an active threat such as a shooting is to lock the doors and turn off the lights in the room.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Purdue University's non-discrimination policy will be upheld in this classroom. Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life.

Purdue University views, evaluates, and treats all persons in any University related activity or circumstance in which they may be involved, solely as individuals on the basis of their own personal abilities, qualifications, and other relevant characteristics.

In this course, each voice in the classroom has something of value to contribute. Please take care to respect the different experiences, beliefs and values expressed by students

and staff involved in this course. We support Purdue's commitment to diversity, and welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, citizenships, disability, sex, education, ethnicities, family statuses, genders, gender identities, geographical locations, languages, military experience, political views, races, religions, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, and work experiences

For more information, see http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.html.

MENTAL HEALTH

If you find yourself beginning to feel some stress, anxiety and/or feeling slightly overwhelmed, try [WellTrack](#). Sign in and find information and tools at your fingertips, available to you at any time.

If you need support and information about options and resources, please contact or see the [Office of the Dean of Students](#). Call 765-494-1747. Hours of operation are M-F, 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.

If you find yourself struggling to find a healthy balance between academics, social life, stress, etc., sign up for free one-on-one virtual or in-person sessions with a [Purdue Wellness Coach at RecWell](#). Student coaches can help you navigate through barriers and challenges toward your goals throughout the semester. Sign up is free and can be done on BoilerConnect.

If you're struggling and need mental health services: Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) at 765-494-6995 during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office on the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.

BASIC NEEDS SECURITY

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. There is no appointment needed and Student Support Services is available to serve students 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMODATIONS

Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: drc@purdue.edu or by phone: 765-494-1247.

DISCLAIMER

This syllabus is subject to change

ASSIGNMENTS

- **Resume Assignment.**
 - **First Draft due September 16**
 - **Final and Reviewed Draft due September 30** – submitted to Wisedoc and updated with feedback from instructor and Wisedoc

This assignment consists of preparing your personal resume, a document providing an overview of your professional life that you can present to potential employers. It is typically one to two pages long and contains a brief overview of your background (education, work experience, relevant activities), skills and accomplishments, and career goals. A well-prepared resume is essential to your job search.

You have a great deal of latitude in format and content, but some **basic information** needs to be included in any resume. These include such items as your *name, address, and telephone number* at the beginning. A *permanent address* or other backup way for someone to contact you can be important if you may reside elsewhere during college breaks. Personal information such as social security number, marital status, age, hobbies or health should NOT be included in your resume.

You should present your qualifications as effectively as possible. Qualifications include both **education** and **experience**, each in its own section. There may also be other items of interest such as leadership **activities, honors**, or special skills that you want to mention. Such items can be very important to employers.

Including a **career objective** statement is *optional* but can be useful to you in deciding whether or not certain items are relevant for inclusion in the resume. A career objective should be *specific and concise* so it tells the employer that you are interested in their job. If you can't be specific in your career objective, *leave it off*. Some people who are interested in more than one kind of job prepare separate resumes with different career objectives.

References are essential to have ready to go when they are requested by a potential employer. *Be sure to identify your references page with your name. For this assignment, it will be necessary to include names and contact information of three references with your resume.* References should be organized in a convenient format and should include telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Who should you use as references? People who know you and who *agree* to write a letter or answer questions verbally if called upon. Your academic advisor should nearly always be included when you are a student or a recent graduate. Other professors can also be used, but you may have other people better acquainted with your work experience who you will choose to use. Three references are the most common number, although you can have more. Whoever they are, you should *ask their permission* before using them as references in an actual job search. Using a relative as a reference is generally not acceptable. Also, so called "character references" (religious leaders, family friends) are not usually found on a professional resume. Your references should be people who can discuss you as a potential employee.

You may have prepared a resume for another course or purpose. Such resumes can be used, at least as a starting point. Your resume is a *living document* that you will be updating throughout your professional career, so save an electronic copy that you will have access to later. Feel free to bring your resume in for the instructor to review before the due date if you have specific questions.

Submit first draft by September 16 to instructor and to Wisedoc. After receiving feedback from both, submit final draft, with revisions by September 30.

- **Personal Statement or Cover Letter Assignment. Due September 30**

Your second assignment will depend on your career goals. If you plan to apply for graduate or professional school, you will write a personal statement. If you plan to apply for a full-time job following graduation, you will write a cover letter.

A **personal statement** provides graduate and professional programs the opportunity to learn more about you. Each type of application has different length requirements and questions/prompts that you must address. Their objectives are basically the same: trying to get to know a bit more about you and discover your motivations for wanting to enter their specific field. **Select an actual program you would like to apply to and include a copy of or link to that program's personal statement requirements with your assignment.**

This is your opportunity to expand upon your experiences or to address anything that you feel has not already been covered in your application. The essay, as much as possible, should give them insight into you. How have various experiences motivated you and changed the way you view the world? What unique qualities do you bring? What have you gained from various experiences? Saying that you are a very empathetic person isn't really helpful. You need to give concrete examples of how this has played out in your life. Remember that most applicants are generally very well qualified. So it is important to take writing your personal statement seriously. Hopefully, this assignment will give you a good start. Most students find that writing a personal statement is difficult. It is hard to know where to begin and it almost always sounds lame when you read it back to yourself. It does not generally read this way to others. Make sure you get help from other readers. You can contact your advisor, other professors, professionals you know in the field, or the Office of Pre-Professional Advising at Purdue (preprofessional@purdue.edu), or Purdue OWL (<https://owl.purdue.edu/>). There are many internet resources you can consult for ideas as well.

A **cover letter** is often mailed or emailed with your resume to constitute a request for a job interview with a specific company or agency. **Select an actual job announcement or advertisement and submit a copy or link with your letter.** Addressing a specific position description will make it easier for you to write a meaningful cover letter.

The cover letter is your chance to individualize the material you send to a potential employer. It is a formal letter, so you should **use an appropriate business letter format**. See the sample provided as well as search online for examples. Usually your letter should be addressed to a specific individual, and should include that person's business title and address. It should show that you know something about the company or agency and can envision yourself as their employee. You can emphasize some of the information that is covered on your resume. You can also supply additional information that you feel would be of interest to this particular employer even though it was not covered on the resume.

Your letter should clearly express your interest in a particular job and tell why you are the one they should hire for that job. Mention a job announcement or other source of information from which you learned of the job. This makes it easier to explain how you fit the needs for the job. Emphasize the experience, education, and personal characteristics you have that qualify you for the job.

Make it as easy as possible for the employer to contact you by telling them the best time to call you and including your telephone number. Express the hope that you will hear from them soon. An alternative is to suggest that you will contact them. Be sure to specify a time if you follow this alternative. Employers are much more likely to have a response ready and be prepared to discuss it with you if they know when to expect your call.

Read the letter yourself and see how it would sound to you if you were receiving it. Looking at it from the recipient's side may help you polish the letter and improve

its overall tone. Be careful to avoid spelling and grammatical errors in your letter as well as in your resume. Remember that these materials are representing you at a time when you want to look your best. Someone is likely to have to decide whom to interview by looking at a stack of letters and resumes. They will form an initial impression of you before they ever meet you. A good letter along with a well-prepared resume can be very helpful to your cause.

You can contact your advisor, other professors, or professionals you know in the field, or the Office of Pre-Professional Advising at Purdue (preprofessional@purdue.edu), or Purdue OWL (<https://owl.purdue.edu/>) for feedback and guidance. There are many internet resources you can consult for ideas as well.

- **Revised Personal Statement or Cover Letter. Due October 28**

Improve your personal statement or cover letter based on feedback from the course instructor, your peers, the CCO, Purdue OWL and other sources. You will submit the revised cover letter or personal statement.

- **Mock Interview Reflection. Due November 18**

Participate in a mock interview, which will be arranged by the instructor. After your interview, you will receive feedback. Write a short, reflective essay (1-2 pages) critiquing your performance in the interview, and taking into account the feedback you received, share what areas you may need to improve upon and some concrete plans for doing so. Your grade will be based on the essay reflecting on what you learned from the interview.

- **Career Development Plan. Due December 9**

Select an area to explore – employment, graduate school, professional school, etc. Decide which specific field to investigate: pharmaceutical sciences, forensic medicine, neurobiology, etc. Investigate potential institutions/companies online, and select **three** programs or employers for further exploration. What are the entrance requirements for these programs? What are the program deadlines? What are the qualifications for these positions? Visit application websites for these programs/employers and evaluate what materials you need to complete the application – Resume? Personal statement? Scores on national exams? Letters of recommendation/references? In your introduction, briefly explain your ultimate career goal and how the steps you are exploring here will help you achieve your goals. Compare the three potential programs/employers, making a list of plusses and minuses for each of them. Evaluate how your training matches up with the list of requirements. What do you need to do to better match the opportunities? Create a plan of action. You may want to include a timeline to take into account deadlines for exams and applications, if those apply.

BCHM390 Professional Development Seminar Fall 2025

LECTURE SCHEDULE (*Subject to change*)

Date	Topic	Speaker	Assignments Due
August 26	Introductions and Course Objectives	Heidi Fornes	
September 2	Pharma Industry Careers: Exploring Opportunities for Biochemists at Eli Lilly and Company	Aya Ryuzoji and Nicole Rivera, Eli Lilly Pharmaceuticals	My Strengths Workshop
September 9	Resume Development	Heidi Fornes	
September 16	Personal Statement and Cover Letter	Heidi Fornes	Resume 1 st draft
September 23	Animal Pharmaceuticals **Introduce Mock interview assignment and sign up	Maddie Sheiss, Elanco (BCHM Alum)	
September 30	Agricultural Research	Chris Bagley, Inari	1. Revised resume 2. Personal Statement or Cover Letter 1 st draft
October 7	Drug Development and Discovery	Kelly Desino, Abbvie	
October 21	Pre-med/Med school	Justin Couetil, IU Med student (BCHM Alum)	
October 28	Medical Research and Discovery	Amy Opoka, Cincinnati Children's Hospital	Final Personal Statement or Cover Letter
November 4	Clinical trials and drug development **Introduce Career Development Assignment	Emily Fugate, Lapcorp	
November 11	Pre-vet/vet school	Kimaya Bakhle, Cornell Vet Student (BCHM alum)	
November 18	Who's Who in Clinical Research	Kortney Baker, Med Institute (BCHM alum)	Interview Reflection
November 25	Writing Workshop	Heidi Fornes	
December 2	Applying to Graduate Programs	Dr. Barbara Golden, Professor of Biochemistry	
December 9	Applying to professional school	Cristy Gosney, Center for Pre-professional Advising	Career Development Plan