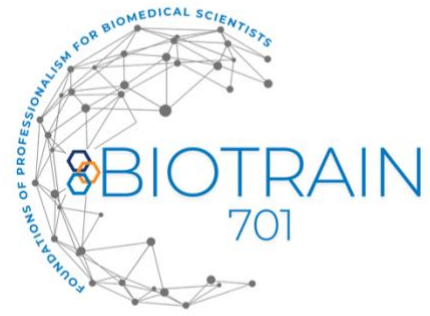


Updated 8.13.2026

BIOTRAIN 701: Foundations of Professionalism for Biomedical Scientists



Course Directors:

Calla Telzrow, PhD

Associate Director of Curriculum, Advising, & Experiential Learning – OBGE

1265 MSRB-III

calla.telzrow@duke.edu

Jodi Belanger

Assistant Director of Biomedical Graduate Student Success – OBGE

1262 MSRB-III

jodi.belanger@duke.edu

Day/Time:

August 27 – October 1: Thursdays 8:30 – 9:30 AM

Format:

In person

Locations:

Instructional sessions: Bryan Research Building 103

Gateway Groups: Variable (see Gateway Groups table below)

Grading Basis:

CR/NC

Course Overview:

This mini-course is designed to engage biomedical PhD trainees in developing essential professional skills that are critical throughout graduate training and beyond. Cultivating these professional skills aligns with the top training priorities outlined by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for T32 Predoctoral Training programs, which aim to enhance the graduate student experience and facilitate smooth transitions into biomedical careers. BIOTRAIN 701 was developed in 2021 by OBGE in collaboration with a senior PhD student from the School of Medicine (SoM) using direct insight and feedback from biomedical PhD alumni about the professional skills essential for successfully navigating graduate school and transitioning into the workforce after graduation.

This course is team-taught by OBGE staff and faculty and PhD student Peer Mentors across SoM PhD training programs. The content is delivered through a combination of didactic instructional sessions and small group discussion sessions called “Gateway Groups”. The goal of these interconnected sessions is threefold: to contextualize professional skills in biomedical science, to facilitate professionalism skill building, and to build community among the SoM PhD programs.

Class Delivery:

Classes are a combination of in-person instructional sessions (didactic lectures) and Gateway Groups (small group discussions). The instructional sessions are held in Bryan Research Building 103. Gateway Group locations are variable, listed in the Gateway Group table below and on the course Canvas site in the “**Gateway Group information**” module.

Course Communications:

E-mail communication is welcome at any time. If you do not receive a reply from a Course Director or Peer Mentor within 24 hours, then assume that they did not receive it and re-send it. Please include an identifier in the “Subject” section of your email (e.g., BIOTRAIN 701) to assist the recipient in linking the email to the class. You may email the

Course Directors or Peer Mentors directly.

Course Materials:

Course materials, including this syllabus, are available on the course Canvas site. You can find the syllabus and course schedule in the “**Syllabus & schedule**” module on the course Home page. Materials and information for each class meeting can be accessed through the corresponding date module on the course Home page. A laptop or tablet should be brought to any class session as indicated in the corresponding date modules on the course Canvas site.

Course Requirements:

The students will:

- Engage with background, pre-class work, and instructional sessions.
- Actively participate in Gateway Groups discussions by sharing ideas, opinions, and experiences; asking questions; and completing activities.

Attendance and Assessment Information:

Course credit is based on attendance and active participation. This course relies on discussion and collaborative learning; attendance and engagement are essential to student success in graduate school and in this course. **Full attendance at all class sessions is therefore expected.**

If a student must miss a class for an approved reason (e.g., illness, retreat, or conference), they are required to:

1. Notify their Peer Mentor and the Course Directors of the absence in advance whenever possible.
2. Watch the recording of the instructional session of the missed class on Canvas.
3. Submit a one-page written reflection on the Gateway Group materials covered in the missed class to their Peer Mentor before the next scheduled class meeting. Details for each class make-up assignment can be found in the corresponding date module on the course Canvas site.

One excused absence is permitted if all the steps above are completed. A second excused absence will require both completion of the make-up assignment and a one-on-one meeting between the student and their Peer Mentor to review the missed material. Three absences or failure to complete the required make-up assignments will result in a no-credit grade for the course. In these cases, students will be required to retake the course next year.

Course Competencies, Objectives, and Student Learning Outcomes:

OBGE Competency: Communication Skills / Communication with the Public

- Objective: To prepare students for success in graduate school through professionalism skill building.
 - Learning outcome: Identify and prepare for high-stress events in graduate school based on personal strengths and weaknesses.
 - Learning outcome: Develop effective and inclusive communication skills and gain insight into the dynamics of different communication styles.
 - Learning outcome: Communicate in direct and respectful manners with diverse groups of individuals from a variety of backgrounds in a professional setting.
- Objective: To provide students with a supportive professional network.
 - Learning outcome: Identify and initiate mentor-mentee relationships with diverse mentors and interdisciplinary interactions.
 - Learning outcome: Clearly communicate with mentors to optimize mentorability.

OBGE Competency: Resilience and Survival Skills / Motivation

- Objective: To prepare students for diverse biomedical careers through professionalism skill building.
 - Learning outcome: Apply and refine professionalism skills developed in graduate school to individual career path.
 - Learning outcome: Pursue and participate in early biomedical career development activities.

Updated 8.13.2026

Accommodation of Student Needs:

Duke University is committed to providing equal access to students with documented disabilities. Students with disabilities may contact the Student Disability Access Office (SDAO) to ensure access to this course and to the program. There students can engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations both in the classroom and in clinical settings. Students are encouraged to register with the SDAO as soon as they begin the program. Please note that accommodations are not provided retroactively. [More information can be found online](#) or by contacting SDAO at 919-668-1267 and SDAO@duke.edu.

Academic Integrity:

Be sure to [read the Duke Community Standard on Academic Dishonesty](#).

Gateway Groups:

This table contains the Peer Mentor information and meeting location for each Gateway Group. Student Gateway Group assignments can be found on the course Canvas site in the “**Gateway Group information**” module.

Gateway Group	Peer Mentor	Meeting Location
Gateway Group 1	Paola Ramos Irizarry	Bryan Research Building 101
Gateway Group 2	Ki Song	Bryan Research Building 427A
Gateway Group 3	Bryony Hawgood	Nanaline 148A
Gateway Group 4	Jake Hira	Nanaline 252B
Gateway Group 5	Hannah Kubinski	Nanaline 323
Gateway Group 6	Rose Homoelle	Nanaline 384
Gateway Group 7	Marco Gontijo	Nanaline 247

Class Schedule:

This table contains the class schedule including topics, presenters, and locations.

Date	Topic(s)	Presenter(s)	Location(s)
August 27	Mentor-Mentee Relationships	SoM faculty panel SoM Peer Mentor panel	Bryan Research Building 103
September 3	Making Professional Connections	Rose Homoelle Paola Ramos Irizarry Dr. Asiya Gusa	8:30 – 9 AM: Bryan Research Building 103 9 – 9:30 AM: Gateway Group rooms
September 10	Tracking Your Graduate Journey	Paola Ramos Irizarry Dr. Calla Telzrow Dr. Chris Nicchitta	8:30 – 9 AM: Bryan Research Building 103 9 – 9:30 AM: Gateway Group rooms
September 17	Professional Development and Career Planning	Jake Hira Hannah Kubinski SoM faculty (TBD) SoM PhD student panel	Bryan Research Building 103
September 24	Scientific Publishing	Bryony Hawgood Ki Song Haley Walton	8:30 – 9 AM: Bryan Research Building 103 9 – 9:30 AM: Gateway Group rooms
October 1	Graduate Student Funding	Marco Gontijo Alicia Korenman	8:30 – 9 AM: Bryan Research Building 103 9 – 9:30 AM: Gateway Group rooms