

# UAB Graduate School *News & Events*

Fall 2005

## Thinking Ahead to Graduate Student Research Days

By Dr. Susan Spezzini

Now is the time to think ahead! You can start preparing for UAB's 2006 Graduate Student Research Day by enrolling in GRD 701 Presentation and Discussion Skills. This pass/fail course meets Wednesdays from 5:30 to 8:00 pm in the Bevill Building (August 18 - December 14). In this course, students give three presentations, one for each of the following audiences: colleagues, the general public, and a professional conference. Presentations are evaluated by classmates and also videotaped for review with the instructor.

GRD 701 provides students with an opportunity to practice presentations for academic courses and/or professional conferences. This course also serves as a catalyst in prompting students to stretch beyond the comfortable by submitting proposals to new venues. Such was the case last year when four students decided to participate in UAB's 2005 Graduate Student Research Day. By taking full advantage of this course to polish their presentation skills, two of them received cash awards, one for first place and the other for third.

By taking GRD 701, students learn to become comfortable and effective communicators within and beyond their academic and professional communities. The Spring 2005 evaluations showed this course to have met or surpassed student expectations: "The whole thing was great!" On the other hand, students who enrolled in GRD 701 just to fulfill a program requirement were pleasantly surprised: "I thought it would be all lecture, but it was actual experience," "I didn't think it would help much since it's only 3 talks, but it did improve everyone's abilities," and "To be honest, the idea of taking this class initially annoyed me because I thought it would be a waste of time. However, the class grew more and more enjoyable, and I really liked it."

The consensus of last semester's 19 students was that they would definitely recommend this course. You should consider taking GRD 701 if you need motivation and/or technical support in preparing for UAB's 2006 Graduate Research Day. This year's event, slated for March 2-3, promises to attract even more student researchers than did last year's when 41 cash prizes were awarded to 150 participants.



**Dr. Susan Spezzini** is the Program Director for *Project Equal*.

## [www.uab.edu/graduate](http://www.uab.edu/graduate)

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205-934-8227 or 800-975-GRAD (4723)





## fall Offerings: *Professional Development Program*

### Fall Term (August 18 - December 14)

#### **GRD 700-2S: Culture and Speaking in the U.S.**

Second language English speakers. Pass/Fail. Sat, Aug 20-Dec 14, 9:30am-12:00pm. Questions to Ms. Abney 934-8129. (3 hr)

#### **GRD 701-7P: Presentation and Discussion Skills.**

Pass/Fail. Wed, Aug 18-Dec 14, 5:30pm-8:00pm, BBRB 170. Questions to Dr. Austin 975-6539. (3 hr)

**GRD 702-2S: Writing up Research.** Sat, Aug 20-Dec 14, 9:30am-12:00pm. Questions to Ms. Abney 934-8129. (3 hr)

**GRD 704-00: Specialized Instruction.** Individualized Instruction. For questions or call numbers, call Ms. Baird 975-6511, Ms. Abney 934-8129, or Dr. Austin 975-6539. (1-9 hr)

**GRD 704B-00: Pronunciation & Accent Individualized Instruction.** Individualized Instruction. For questions or call numbers, email Ms. Shadix at [jshadix@uab.edu](mailto:jshadix@uab.edu). (2 hr)

**GRD 704C-00: Pronunciation & Accent Improvement Workshop.** Pronunciation class. Aug 18-Dec 14, 5:30pm-8:00pm. For questions, email Ms. Shadix at [jshadix@uab.edu](mailto:jshadix@uab.edu). Class size limited. Permission of instructor required. (3 hr)

**GRD 706-C1: Grants and Fellowships 101.** One-day workshop. Sat., 9:00am-5:00pm, Sept. 10, 2005, CH 204. Lunch provided. Questions to Dr. Austin 975-6539 or Ms. Baird 975-6511. (1 hr)

**GRD 715-C1: Preparing TAs to be Effective Teachers.** (*Department recommendation required*). Pass/Fail. Class meetings: Sat, Aug 16, (9:00am - 5:00pm), Aug 20 (9:00am-1:00pm), Sept 16 (5:00pm-8:00pm), Dec 2 (5:00pm-8:00pm). Questions to Ms. Baird 975-6511, Ms. Abney 934-8129, or Dr. Austin 975-6539. (2-3 hr)

**GRD 717-6N: Principles of Scientific Integrity.** Pass/Fail. M-, Aug 18-Dec 14, 2:00pm-4:40pm, BBRB 170. Questions to Dr. Vollmer 934-4805. (3 hr)

**GRD 720-P7: Effective Communication Skills.** (Second language English speakers). Thur, Aug 18-Dec 14, 5:30pm-8:30pm. Questions to Ms. Abney 934-8129. (3 hr)

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For more details, see the UAB Class Schedule, visit the GRD web site ([www.uab.edu/profdev](http://www.uab.edu/profdev)), or contact Julia Austin at 975-6539 or [jaustin@uab.edu](mailto:jaustin@uab.edu)

## Graduate School Deadlines: *To Graduate in Fall 2005*

MPH, MSPH, DrPH, and MSN students: Check with your Graduate Program Directors for other deadlines, which differ from those of the Graduate School.

**Aug. 17:** Deadline to change residency

**Aug. 17:** Admission to candidacy due  
(Doctoral students require 2 semesters)

**Sept. 9:** Application for degree due

### Plan I

**Nov. 4:** Last day for public defense

**Graduate School Format Acceptance Review:**  
No later than 10 days following the defense.

### Plan II

**Dec. 2:** Last day for receipt of final papers

*Notes from Jan:* Students often find the final stages of thesis and dissertation preparation frustrating and confusing. However, more and more often we are finding those who report being pleasantly surprised at how quickly the format review and editing process was completed. These are very often the students who have taken advantage of various workshops, classes, and seminars designed by the Graduate School Professional Development Program to assist students throughout the writing process. Visit the Professional Development website for a listing of these special classes: <http://www.uab.edu/profdev>

One free seminar offered every semester is the *Preparing a Thesis or Dissertation Seminar*, which will be held this fall on September 8 from 4:00-6:00. This seminar is specifically designed to help students who are in the process of writing a thesis or dissertation understand and deal with such things as meeting deadlines and implementing Graduate School format requirements. Seating is limited, so reservations are required. Email me at [jbaird@uab.edu](mailto:jbaird@uab.edu) to reserve a place.

Also, the Fall 2005 *UAB Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations* is now available in the Graduate School and online. Each new edition contains added information that you will find helpful as you work toward completing your degree requirements, so be sure you have the most recent edition.

## Spotlight On *Professional Development*

If you want to build a table, the first thing to do is to get the proper raw material, and then learn how to combine the pieces to make something that looks like a table. Let's say you succeed in bringing the properly cut timber together with nails, would you use this table without varnishing or polishing its surface?

Learning a foreign language is a similar process; first I learned vocabulary and grammatical rules, then I could communicate with people using that language. My successes in communication made me think that I had learned English well, and I started to lose my motivation to improve. At the introductory level, people looked at my speaking, and despite all the mistakes, they noticed the positive point that I was actually able to express myself, and they even congratulated me for my effort. As I improved my language, I could communicate successfully, but my mistakes were noticeable. I needed to polish my language.

Unfortunately, polishing your language and becoming a native-like speaker is not as easy as making ground for the first time; it is the most time- and energy-consuming part of the language learning process. There are different problematic issues such as idioms, jokes, slang, abbreviations, literature, local accents, individual differences in the pronunciation and in the usage of the language, etc. Socializing with people might help with all these aspects, but sometimes you need special instruction to overcome your most obstinate weaknesses.

As a graduate student at UAB, I was seeking a way to polish my English, and through UAB Graduate School's Professional Development Program, I was recommended to Jonghee Shadix, who teaches Pronunciation and Accent Training courses for international scholars. Because I want to speak with a native-like accent and because I am preparing for my public defense in the near future, I have benefited a lot from her Specialized Instruction course (GRD 704).

When I spoke in English, most of the time, I was aware of the fact that my pronunciation or word and sentence stress, or the way I said something was different from that of native speakers, but you cannot say exactly what those differences are unless you are a pro. Because she is a professionally trained English and pronunciation instructor, Jonghee Shadix knows how to diagnose and remedy students' language problems.

If you want to improve your language, I definitely recommend this class. Language is itself an interactive tool and cannot be learned properly without proper interaction. In a sense everybody, either native or non-native, is a language learner because language is a dynamic tool. But non-native speakers need this tool to successfully communicate with native speakers.

*Mevlut Bulut*



**Mevlut Bulut**  
Research Assistant  
UAB Department of Physics

### **The 2005-2006 UAB Graduate Student Handbook**

The *UAB Graduate Student Handbook*, published every fall semester, is an excellent resource for new and returning graduate students. The *Handbook* covers general academic requirements, ethics and conduct, financial information, facilities and services, requirements for completing a master's or doctoral degree, and university policies that are most pertinent to graduate students. You can pick up a copy of the *Handbook* from the Graduate School in HUC 511 during the first week of September.

# UAB Doctoral Hooding and Commencement Ceremony



In order to properly acknowledge those who are receiving the university's highest degree, UAB holds a special **Doctoral Hooding and Commencement Ceremony**. You, your dissertation advisor, mentors, family, and friends are invited to attend the ceremony to be held in the Jemison Concert Hall at the Alys Stephens Center at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, December 17. The ceremony will be followed by a reception in the lobby.

This ceremony, marking as it does the culmination

of an academic career, has proven to be memorable for all who attend.

In order for a doctoral candidate to participate in the Hooding Ceremony, the candidate must meet all criteria to graduate and submit the *Doctoral Hooding & Convocation Form* to the Graduate School. This form can be accessed on the Graduate web site at [www.uab.edu/graduate](http://www.uab.edu/graduate).

*Julie Bryant*

Director, Graduate School Operations

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