

MEDG 545 Journal Club: Genetic Variation and Human Disease

Winter Term 2023-2024

Syllabus

This course consists of a series presentations and discussions summarizing and critically assessing recent journal articles. Each student will present two articles, one in each semester. In addition, students are expected to read every paper selected for presentation and to participate fully in each discussion. The course is held in person; remote participation is not available.

All journal articles selected for presentation should be related to the general theme of the journal club, **GENETIC VARIATION and HUMAN DISEASE**. Although a variety of topics within this area is appropriate, we usually focus on the following issues:

- Current or novel approaches to the identification of human genetic or genomic variation.
- Alterations of genomic structure, non-coding variation, and other unusual genetic mechanisms that lead to disease.
- Human population genetics, evolution, and other factors that affect human genetic variation.

The articles you select for presentation must be recent (e-published within the past 6 months), they must be primary research papers (no reviews or commentaries), and they must have been published in a peer-reviewed journal (no BioRxiv or MedRxiv papers). To ensure the appropriateness of a paper you wish to present, please send the PDF to Dr. Friedman (jan.friedman@ubc.ca) for approval **at least 10 days before the scheduled date of your presentation**. Once the article is approved, we will circulate it to all students as well as to other journal club attendees prior to your presentation.

The class starts usually at 13:00, but the presenter should arrive at least 10 minutes early to prepare for his/her talk. The course is usually held on Mondays, 2 or 3 times a month. Be sure to check the schedule so that you know when we are meeting and when we aren't.

Your presentation should not be too long – aim for about 30 minutes. There will be questions and discussion throughout and after your talk that will add substantially to its duration. Be sure that your presentation focuses on the key points but be prepared to provide additional information on things that you leave out, in case someone asks about them. Keep in mind the general guidelines for good scientific presentations when preparing your slides: make sure that the font style and size are easily readable and that your figures are clear and well-annotated, avoid too much information on a slide, etc.

Half of your final grade in MEDG 545 will be on your presentations (25% for each one), and half will be on your participation in the discussion of other papers (25% for each term). You are expected to contribute to every discussion, so it is essential that you read the selected paper prior to class. You may request feedback on your presentations or class participation from Dr. Friedman (jan.friedman@ubc.ca) at any time, but formal marks will only be provided at the end of the second semester.