Abstract:

Earning a PhD is an exciting but arduous process, marked by an attrition rate of about 50%. Graduate study is very intensive and requires a lot of dedication to both your own career and group goals. In this seminar, I will outline some of the important characteristics of a successful graduate student. A core message is that doctoral education is a unique social world, the main function of which is to prepare the trained academic and industrial professionals. The biggest challenge for a new graduate student is how to become an independent scholar—to acquire the depth of expertise and genuine passion for subsequent professional accomplishment and fulfillment. Therefore, graduate students should not expect to be taken care of but must be the architects of their own professional development. They need to develop research skills, learn how to teach, use unstructured time productively, and act in ways that will bolster their reputation as a professional. Graduate study is not a “job”. A successful graduate student is always the one who gets as much out of graduate studies as possible.