

Mind, Brain and Behavior

PSYCW1010

Course Syllabus

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Office Hours: Posted on Courseworks

Why do people act the way they do, feel the way they do, think the way they do? How is the brain involved in these processes? We will explore answers to these questions through understanding the science of behavior, as well as what we know (and don't know) about the role of the brain in creating our reality. Emphasis is placed on scientific analysis of behavior, understanding theories, and interpreting research findings, with the ultimate goal of understanding more about human behavior from a scientific perspective.

Text: Principles of Cognitive Neuroscience, by Dale Purves et al., (Sinauer Press, 2nd edition; ISBN 978-0-87893-573-4). The text is available at the Columbia Bookstore. You can also purchase access to an online version from online vendors at a significantly reduced price relative to a new text. Supplemental readings will be posted on Courseworks. There will be at least 2 copies of the text on reserve in the Science Library in the Northwest Corner Building.

Exams and Grading: There are 4 exams for this course, 3 semester exams and a cumulative final. Semester exams cover lecture, text and supplemental reading material, results of class demonstrations, and any material presented through additional media sources (videos, demonstrations, etc.). Each exam will cover only the material since the previous exam. The cumulative final exam will be a multiple choice exam and will cover all the material from the class. The lowest test grade from the 4 exams (3 semester exams and the cumulative final) will be dropped, and your course grade will be include the scores on the remaining 3 exams. Course grades are calculated as follows:

Exams = 25% each Chapter Quizzes 15% Short Paper = 5% Experimental Participation = 5%
The method used for determining letter grades is described in detail in the Grading Policies file posted on Courseworks.

Exams must be taken at the scheduled time unless you have been granted an excused absence by Prof. Taylor *prior to* the scheduled exam. *There is no option to make up a missed exam for any reason.* If you have an excused absence, that exam will have a score of 0 and will be factored in to your course grade as your lowest exam score. An excused absence from a semester exam means that you are required to take the cumulative final exam at the scheduled time. You cannot pass this course if you miss two semester exams. If you are satisfied with your course grade based on the 3 semester exams, you may choose not to take the final exam; the final exam will then count as your lowest exam score.

Prior to the first exam, a practice question will be posted on Courseworks. Your answer to this question will be graded and included as extra credit on the first semester exam. This will give you an idea of the type of essay question you will encounter on the exam, and how we grade these questions.

Please see the Exam Policies document posted in Courseworks for a complete description of all exam policies for this course.

Final Exam Scheduling: The final exam will be held at the date and time indicated by the registrar. There is no option to take the final at an alternate time or on an alternate date. The *projected* date and time for the final exam is Wednesday, December 21st from 7:10p-10p. Please check the Registrar website to confirm the final exam date and time.

Chapter Quizzes: There will be an online quiz on Courseworks covering the material in the textbook. Each quiz consists of 10 multiple choice questions randomly selected from a larger set of questions. You may take the quizzes for full credit any time up to the semester exam covering that material,

and may take each quiz multiple times if you wish. The quizzes are open from the beginning of the term so feel free to work ahead if you wish.

Short Paper: Find a popular press account of a psychological finding from this year. Read the original research article, and provide a critique of the secondary (popular) report. Specific details on the written assignment are posted in Courseworks, along with directions for submitting the assignments electronically. Written assignments are due by 5pm on the date indicated on the Courseworks calendar. Late assignments will be accepted for one additional week and will only receive half credit.

Research Participation: This semester you will have the opportunity to experience first-hand what happens in a psychology research project by participating in experiments currently being conducted by faculty members and graduate students in the Psychology Department. A representative from the Psychology Department will stop by our class early in the semester to describe this requirement. A summary of this information will be posted on Courseworks. If you are under 18 years old, and will not turn 18 before the end of the term, or if you have ethical objections to the experimental research requirement, please see Prof. Taylor by the end of September to arrange an alternate assignment. If you have any questions about the requirement or getting credit for your experiments please contact the department research representative. Additional information on will be posted on Courseworks.

General Tips and Advice: Course attendance, and on-time arrival, is most strongly recommended. Please be considerate of your classmates by not arriving late or departing early. If you are late please do not disrupt other students - sit in the back or on the edge of the classroom. PowerPoint slides from each lecture will be posted on Courseworks, but these outlines are brief and are not meant to substitute for attendance. You are responsible for all material covered in the course. If you miss a lecture, please find a classmate willing to share course notes.

Computer use for taking notes and other course-related functions is welcomed. However, research has demonstrated that we aren't nearly as good at multitasking as we believe ourselves to be. Therefore I ask that you not surf the web or engage in any other non-course related activities that will likely distract you and those around you during lecture. All cell phones must be turned to silent mode at the beginning of class.

Keep up with the reading in the text. The book has a great deal of information and it will probably take longer than you think to read and study each chapter. Use the lecture slides and the study questions from each lecture to prepare for the exams. Some study questions will cover material not covered in lecture. The study questions at the end of each lecture will include all possible exam topics – if you thoroughly understand and can answer these questions you should do quite well in the course. Your text is a resource, not something to memorize. Refer to the Study Tips file posted on Courseworks for more hints on how to effectively prepare for exams.

Disability Services: If you require testing or other accommodations, please notify the Office for Disability Services and your instructor at least 2 weeks prior to the first exam. If you believe you are eligible for testing accommodations you must register with ODS as soon as possible.

Course Schedule

September 7	Course Introduction, Introduction to Cognitive Neuroscience (Ch. 1)
September 12,14	Basics of Neuroscience – Brain Mechanisms (Appendix)
September 19,21	Research Methods (Ch. 2) Sensation and Perception - Vision (Ch. 3)
September 26,28	Sensation and Perception (Chs. 3 and 4)
October 3,5	Sensation and Perception (Ch. 4) Exam #1 on October 5th
October 10,12	Motor Systems (Ch. 5) Attention – Part 1 (Ch. 6)
October 17,19	Attention – Part 2 (Ch. 7)
October 24,26	Memory (Ch. 8)
October 31, November 2	Memory (Ch. 9)
November 7,9	<i>Election Day – No Classes</i> Exam #2 on November 9
November 14,16	Emotion (Ch. 10) Social Cognition (Ch. 11)
November 21,23	Social Cognition (Ch. 11) Language (Ch. 12)
November 28,30	Executive Functions (Ch. 13) Decision Making (Ch. 14)
December 5, 7	Decision Making (Ch. 14) Drug Addiction and the Brain (TBA)
December 12	Exam #3
Wednesday, December 21	<i>Projected Final Exam date (9a - 12p)</i>

* Any changes to this schedule will be announced in lecture.