

Mind, Brain, and Behavior

W1010 TR 6:10-7:25PM

Instructor:

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Welcome to Mind, Brain and Behavior...

This course is designed to introduce you to the brain and how we use it to think about our world. We will be examining the function of the brain from the cellular level up to the "whole brain" by examining several types of research. By understanding how the brain functions, cognitive neuroscientists hope to examine the mystery of human thought processes, and ultimately the biology of conscious thought and awareness. This course satisfies the Core Curriculum Science Requirement, and is appropriate for non-science majors. We will be dealing with cognitive psychology, biology, chemistry and physics, but will approach it from a basic level so that all can participate. Emphasis will be placed on understanding experimental design and interpreting the results of research experiments.

Required Readings:

The text for this course is Purves, et al., (2008) Principles of Cognitive Neuroscience; Sinauer Associates. The text is available at the Columbia University Bookstore, or can be purchased online from the publisher or other online sellers. This text has been used in previous semesters, so used copies may be available. Supplemental readings will be posted on Courseworks.

Grading, Attendance and Course Requirements:

Exams will cover class notes, text, and supplemental readings. The material in the text will be supplemented in the lecture, and the exams will cover text, supplemental readings, and material presented in lecture that may not be covered in the text or readings. Lecture outlines will be available within 48 hours after each class (posted on Courseworks), but should not replace attending the lecture. Study guides will be posted for each topic to help you organize the material and your study time. I strongly encourage you to make use of the outlines and study guides in preparation for exams as well as the companion website provided by the publisher (www.sinauer.com/cogneuro). If you need accommodations for exams you must have all approvals completed before the first midterm. Make-up examinations will only be allowed in the event of a documented emergency (illness severe enough to require hospitalization, death in the family, etc), and will require written permission from your dean and my permission. IF you are given permission for a makeup exam, it will take place from 4:30 to 5:45 one week after the scheduled exam date. There are no make-up exams for the final. There are no exceptions to this policy for any reason.

There are 2 written assignments required for this course. You will need to find a popular press report of a cognitive neuroscience research finding, and critically compare the reported findings with the original research report. Details of this assignment are posted on Courseworks, and the due dates are listed below. Course grades are determined as follows: Exams – 30% each; Written Assignments – 5% each. Late written assignments will not be accepted.

Extra credit may be earned by participating in ongoing research and writing a brief summary of the experimental hypothesis and expected results. One point will be added to the midterm exam grade for each credit of experimental participation (including the written summary). You can earn a maximum of 5 additional points to each of the 2 midterms; no extra credit will be given for the final exam. Extra credit must be completed and handed in at the time of the midterm. Details on the extra credit option are posted on Courseworks.

If you find you are struggling, please make an appointment to see me or one of your TAs as soon as possible so we can help you master this material.

