

PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS

PSY308 Biopsychology Fall 2009

Location: NOA 1.124 **Time:** TTH 12:30-2:00p **Unique:** 43990

Instructor: Prof. Theresa Jones, office: Seay Hall 5.248, email: tj@psy.utexas.edu

Phone: 232-1814; **Office Hours:** W 2-3, Th 2-3 and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Aaron Asay, office: SW7 Room 103, email: aaronlasay@mail.utexas.edu

Office Hours: T 11-12, W 12-1 and by appointment

Content: Introduction to the biological bases of psychological processes and behavior. Our emotional experiences, personal identity, motor skills, sexuality, complex thoughts and other behaviors are all a product of our brain and the rest of the nervous system. Biopsychology is the study of the biological basis of behavior. This course covers basic concepts, findings and research in the field of Biopsychology.

Textbook: Biopsychology, John PJ Pinel, 7th edition

Schedule:

The course is composed of 4 segments, each ending in a test. The first segment is focused on developing the language of neuroscience and learning basic principles of neuroanatomy and neurophysiology. The second covers sensory systems, including vision, audition, somatosensation and taste and smell. The third segment is focused on hormones and the neurobiology of sex, sleep and other behaviors. The last is focused on learning, neural plasticity and select brain disorders and dysfunction. A more specific schedule will be available by the first class meeting.

Grading

TESTS

Tests 1-4 make up 98% of the final grade. The tests include material from lectures, readings and points brought up in discussion during class. They will emphasize material listed in the schedule. However, they may also include knowledge of material covered in previous exams. The tests include multiple choice, matching, true-false and short answers. Each of the 4 tests counts 24.5% toward the final grade.

There are no make-up tests. If a test is missed, it is given a score of "0". Your grade will then be based on the remaining 3 tests plus test 5.

Test 5 is comprehensive and will be held during final exams. If you have taken all of the first 4 tests, it is optional. If your test 5 grade is higher than any of your first 4 test grades, then the worst of the first 4 tests grades will be dropped and substituted with the test 5 grade. If your test 5 grade is the lowest of your 5 tests, then it will be dropped. Test 5 counts 24.5% toward your final grade.

Final Exam: Thursday, December 10, 2:00–5:00 pm

During the tests, students are encouraged to make written comments explaining their choice of answers to specific questions. These comments sometimes result in partial credit given for incorrect answers and never result in a further reduction in credit. After the tests, students may dispute the answers in writing only. Convincing written explanations that are provided after the test may result in partial or full credit for the question. Extremely poor explanations will result in an additional reduction in credit equal to the total value of the disputed question(s).

Class Participation

Class participation credit counts 2% towards the final grade. This includes participation in short thought questions during class and attendance.

Computation of grades

Each test is computed as the total percent correct:

$[(\text{Total number of correct answers} + \text{extra credit points}) \div (\text{Total possible points not including extra credit questions})] \times 100$. Scores are rounded up to the 100th decimal place. The final test grade is determined from the average percent correct on the 4 best tests. After averaging the test grades (98% of the final grade) and adding class participation credit (2% of the final grade), the totals are rounded, i.e., 89.55% = 90%, 89.54% = 89%.

We WILL use the plus/minus grade system this semester.

Grade cutoffs are: 93-100%=A, 90-92%=A-, 87-89%=B+, 83-86%=B, 80-82%=B-, 77-79%=C+, 73-76%=C, 70-72%=C-, 67-69%=D+, 63-66%=D, 60-62%=D-, Less than 60%=F

Prerequisites: The Psychology Department will drop all students who do not meet the prerequisite: PSY 301 with a C or better.

Special Needs: The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY. If they certify your needs, I will work with you to make appropriate arrangements.