

Biopsychology
PSYC 372 – 001
Fall 2019

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Brielmaier

E-mail address: jbrielma@gmu.edu

Class time: MW 1:30-2:45 pm

Class location: Buchanan Hall D001

Office phone #: 703-993-1469

Office location: DK 2044

Office hours: W 3-4 pm and by appointment

Office hours signup: <https://brielmaiersontag.youcanbook.me/>

Course description:

Biopsychology is the branch of psychology that investigates the biological bases of normal and abnormal behavior. Topics include the structure of the nervous system, neural communication, research methods, sleep, reproduction, eating, cognitive processes, emotion, and psychiatric conditions. A special emphasis will be placed on clinical applications of course material and on biopsychology research findings that have shed light on the brain-behavior relationship.

This course will consist of a series of lectures, in-class assignments and activities, online quizzes, and in-class exams. All course tasks are described in detail below.

Required textbook:

Pinel, J.P.J. (2013) *Biopsychology*, 10th Edition. ISBN: 9780134203690

Course goals:

By the end of the semester, you should be able to...

- describe the layout and general functions of the nervous system.
- compare and contrast the different approaches and research methods used in biopsychology.
- explain the biological underpinnings of various normal and abnormal behaviors.
- draw connections between course content and “real world” problems/current events.

Course Tasks:

- **Readings:** Assigned readings will consist of chapters from the textbook. Our time together in class will be much more productive if you come to class prepared. Part of being prepared is completing all readings **before** you come to class. You don't need to understand every word, but you should have a clear idea of the overall concepts addressed.
- **In-Class Assignments:** I will provide time during most class meetings for you to complete a written assignment during class. Assignments will relate to that day's material and will address topics that will be on the exams. Therefore, it is highly encouraged that you attend each class and complete the assignments. Depending on the week, assignments will be completed individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Bringing your textbook and notes to class will help you complete the assignments. You will submit the assignments **in class** online via Blackboard (either typed on your laptop/tablet or uploaded as a photo). Assignments will be graded based on completion as opposed to accuracy. However, you must address all questions in

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order to receive credit. You are allowed to drop two of these assignments with penalty; thus, there will be no make-ups. These assignments will account for 10% of your final grade.

- **Chapter Quizzes:** Following completion of all lectures activities for a chapter, you will take an **online** chapter quiz via Blackboard. All quiz questions are multiple-choice and cover topics that will appear on exams. Quizzes are open book/note and timed, and you may only take each quiz once. Quizzes must be completed by 11:59 pm on their specific (Sunday) due dates (see schedule below). There will be a total of 12 chapter quizzes, and your lowest two quiz grades will be dropped. Thus 10 quizzes will count toward your final grade for a total of 15% of your final grade.
- **Exams:** There will be a total of three exams consisting of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. Each exam accounts for 20% of your final grade (60% total). There is an **optional** cumulative final exam that may be taken to replace the lowest of your 3 exam scores.
- **“5 Minutes of Fame” Presentation:** Each student will select a news item describing a recent biopsychology study and create a 5-minute presentation based on the news item AND the actual research report. This will be done using Padlet’s screen recording feature. You will share the link to your news item and original research report in advance using a dedicated Class Discussion Board forum (see schedule below). In addition to recording your own presentation, you will select and watch 5 other students’ presentations and write 1-paragraph summaries of each presentation you watch. Your presentation and summaries will together account for 10% of your final grade.

Attendance and Makeup Policies:

- **Attendance:** Attendance *per se* is not part of your grade for this course. However, arriving late, leaving early and/or failing to attend class will adversely affect your in-class assignment grade and will interfere with your ability to learn the course material. With that being said, I understand that emergencies do come up. If you must miss a class, please go to a classmate first for notes. I will be glad to meet with you about any questions after you do this. I also welcome questions via email anytime. If you must arrive to class early or leave late, please seat yourself as close to the door as possible to avoid any sort of disruption. **NOTE: You are responsible for all announcements and any syllabus modifications made in class each week whether you are present or not.**
- **Assignment Makeup Policy:** Because you are allowed to drop two in-class assignments without penalty, makeups are not allowed. Because they count for extra credit, makeup quizzes are not allowed under any circumstances, including arriving late to class the day a quiz is given. 5 Minutes of Fame presentations or summaries turned in late without written medical/emergency documentation or my advance consent will incur a grade penalty of 10% per day.
- **Exam Makeup Policy:** If you fail to take Exam 1, 2 or 3 on the scheduled date, you will need to plan on taking the final exam in order to make up for the missing grade.

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Permission to postpone exams will only be given for very acute and important reasons, at my discretion, and may incur a grade penalty of 10% per day.

Class Cancellation Policy:

In the event that I need to cancel class, you will be notified about the cancellation and any makeup plans via email and/or Blackboard as soon as possible. Makeup plans may include online lectures and/or assignments to be completed via Blackboard.

Grading Breakdown:

Breakdown: In-Class Assignments (10%) + Chapter Quizzes (15%) + Exams (60%) + 5 Minutes of Fame Presentation (15%) = 100%

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale

| Letter Grade | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------------|
| A | 89.50% or above |
| B | 79.50%-89.49% |
| C | 69.50%-79.49% |
| D | 59.50%-69.49% |
| F | < 59.49% |

Note: +/- grades will be assigned per GMU policy.

Incomplete (IN) grades will be assigned only in cases of compelling and documented need, in accordance with policies set forth in the University Catalog.

Official Communications via GMU Email:

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason email account, and are required to activate that account and **check it regularly**.

Technology Statement:

Required knowledge of technology for this course includes ability to retrieve additional materials sent via email to your GMU address and/or posted on Blackboard. Please be sure you have access to Blackboard and that your GMU email account is active. I will post relevant information and documents via the latest version of Microsoft Office, so make sure to have the latest version of office or download the converter in order to read all important documents. *Policy on technology in the classroom:* Laptops and tablets are permitted. The use of cell phones is discouraged. Anyone found using their device for something other than course-related work will not earn credit for the in-class assignment given that day (or for the following class if no assignment is given that day).

Special Needs:

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class,

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please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500.
Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

Student Services:

- **Counseling and Psychological Services:** The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance (See <http://caps.gmu.edu>).
- **Student Support and Advocacy Center:** The George Mason University Student Support and Advocacy Center offers one-on-one support to students, interactive programming, and off-campus resources. Some of the topic areas they address include healthy relationships, stress management, nutrition, sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, stalking, drug and alcohol use, and sexual health. See <http://ssac.gmu.edu> for more information.

The GMU Honor Code will be strictly enforced. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be reported to the University Honor Board and/or penalized. Plagiarism is defined as using another's work (e.g. words or ideas) without giving proper credit. Sources of information used in all coursework must be properly cited so as to avoid plagiarism. The instructor for this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation. Here is an online quiz that you can take to check your knowledge about what is and is not plagiarism:
<http://www.easybib.com/guides/quiz-is-it-plagiarism/>.

Religious Holidays:

Please refer to George Mason University's calendar of religious holidays and observations (<http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/>). It is the student's responsibility to speak to the instructor in advance should their religious observances impact their participation in class activities and assignments.

Student Privacy:

George Mason University strives to fully comply with FERPA by protecting the privacy of student records and judiciously evaluating requests for release of information from those records. Please see George Mason University's student privacy policy
<https://registrar.gmu.edu/students/privacy/>

Add/drop deadlines:

Last day to add/drop with 100% tuition refund Sept 9
Last day to drop with partial tuition refund Sept 17
Last day to drop with no tuition refund Sept 30

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Tentative Schedule

NOTE: You are responsible for all announcements and any syllabus modifications made in class each week whether you are present or not.

| Class Dates | Topic | Readings/ Assignments Due | Other Deadlines (Due BY 11:59 pm on date listed) |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Aug 26 Aug 28 | Course Intro Biopsychology as a Neuroscience | Chapter 1: 1.1-1.3 | |
| Sept 2 Sept 4 | LABOR DAY – NO CLASS Biopsych as a Neuroscience (cont.) | Chapter 1: 1.4-1.7 | Sept 8: Ch. 1 Quiz |
| Sept 9 & 11 | Anatomy of the Nervous System | Chapter 3 | Sept 15: Ch. 3 Quiz |
| Sept 16 & 18 | Neural Conduction and Synaptic Transmission | Chapter 4 | Sept 22: Ch. 4 Quiz |
| Sept 23 & 25 | Research Methods of Biopsychology | Chapter 5 | Sept 29: Ch. 5 Quiz |
| Sept 30 Oct 2 | EXAM 1: Chapters 1, 3, 4, 5 Development | Chapter 9 9.1-9.5 | Oct 6: Ch. 9 Quiz |
| Oct 7 & 9 | Hunger, Eating and Health | Chapter 12 | Oct 13: Ch. 12 Quiz |
| Oct 15 & 16 | Hormones & Sex | Chapter 13 | Oct 20: Ch. 13 Quiz |
| Oct 21 & 23 | Sleep, Dreaming and Circadian Rhythms | Chapter 14 | Oct 27: Ch. 14 Quiz |
| Oct 28 Oct 30 | EXAM 2: Chapters 9, 12, 13, 14 Presentation Guidelines | | |
| Nov 4 & 6 | Learning, Memory and Amnesia | Chapter 11 | Nov 10: Ch. 11 Quiz |
| Nov 11 & 13 | Lateralization, Language and the Split Brain | Chapter 16 11/14: 5 MOF Article Due (on Blackboard Disc Board) | Nov 17: Ch. 16 Quiz |
| Nov 18 & 20 | Biopsychology of Emotion, Stress and Health | Chapter 17: 17.1-17.5 | Nov 24: Ch. 17 Quiz |
| Nov 25 Nov 27 | Biopsychology of Psychiatric Disorders Thanksgiving Recess – NO CLASS | Chapter 18: 18.1-18.2 | Dec 1: Post 5 MOF to Padlet wall |
| Dec 2 Dec 4 | Psychiatric Disorders (cont.) EXAM 3: Chapters 11, 16, 17, 18 | Chapter 18: 18.3-18.4 | Dec 8: Ch. 18 Quiz |
| Dec 11 | Optional FINAL EXAM 1:30-4:15 pm | | Dec 15: 5 MOF Summaries Due |