**Instructor:** Dr. Jennifer Brielmaier **E-mail address:** jbrielma@gmu.edu

**Class time:** Online

**Virtual office hours:** Thursday 12-1 pm

Last day to add Feb 1

Last day to drop with 100% tuition refund Feb 12

Last day to drop with 50% tuition refund Feb 16

**Course Description:**

This is the second semester of a two-part course on the relationship between the nervous system, cognition, and behavior. In the first semester (PSYC 375), you learned about neurons and neuronal function, basic brain anatomy, and the sensory systems (auditory, visual, somatosensory and chemical). In this semester, you will learn about the neurobiological bases of selected behaviors and cognitive processes. A special emphasis will be placed on clinical applications of course material and on neuroscience research findings that have shed light on the intricacies of the brain-behavior relationship.

This online course consists of a series of lecture videos and supplementary materials, with assignments and exams all to be completed online. The course is asynchronous, meaning you do not have to log in at a specific time. There will, however, be weekly deadlines. There is also an end of semester video presentation. All assignments are described in detail below.

**Required Text:** Bear, M.F. (2015). Neuroscience: Exploring the Brain (4th edition). Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins. ISBN: 9781451109542

**Course Objectives:** As a result of completing work in this course, students will be able to:

* Describe the structure and function of brain systems controlling selected examples of behaviors and cognitive processes
* Describe neurochemical and hormonal influences on behavior and cognition
* Explain the neurobiological bases of various psychiatric and neurological disorders
* Communicate information about a specific course-related topic to a lay audience

**Course Tasks:**

* **Readings:** You should read the assigned chapters of the textbook prior to watching the lecture videos.At certain points during the course, the lectures will coincide closely with the textbook, while at other points the lectures may diverge a bit. In the case of divergence, consider the lecture recordings as the primary material and that from which all exam questions will be derived. **Material contained within textbook chapters that is not covered in lecture videos will NOT be included on exams.**
* **Weekly Assignments:** Each week a short written assignment consisting of one or more questions will be posted in the chapter modules on Blackboard. These assignments are designed to reinforce and/or extend your learning of the chapter material. Your grade on these assignments will be determined by effort, not by correctness. You should attempt to answer each question using your class notes, textbook etc. You may see similar questions on the exams. I will go over the assignments in office hours and/or in weekly messages to the class. You will submit the assignments online via Blackboard (either typed on your laptop/tablet or uploaded as a photo). Assignments will be due by 11:59 pm on Mondays. **Late submissions will not be accepted for credit.** However, you are allowed to miss two of these assignments without penalty. These assignments will account for 15% of your final grade.
* **Participation in Weekly Discussion Boards:** A sense of community is an important element for successful learning in an online course.Every week you will have the opportunity to earn credit for participation in the weekly discussion board. You are required to make one post to this board each week for full credit. The first Discussion Board is an “Introduce Yourself” discussion, where you can post information about yourself so we can get to know each other. Subsequent weekly discussions are open-ended but must pertain to one or more chapter topics. Suggestions for weekly posts include: questions about a course topic or concept, comments about the weekly assignment, interesting videos/articles, etc. You can earn participation credit by responding to another student’s post; however, your post must be deemed by me to be substantive and specific. Generic posts such as “great post”, “I agree”, or “good question” will not count. Credit for these posts is “all or none”. **Late posts will not be accepted for credit.** However, you are allowed to miss two posts without penalty. Participation will count for 10% of your final grade.
* **Exams:** There will be a total of three regular exams consisting of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. Exams will be administered via Blackboard using the Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor software. Each exam accounts for 20% of your final grade (60% total). There is an **optional** cumulative final exam (all multiple choice) that may be taken to replace the lowest of your 3 exam scores. The final exam will also be given online. Each exam will be made available for a time window of a few days.
* **“5 Minute Fact” Video:** Explaining complex concepts to a lay audience requires a deep understanding of the topic and is an important skill for scientists to learn. Toward the end of the semester, each of you will create a short (~5 minute) video on a topic relevant to the brain-behavior relationship and share it with the class. You should strive to make your video entertaining yet informative. See the Society for Neuroscience Brain Awareness video contest winners for inspiration: <https://www.brainfacts.org/for-educators/programs-and-events/brain-awareness-video-contest>. As part of your grade you will summarize and critique 3 other students’ videos. Together your video and summaries count for 15% of your final grade.

**Grading Breakdown:**

In-Class Assignments (15%) + Weekly Discussion Posts (10%) + Exams (3 x 20% = 60%) + “5 Minute Fact” Video (15%) = 100%

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

A+ 97% or above B+ 87-89% C+ 77-79% D 60-69%

A 93-96% B 83-86% C 73-76% F 59% & below

A- 90-92% B- 80-82% C- 70-72%

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

# Schedule

***NOTE:*** You are responsible for knowing about all announcements and any syllabus or schedule modifications made via Blackboard and/or email.

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| **Week** | **Topic** | **Assignments Due** |
| Week 1  Tue 01/26-Mon 02/01  02/01 Last Day to Add | Getting Started  Course Introduction | **Mon 02/01 by 11:59 pm:**  Review technology, links, and Course Overview on Getting Started page  Introduce yourself on the class Discussion Board forum |
| Week 2  Tue 02/02-Mon 02/08 | Chapter 13: Spinal Control of Movement | **Mon 02/08 by 11:59 pm:**  Ch. 13 Assignment  Post to Ch. 13 Discussion |
| Week 3  Tue 02/09-Mon 02/15  02/12 Last Day to Drop | Chapter 14: Brain Control of Movement | **Mon 02/15 by 11:59 pm:**  Ch. 14 Assignment  Post to Ch. 14 Discussion |
| Week 4  Tue 02/16-Mon 02/22 | Chapter 15: Chemical Control of the Brain and Behavior | **Mon 02/22 by 11:59 pm:**  Ch. 15 Assignment  Post to Ch. 15 Discussion |
| Week 5  Tue 02/23-Mon 03/01 | Chapter 16: Motivation | **Mon 03/01 by 11:59 pm:**  Ch. 16 Assignment  Post to Ch. 16 Discussion |
| Week 6  Tue 03/02-Mon 03/08 | **Exam 1 Prep and Exam**  **(Chapters 13, 14, 15, 16)**  **Exam opens 12 am Thurs 03/04** | **Mon 03/08 by 11:59 pm:**  **Exam 1** |
| Week 7  Tue 03/09-Mon 03/15 | Chapter 19: Brain Rhythms and Sleep | **Mon 03/15 by 11:59 pm:**  Ch. 19 Assignment  Post to Ch. 19 Discussion |
| Week 8  Tue 03/16-Mon 03/22 | Chapter 24: Memory Systems | **Mon 03/22 by 11:59 pm:**  Ch. 24 Assignment  Post to Ch. 24 Discussion |
| Week 9  Tue 03/23-Mon 03/29 | Chapter 25: Molecular Mechanisms of Learning/Memory | **Mon 03/29 by 11:59 pm:**  Ch. 25 Assignment  Post to Ch. 25 Discussion |
| Week 10  Tue 03/30-Mon 04/05 | **Exam 2 Prep and Exam**  **(Chapters 17, 19, 24, 25)**  **Exam opens 12 am Thurs 04/01** | **Mon 04/05 by 11:59 pm:**  **Exam 2** |
| Week 11  Tue 04/06-Mon 04/12 | Chapter 20: Language | **Mon 04/12 by 11:59 pm:**  Ch. 20 Assignment  Post to Ch. 20 Discussion  **5 Min Fact Video Plan Due** |
| Week 12  Tue 04/13-Mon 04/19 | Chapter 18: Brain Mechanisms of Emotion | **Mon 04/19 by 11:59 pm:**  Ch. 18 Assignment  Post to Ch. 18 Discussion |
| Week 13  Tue 04/20-Mon 04/26 | Chapter 22: Mental Disorders | **Mon 04/26 by 11:59 pm:**  Ch. 22 Assignment  Post to Ch. 22 Discussion  **5 Min Fact Video Upload Deadline** |
| Week 14  Tue 04/27-Mon 05/03 | **Exam 3 Prep and Exam (Chapters 18, 20, 22)**  **Exam opens 12 am Thurs 04/29** | **Mon 05/03 by 11:59 pm:**  **Exam 3** |
| Week 15  Tue 05/04-Mon 05/10 | **OPTIONAL Final Exam Prep and Exam (All Chapters)**  **Exam opens 12 am Thu 05/06** | **Mon 05/10 by 11:59 pm:**  **OPTIONAL Final Exam**  **5 Min Fact Video Summaries** |

**Late/makeup work policy:**

As noted above, makeups for weekly assignments and discussion posts will not be permitted given that students may drop two without penalty. Permission to postpone exams or the 5 Minute Fact video will only be given to those with the relevant accommodations from the Office of Disability Services or for very acute and important reasons, with documentation and at my discretion. A 10% per day late penalty may be applied in these situations.

Students are responsible for checking the GMU Academic Calendar and making sure they are available to complete coursework throughout the entire semester. For an online course this means ensuring you have reliable Internet access from beginning to end. **Exams and other work may not be postponed due to travel occurring during the semester**; nor can the final exam be taken earlier than the scheduled timeframe.

**Commitment to an inclusive learning environment:**

Your experience in this class is important to me. It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds, perspectives and circumstances be well served by this course and that students’ learning needs are addressed. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment of your achievement, please notify me as soon as possible and/or contact the Office of Disability Services. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit [http://ds.gmu.edu/](http://ds.gmu.edu/" \t "_blank) 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](mailto:ods@gmu.edu" \t "_blank) | Phone: (703) 993-2474

**Technology statement:**

Required knowledge of technology for this course includes ability to access course materials posted on Blackboard and/or sent via email to your GMU address. To log in to Blackboard, go to the MyMason portal at https://mymason.gmu.edu, enter your PatriotPass credentials (i.e., your Mason email username and password), and select the Courses tab. **Please be sure that you have continuous access to Blackboard and that your GMU email account is active.**

The technology requirements for this online course are as follows:

**Hardware:**

* A Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and to a fast, reliable broadband Internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL).
* Recommended computer monitor and laptop screen size of 13 inches or larger, for optimum visibility of course material.
* Computer speakers or headphones to listen to recorded content.
* A headset microphone for live audio sessions using course tools like Blackboard Collaborate.
* A webcam (built in to your computer or a portable one that can be externally mounted) for taking exams using Respondus Monitor.
* Enough space on your computer to 1) install the required and recommended software and 2) save your course assignments.

**Software:**

* Web browser (See [Blackboard Support](http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/Students/" \t "_blank) for supported web browsers)
* Blackboard Courses (Log into [http://mymason.gmu.edu](https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/" \t "_blank), select the Courses Tab)
* Blackboard Collaborate (select from the course menu)
* Adobe Acrobat Reader ([free download](http://get.adobe.com/reader/" \t "_blank))
* Flash Player ([free download](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/" \t "_blank))
* Microsoft Office ([purchase](http://compstore.gmu.edu/products/microsoft/" \t "_blank))
* Respondus LockDown Browser (download from the myMason home page or with this [link](http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=133435885" \t "_blank" \o "Download Respondus LockDown Browser))

For hardware and software purchases, visit [Patriot Computers](http://compstore.gmu.edu/" \t "_blank).

**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**.

**Academic Integrity:**

George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. See honorcode.gmu.edu for detailed information. You in this course are expected to behave at all times in a manner consistent with [the GMU Honor Code](https://oai.gmu.edu/). Violations of the Honor Code will not be tolerated in this course and will be reported according to GMU procedures. **You must paraphrase any information from a source into your own words. Do not copy anything word for word, even if you are citing the source. Direct quotes are not accepted in problem sets.** The instructor reserves the right to use software to determine the extent to which the work is the student’s.

If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor or utilize the GMU writing center. Here is a great 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/>.

**Student Services:**

* **University Libraries:** University Libraries provides resources for distance students. (See <http://library.gmu.edu/distance> and <http://infoguides.gmu.edu/distance_students>).
* **Writing Center:** The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. (See [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/)). You can now sign up for an Online Writing Lab (OWL) session just like you sign up for a face-to-face session in the Writing Center, which means YOU set the date and time of the appointment! Learn more about the [Online Writing Lab (OWL)](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/?page_id=177#more-177).
* **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](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.

**Religious Holidays:**

Please refer to George Mason University’s calendar of religious holidays and observations ([http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious -holiday-calendar/](http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious%20-holiday-calendar/)). The online asynchronous format of this course offers a great deal of flexibility. If any course deadlines conflict with your religious events, however, please let me know in advance so that we can come up with an acceptable plan.

**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/>

**Copyright statement:**

In accordance with university policy, I hold the copyright on all course materials prepared by me (lecture slides/videos, assignment questions, exam questions, chapter study questions). Reproducing or sharing these materials outside of our course (e.g. on study websites such as Course Hero, Quizlet, or Study Blue) is a copyright violation and will be reported to the Copyright Office. Students who violate the University Copyright Policy may place themselves individually at risk for liability in the event of a claim of copyright infringement.