

Instructor

Vjosa Poshka | she/her (What's this?)

Email

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Questions? Concerns? Tea?

Feel free to email me with questions or concerns you may have after reviewing the syllabus and FAQs on Blackboard. I will do my best to respond to all emails within two business days. Alternatively, I highly encourage you to check-in with me via Zoom by scheduling a meeting (see “Schedule Meeting” tab on Blackboard or click [here](#)). **Short and sweet touch bases >>> drawn out email threads.**

Required Text

I got you—check Blackboard.

Course Overview

First half of a course surveying concepts and principles of neuroscience—including basic neuroanatomy, neural and synaptic transmission, and neural mechanisms of behavior. In this 8-week course, we will review what we know about the brain, how it guides sensory processes, and future areas of research opportunity.

In this course, students will (1) learn the fundamental principles and theories of neuroscience and the neural underpinnings of the senses; (2) approach topics in psychology and neuroscience critically by learning how psychologists develop and test hypotheses; (3) apply in-class concepts to everyday situations.

Add/Drop Deadlines

Last day to add/drop with no tuition liability:
6/3

Course Requirements**Retention Checks (x3, 20 points each, 60 total points)**

You will complete three retention checks that review content from chapters and lectures/slides.

Meme/GIF/Blurb (x2, 5 points each, 10 points total)

Your first assignment for this class is to find and submit one or more memes/GIFs/short blurb describing how you feel going into the course. Your last assignment is to also submit one or more memes/GIFs describing how you feel about the course at the end.

Comm Tasks (x5, 6 points each, 30 points total)

Effective communication skills are necessary in navigating academia (and every other realm of our lives). Throughout the session, you will be expected to complete a range of tasks that facilitate our communication skills.

Me, Myself, and I: As Beyoncé's legendary song goes, it's all we've got in the end. Your health and well-being are priority. Let me know how I can support your experience as a student in this course.

Technology: The use of technology—a device able to connect to the internet—as well as access to Blackboard, and your MasonLive email account are required for this course. Direct all emails to me with the subject line **"PSYCH 375-Your Name"**.

Deadlines & Extensions

Late submissions are no fun. Given that all assignments are due by 5pm, same-day submissions after 5pm will be penalized by 10%. For every day that an assignment is submitted past the deadline, there will be a 20% assignment penalty.

Any messages regarding upcoming assignments must be sent at least 48 hours prior to the assignment deadline to ensure an in-time response from me. If you send me a message about an assignment a few hours before the assignment is due, I can't commit to replying before the deadline, and you will accept responsibility for not submitting work on time. Asking questions about assignments as a delay tactic will not be tolerated.

Extensions on assignments will be reserved only for 1) serious hospitalization or illness that has been documented and judged by me as preventing you from a) preparing adequately for the retention checks; b) reviewing the asynchronous lectures, or c) completing any other assignment; 2) death or serious illness in your family; 3) religious holidays that you may recognize. Documentation must be provided by health officials (e.g., a physician or member of the Student Health Services staff) in the case of illness; an immediate family member in the case of death or serious illness in the family; and official paperwork in the case of court dates. Decisions regarding extensions/makeups under these circumstances will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Accommodations: Disability Services at Mason is committed to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. Please reach out if you require accommodations.

Honor Code: Mason's Honor Code 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.

Our online classroom is a safe space, and there are ground rules that apply to everyone. We commit to upholding fairness, equity, and celebrating diversity. **We will:** make this class welcoming and open for everyone; be aware of our prejudices and how our words affect others; and give others room to explore, define, embrace and express their identities.

Title IX: George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. As a designated "*Responsible Employee*", I am required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking.

Course Assignment Details

Meme/GIF/Blurb (10%)

At the beginning of the session, you need to find a meme/GIF or write a 1-2 sentence blurb describing how you feel about the course based on what you know, so far. It has to be clean and appropriate. Other than that, you're free to find memes/GIFs online and submit them as they are or tweak them, or make your own. Take the creative liberty and run with it! You will do the same thing at the end of the semester, but in that case, your meme/GIF/blurb should reflect how you feel about the class at that point.

Retention Checks (60%)

These are multiple choice, T/F, fill-in-the-blank reviews of material covered in the lecture/ slide decks and textbook chapters. The purpose of this assignment is to maintain engagement and gauge your understanding of the material in the course. Retention Check #1 covers chapters 2-5, Retention Check #2 covers chapters 6 and 7, Retention Check #3 covers chapters 8-12.

Comm(unication) Tasks (30%)

Given that communication is a key element to navigating the academic and social world, it is pivotal that we develop our skills in interacting with one another. We will cover important ground like email etiquette (i.e., emailing faculty), paraphrasing information (e.g., abandoning the tendency to quote excerpts of text directly), and others. Detailed instructions for each comm task and grading criteria will be provided on Blackboard.

Grading Scale

A+	97-100	A	93-96	A-	90-92
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
		D	65-69		
		F	Failing		

Course Schedule (subject to change)

Topic	Chapter	Assignment Deadlines
Neurons and Glia	2	Meme/GIF/Blurb #1 due by 5pm on 6/4
The Neuronal Membrane at Rest	3	Comm task #1 due by 5pm on 6/9
The Action Potential	4	Comm task #2 due by 5pm on 6/14
Synaptic Transmission	5	Retention Check #1 due by 5pm on 6/17
Neurotransmitter Systems	6	Comm task #3 due by 5pm on 6/25
The Structure of the Nervous System	7	Retention Check #2 due by 5pm on 6/28
The Chemical Senses	8	
The Eye	9	Comm task #4 due by 5pm on 7/7
The Central Visual System	10	Comm task #5 due by 5pm on 7/12
The Auditory and Vestibular Systems	11	Meme/GIF/Blurb #2 due by 5pm on 7/13
The Somatic Sensory System	12	Retention Check #3 due by 5pm on 7/13