Psych 3FA3: Neurobiology of Learning and Memory  
(2006-2007, Term 1)

Instructor:  
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Tutorial Leaders:  
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Weekly Schedule:  
Wednesday, 7-10pm  
Lecture/Presentation: HH302  
Group discussion: HH305, HH104

Virtual Classroom:  
http://www.learnlink.mcmaster.ca

Course Description  
This course will explore empirical and theoretical accounts surrounding the neural basis of learning and memory. Neural mechanisms will be discussed from several perspectives ranging from cognitive neuroscience to synaptic physiology. Students will attain some understanding of the rationale and methodology of a variety of strategies that are used in the investigation of the neural mechanisms underlying learning and memory. The course will start with a historical perspective and an overview of the multiple memory systems. This model emphasizes the fact that memory is composed of multiple, separable systems that are associated with specific neurobiological substrates. A number of brain mechanisms subserving learning and memory at the systems level, cellular level, and molecular level will subsequently be discussed.

The lectures, required and supplementary readings, in conjunction with student discussion/presentations, are meant to provide students with both an overview of some of the currently "hot" areas in the field as well as some basic tools useful for research in this field. Moreover, students are expected, through active learning (discussions, presentations, and written critiques), to gain experience in critically evaluating research literature and in communicating ideas through written and oral presentations.

During 4 of the 12 weeks, for the entire 3 hours of class, introductory material will be covered in a traditional lecture format. In 8 of the 12 weeks, for 1 hour only, introductory lectures will be given by the instructor. There will be another hour of student group discussions, and another hour of class presentations/discussions.

Reading Materials  
Required readings (available in Campus Bookstore):  
- Psychology 3FA3 courseware

Background readings
Supplementary readings
**Overall Requirements**

The course includes three learning formats:

- Reading
- Lectures
- Discussions/Presentations/Critiques

**Readings**

- The textbook by Eichenbaum will provide background information for the lectures. Some other supplementary reading materials will also be recommended.
- The required readings provided in the courseware are organized into 8 topic modules (see page 3-5 for a list/schedule). For the 8 modules, students will be required to read:
  a) One review paper,
  b) One or two empirical papers, and
  c) A written commentary based on the empirical papers (for most modules).

**Lectures**

In weeks 1, 2, 3 and 12, there will be 3 hours of lectures in every class. From week 4 to week 11, lectures will take place only for an hour (with the exception of Oct 25 when one hour will be devoted to midterm exam). All lectures will be held in HH302.

**Discussion/Presentations/Critiques (weeks 4-11)**

For these 8 weeks, the first two hours of the classes will be reserved for group discussions (room to be determined) and class presentations by selected groups (HH302). Students will work in groups of 5-7. Each group of students will be assigned specific tasks for the 8 topic modules.

- **Discussions**: each group will discuss the empirical papers listed for the target module prior to the class presentation. At the end of the one-hour discussion, the group will be required to hand in a written summary of the issues discussed.
- **Presentations**: Each group will be assigned 2 of the 8 modules for which they will be responsible for giving a formal presentation of the empirical papers to the class (half of the class). The other six groups will attend the presentation and participate in the discussions. For a given week, the presentation in class is done by two groups (one as a primary presenter, the other as a “commentator”).
- **Critiques**: Each student will be required to write critiques for any 2 of the 8 modules (but not the ones they are presenting). The content of the critiques should be discussed in the groups; however, the critiques must be written individually, not as a group.

During that 8 weeks, half of the class will spend the 1st hour holding their group discussions (room to be determined) and spend their 2nd hour listening or presenting in the group presentations session; the other half of the class will have the opposite schedule (i.e., 1st hour group presentation and 2nd hour group discussion). See below for a complete schedule of which groups will be responsible for PRESENTING which modules.
The two modules that each group will be presenting in class:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st hour</th>
<th>2nd hour</th>
<th>Group #</th>
<th>A1</th>
<th>A2</th>
<th>A3</th>
<th>A4</th>
<th>A5</th>
<th>A6</th>
<th>A7</th>
<th>A8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion (for the module presented this week)</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>As primary presenters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Group #</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>B3</td>
<td>B4</td>
<td>B5</td>
<td>B6</td>
<td>B7</td>
<td>B8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion (for the module presented next week)</td>
<td>As primary presenters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As commentators</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Topics to be covered and reading schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture and presentation topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept 13 - Course overview- Introduction to the research ideas, History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept 20 - History (con’t), Lecture on the multiple memory systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sept 27 - Lecture on the multiple memory systems (con’t)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Oct 4 - Presentation on module 1: Multiple memory systems I &amp; Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Oct 11 - Presentation on module 2: Multiple memory systems II &amp; Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Oct 18 - Presentation on module 3: Perceptual learning &amp; Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 25 - Presentation on module 4: Hippocampus: Spatial learning in humans I &amp; <strong>Midterm Exam</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nov 1 - Presentation on module 5: Hippocampus: Spatial learning in humans II &amp; Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nov 8 - Presentation on module 6: Hippocampus: place cells &amp; Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nov 15 - Presentation on module 7: LTP I: behavioural approaches &amp; Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 22 - Presentation on module 8: LTP II: cellular approaches &amp; Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 29 - Lecture &amp; Review and Final Exam Tutorial</td>
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Evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Marked by</th>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORK AS A GROUP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Discussion Notes</td>
<td>TAs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation as primary presenter</td>
<td>Instructor/TAs/Peers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation as commentator</td>
<td>Instructor/TAs/Peers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORK AS AN INDIVIDUAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Critiques (Total 2)</td>
<td>TAs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within group</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instructor/TAs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Exam</td>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Required Reading for each module  
(revised from the version in the courseware)

Please note the change from the table of content of the courseware. The total number of modules has been changed from 9 (specified in courseware) to 8. Module 4 in the courseware has been deleted. The order number for the subsequent modules should be changed accordingly.

The items highlighted in yellow are the review/background papers for the module. For the modules without such papers listed, use the review paper in the previous module.

The empirical papers are the items underlined. Those are the ones that you are supposed to (1) discuss in group and generate written minutes, (2) write critiques, or (3) present in-class

The rest of the papers are commentary to the empirical papers.

1. Multiple memory systems I
   

2. Multiple memory systems II

3. Perceptual learning: visual system
   

Please note that Module 4 in the courseware has been deleted. The order number for the subsequent modules should be changed accordingly.
4. Hippocampus: Spatial learning in humans I


5. Hippocampus: Spatial learning in humans II


6. Hippocampus: place cells


7. LTP I: behavioural works


8. LTP II: cellular approaches


Detailed Requirements

Presentations
- The group discussion and in-class presentation should be based on the empirical papers listed in each module.
- The primary presenting group should present the basic findings (max 20 minutes).
- The “commentator” group should make comments on the paper (max 15 minutes) and explore the broader issue(s) related to the empirical papers. For the issues to be addressed, this group may follow the guidelines for writing the 2nd part of a critique.
- Each group may elect a few members to give the presentation in class but all group members must participate in the preparation of the presentations and the answering of questions during/following the presentation.
- Oral presentations will be graded by class as well as by the instructor, based on the content delivered, the logical flow of ideas, and the presentation style.
- The presentations should incorporate proper audiovisual aids (e.g., Powerpoint slides) and handouts if necessary. The final version of the presentation slides should be sent to the instructor electronically the day of the presentation (preferably before the presentation). This will enable the instructor to post the materials on web for other students to preview/review.

Critiques
- For 2 of the 8 modules (NOT the module they are responsible for presenting), students are expected to write a critique based on all empirical papers listed for that module. Students will be given the opportunity to write three critiques, in which case, the two critiques with the highest marks will be included in the final grade.
- The critique is due one day after the date that is designated for presentations. Late critiques will not be accepted.
- See separate sheet below for detailed instructions for the suggested content of the critique.

Participation graded for within group performance by peer group members
- At the end of the term, each member will be required to hand in a written evaluation of the contributions of each of their group members.
- Both, grades (in terms of %) and a written justification should be provided for ALL aspects of participation (e.g. including intellectual contribution and contribution of time and effort, etc).
- Typically, all group members will be given the same grade for the discussion note and presentation, however the instructor reserves the right to factor-in peer evaluations, and may adjust the presentation marks for certain individuals accordingly (e.g., those who contribute very little to the joint effort).

Participation graded by instructor/TAs:

Participation grades will be assigned based on the student's performance in the following aspects:
- Attendance in class and at group meetings and punctuality
- Active learning
  - Contributions to class and group discussions
  - Contributions to LearnLink discussions
Contributions to literature search (students are encouraged to share suitable articles with the group and class, possibly through LearnLink)

- Showing initiative in organizing group activities

- Providing extensive and informative feedback to other students on their oral presentation, by completing a very brief evaluation form at the end of each presentation

- Providing feedback and suggestions to the teaching of this course (e-mail to the instructor)

Exams
The written exams (closed book) will cover lecture and required readings materials. Midterm tests can only be written at the times indicated. There will be no make-up tests or special sessions for any student. Students with valid reasons for missing a midterm test must consult the Dean of Studies office for their faculty (e.g. Science or Social Science). If (and only if) there is adequate written justification for missing the test, such students will have their grades proportionately re-weighted, increasing the relative contribution of the other portion of the grades. The exams will consist of short answer and essay questions.

Final grades will be assigned according to the following conventional scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>90-100</th>
<th>85-89</th>
<th>80-84</th>
<th>77-79</th>
<th>73-76</th>
<th>70-72</th>
<th>67-69</th>
<th>63-66</th>
<th>60-62</th>
<th>57-59</th>
<th>53-56</th>
<th>50-52</th>
<th>0-49</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The instructor reserves the right to adjust final marks up or down, on an individual basis, in light of special circumstances and/or the individual's overall performance in the course.

Message from the Chair of Psychology
The instructor cannot be responsible for returning long distance calls from students. Any student wishing to reach an instructor is invited to e-mail the instructor.

Policy Reminder
Attention is drawn to the Statement on Academic Ethics and the Senate Resolutions on Academic Dishonesty as found in the Senate Policy Statements distributed at registration and available in the Senate Office. Any student who infringes one of these resolutions will be treated according to the published policy.
Guidelines for Psych 3FA3 Critiques

The goal of writing a critique is to allow students to attain a deeper understanding of some of the major issues with the topic of the neurobiology of learning and memory and to provide experience in critically evaluating primary source materials in scientific literature.

Each critique must be written in APA style, typed in 12-point font, and the length should be no more than 2 double-spaced pages with 1-inch margins, excluding references. Papers that do not meet these criteria will not be accepted.

Generally, the critique should accomplish two things. First it should try to summarize the important message delivered in the article (half to one page). Second, it should include a discussion of the theoretical implications and their relation to the broader literature.

1. The summary section might include short discussions of:
   a. the research issue addressed in the article
   b. the experimental method and hypothesis
   c. whether the empirical findings of the paper support the hypothesis and/or theoretical conclusions

2. The critical analysis could include (but not be limited to) the following:
   a. Methodological issues
      i. whether the data presented supports the authors' claims as stated in the article.
      ii. some factors that were not controlled in a study or other ways in which it was incomplete.
   b. Suggestions
      i. further analysis of the data already collected that could tell us something more
      ii. logical alternatives to the authors' explanations of their results
      iii. relevance to theories and phenomena not discussed by the authors
      iv. additional predictions or experiments that could come out of the conclusions
      v. related issues that could be studied by similar approaches
      vi. possible next steps for the research program
   c. Relevance to other studies - relating the results to other findings in the literature
      i. relating the study to the greater theoretical context; how the findings of this paper extend our knowledge of this area of research (why is this study important and interesting?)
   d. Cite at least 2 other related references (empirical papers) from the literature other than the primary source paper. Websites, textbooks, and other secondary source materials may be used, but are not sufficient on their own.