

PNB 2XF3: Perspectives in PNB

Winter 2019

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Office Hours with TAs or Dr. Obhi: By appointment. Please prepare early and contact the TA/instructor as soon as possible. Please note, no guarantee can be made that you will receive a response if you make last minute inquiries, so be sure to request a meeting as early as possible to give the TA/instructor time to respond.

Course Text: Obhi, S. S. (2016) Success in Seminars and Tutorials, Oxford University Press (available at campus bookstore)

Course Objectives

There are several aims of this course, but they can be broken down into three main areas:

1. Developing your scientific (PNB related) presentation and communication skills
2. Understanding (at a high level*) core issues, approaches and challenges in conducting PNB research
3. Becoming a discerning and critical consumer of PNB related information

*this is not a research methods course, so our consideration of research will be at a high level – e.g., conceptual understanding of stages of research and issues relevant to research, as opposed to research designs and data processing and analysis etc.

Tutorials will provide a forum for you to develop your presentation skills and this will lead up to a group presentation in front of the entire class toward the end of term. Presentation skills will be emphasized early on in the course so that you can begin to sharpen your skills quickly. The course will also introduce you to various issues, approaches and challenges involved in conducting and evaluating research in Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour (PNB). We will do this by surveying and discussing core elements of the research pipeline (stages of doing research). You will also learn about research ethics, research funding, and dissemination of research to other scientists and to the public. There will be an emphasis on developing critical thinking and on understanding how the broader social context affects both the research process and the consumption of PNB research. Emphasis will also be placed on how to extract good PNB research from the multitude of good and bad information we are exposed to everyday (including on social media). You should leave the course with improved scientific communication skills and a solid high-level understanding of the research process. These skills are critical regardless of the career path you end up choosing.

As part of your exposure to research in PNB, every week, a graduate student from the department will deliver a guest lecture relating to a specific themes linked to psychology, neuroscience, and/or behaviour. The aim of these lectures is to provide the “story behind the story” to give you insight into the research process, as well as give you a sense of the academic journeys that our graduate student presenters have undertaken. These lectures will provide invaluable insights for you as you move through the PNB program.

Toward the end of term, your assigned group will deliver a presentation to the entire class in which you will present a critical fact check of an assigned TED talk. The aim is to foster critical thinking and analysis of information.

Assessment

Quizzes on book & lectures	15%
Tutorial attendance	5%
Tutorial participation	5%
Presentation 1 (group)	20%
Presentation 2 (single)	20%
TED Presentation	20%
Reflections Piece	15%

Quizzes will happen in class on Tuesdays and in tutorials on Wednesdays and may use iclickers. For the first few weeks of term, in class quizzes will be on the relevant book chapter. At the start of each tutorial, there will be a quiz that could cover the lecture from the day before and or the guest lecture from the previous week. Every student needs an iClicker and should bring it to each class. iClickers can be purchased at the Campus Store and must be registered online with your name and a MacID (used to sign into AVE) to receive participation credit for your responses. Visit <http://www.bookstore.mcmaster.ca/textbooks/iclicker-faq.html> for more information.

Your final quiz mark will be calculated from all the quizzes that were held. If you miss a quiz, you will receive 0 for that week, no exceptions, and no make-ups.

If you forget to bring an iClicker to class, you will not be able to provide your answers. Hard copy responses will not be accepted (sorry!).

Tutorial participation (5%): Your teaching assistant (TA) will expect active participation in tutorial to create a dynamic learning environment. If you have specific issues with this process you must speak with your TA as soon as possible. Every three weeks your TA will assign you a grade out of 10 using the rubric below.

CONTRIBUTION TO TUTORIAL

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
(3 of 3)	10	8	8	4
(2 of 3)	6-8	4-6	2-4	0-2
(1 of 3)	4	2	0	0

EVALUATING CONTRIBUTIONS

Excellent	Frequent & stimulating
Good	Frequent & valuable
Fair	Occasional & Forced
Poor	Infrequent & Irrelevant

The Reflections Piece constitutes a reflection on your learning during the course and is a maximum 2-page written account of your journey through the course. You should

reflect on things you learned. In particular, you should mention any specific challenges you encountered and how you overcame them. You can write the piece in your own style to make it personal and meaningful. Format is single spaced 12-point font with 1-inch margins all round. **Deadline April 12th 2019 by 5PM in your tutorial DropBox via Avenue.**

Presentation 1 – in pairs (20% see rubric on p. 5)

This will be a presentation in pairs on papers assigned by the previous week's guest lecturer. Your presentation will be 10 minutes and will provide a synopsis of your assigned journal article.

It is also recommended that all students think about questions that could be asked to speakers on the day of their lectures.

Presentation 2 – individual (20% see rubric on p.6)

You will give a short (7 minute) presentation of a research paper assigned by a guest lecturer. After your presentation, you will lead a 3-minute class discussion on the paper. In your presentation you must:

1. Provide a succinct overview of the study including why it was done and what was done, along with the main results and the authors' interpretation
2. Provide at least 1 reason why you think the paper was interesting and highlight what the most important contribution of the paper is
3. Provide at least 3 limitations of the work and suggest ways it could be improved
4. Lead a 3-minute class discussion on the paper

The 3-minute discussion means that contributions can't be long winded. Participants should focus on making clear concise contributions. Not everyone will be able to comment on every presentation, but there should be ample time for some contribution for each member of the group at some point in each tutorial session.

TED Fact Checking Presentations (20%, see rubric on p. 7)

Your larger group project is to scrutinize your assigned TED talk in detail. You should use everything you've learned about effective presentations and critical appraisal when you give your talk. Links to TED talks will be posted ahead of your session, so there is no need to play the whole TED talk in your presentation. You may however play parts of it to illustrate specific points. Your TED talk fact checking should include three essential components:

1. The main thesis of the talk and the specific claims made
2. A critical appraisal of both the thesis (is it important and worthy of dissemination to the public) and the specific claims made. For each of the claims you identify, you should research the relevant background literature with great care and attention to detail and relay to the class whether the claim made is justifiable in the light of the extant research and whether there any inaccuracies
3. You should also identify whether the speaker has any biases or hidden or unhidden agendas and ultimately assign a "truth score" out of 10 to the TED talk. A truth score of 1 means the TED talk bears no relation to the research evidence

on the topic of the talk. A truth score of 10 means that every single point or claim made in the TED talk was based on solid data.

Notes on Group Work

Before you begin, think about how best to effectively complete course assignments that involve multiple people. Read the chapter on Effective group work in the course text. Have a discussion about strategies that have worked in the past and also about those that did not! Clearly communicate group expectations about: [1] method(s) of communication, [2] expected response time, [3] deadlines, and [4] what to do if a group member does not complete his/her assigned task(s).

Also think about possible tools your group could use to work efficiently and effectively. Some examples of online (free) resources are provided below.

1. Google Drive: <https://www.google.com/drive/>
2. Doodle: <http://doodle.com/?home>
3. Slack: <https://slack.com/>

Late assignments will be penalized 25% a day (weekends will count as one day). If you submit a McMaster Student Absence Form, please contact your tutorial TA directly.

All electronic copies should be submitted before 5 PM on the due date to your tutorial DROPBOX via AVENUE.

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to check for plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

Students are encouraged to visit the Centre for Student Development to improve their writing skills (MUSC B107 at x:24711). For information about the Writing Clinic and the Centre's other services, visit the Centre's website: <http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-skills/writing-support-services.html>

Please read the NEW MSAF policy here:

http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=2208#Requests_for_Relief_for_Missed_Academic_Term_Work

Presentation 1: Research paper presentation given as a pair: Rubric

Group Members					Date:		
Presentation Title:					Score: (speaker 1)	/36	
					(speaker 2)	/36	
					(speaker 3)	/36	
Missing	Poor (Below Expectation)	Fair (Changes Needed)	Good (Minor Errors)	Excellent (Meets/Exceed Expectations)			
0	1	2	3	4			
Presentation Slides		Score	Comments				
Slides are well designed, do not tax perception, attention or memory of audience members							
Images used are relevant and engaging							
Slides and speakers are complementary and do not compete with one another							
Structure and Content		Score	Comments				
Identifies rationale of assigned papers							
Demonstrates understanding of research hypothesis							
Conveys methodological approach and how this helps to address research question							
Describes main results and they support the hypothesis							
Draws audience to a clear conclusion of research findings							
Individual Speaking Style		Score	Comments				
Group member 1 – speaker was clear and easy to follow							
Group member 2 – speaker was clear and easy to follow							
Group member 3 – speaker was clear and easy to follow							

Presentation 2: Individual Research Paper Presentation: Rubric

Group Member		Date:	
Presentation Title/paper reference they were presenting:		Score:	/44
Missing	Poor (Below Expectation)	Fair (Changes Needed)	Good (Minor Errors)
0	1	2	3
Presentation Slides		Score	Comments
Slides are well designed, do not tax perception, attention or memory of audience members			
Images used are relevant and engaging			
Slides and speakers are complementary and do not compete with one another			
Structure and Content		Score	Comments
Sets context of paper			
Describes central question addressed			
Describes method/experimental design employed			
Relays main results and author interpretations			
Provides 1 valid reason to like the paper and a clear statement of what the paper contributes			
Provides at least 3 limitations and suggestions for improvement			
Discussion Facilitation		Score	Comments
Facilitates Discussion			
Prepared questions provide a solid foundation for discussion facilitation			
Individual Speaking Style		Score	Comments

Speaker was clear and easy to follow		
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TED Talk Fact Checking Presentation Rubric (group grade)

Group Members					Date:	
TED talk being critiqued:					Score:	/36
Missing	Poor (Below Expectation)	Fair (Changes Needed)	Good (Minor Errors)	Excellent (Meets/Exceed Expectations)		
0	1	2	3	4		
Presentation Slides		Score	Comments			
Slides are well designed, do not tax perception, attention or memory of audience members						
Images used are relevant and engaging						
Slides and speakers are complementary and do not compete with one another						
Structure and Content		Score	Comments			
Clear synopsis of the TED talk given						
Clear presentation of the claims made in the TED talk						
Clear statement about whether TED speaker likely had biases/conflict of interests and what they were						
Clear statements about research that was done to fact check and what the findings of this fact checking were						
Clear summary and conclusion						
Logical flow and structure of presentation						

Tentative Schedule of Topics (subject to change/modification)

See Course Page on Avenue