

## **Course Outline for Social Cognitive Neuroscience – PNB 4E03.**

**Dec, 2018**

**Instructor:** Dr. Sukhvinder Obhi (e-mail: [obhi@mcmaster.ca](mailto:obhi@mcmaster.ca) – please put 4E03 in subject of email)

**Course email:** [obhi@mcmaster.ca](mailto:obhi@mcmaster.ca)

**Teaching Assistant:** Michael Galang ([galangc@mcmaster.ca](mailto:galangc@mcmaster.ca) )

**Office hours with TA or Dr. Obhi:** By appointment

Course Text: Obhi, S.S. & Cross, E.S. (2016) *Shared Representations: Sensorimotor Foundations of Social Life* (Cambridge Social Neuroscience) – available as a Kindle ebook on Amazon.ca, or through McMaster Library.

**NOTE:** Class time is intended for students to engage with the material and each other in productive discussions relating to the topic under consideration. No unauthorized recording (either video, sound or photographic) is permitted. Further, no social media broadcasting/posting of class discussions is permitted.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course is intended to give students experience in reading, understanding, presenting and discussing research in the area of social cognitive neuroscience (SCN). This year the focus is on “Shared Representations” and also includes debates on three controversial ideas within the broader domain of SCN. Preparation for the debates is to be undertaken outside of class-time in your assigned teams (teams will be announced on first day of class). Preparation will require broad reading around the topic of your debate. Information about debating protocol will be provided early on in the course. By the end of the course, students will have experience in:

1. Reading and understanding primary and secondary research chapters on the theme of Shared Representations (from course text)
2. Extracting core content from readings and summarizing and presenting it succinctly and clearly
3. Leading a class discussion on the implications of research on Shared Representations
4. Formulating insightful questions and posing them articulately during discussion time
5. Integrating a wide range of information from SCN literature to prepare for a class debate
6. Participating in a class debate on a controversial topic related to SCN
7. Writing a 3000-word essay on the topic of your debate (the side you are defending) – (Each team member will write from their own perspective – this is individual, not group, work).
8. Writing a 500-word reflection detailing 3 aspects of knowledge gained during the course and/or three transferrable skills gained or honed during the course.

### **Paper Presentation and Discussion: Notes on Leading the So-What Discussion:**

Every student will be assigned a chapter from the course text that they will be responsible for presenting and leading a discussion on. Rather than presenting a summary of the chapter in class, students will produce a 10-minute video in which they summarize the chapter. This 10-minute video will be played in class, after which students will lead a discussion answering the general question: “So what?”.

More specifically, after presenting your 10-minute video to the class, you are expected to lead a class discussion for 20 minutes addressing the broad question “So What”? in relation to the chapter you were assigned. The so-what question is broad in the sense that you can answer it in myriad ways. For example, you could consider how the chapter aids theory development by discussing the advancement in knowledge that it represents. Alternatively, you could consider whether there are any applied implications of the research you learned about. For example, could the research be used in the real-world to solve problems or improve processes or outcomes in non-academic settings? All students are required to come prepared to answer this question for all chapters covered in the course. The presenting student is responsible for managing and leading the discussion, but success depends on everyone having prepared thoroughly before class.

### **Notes on Written Assignments:**

**Assignment 1:** 3000-word essay on topic of the debate you participated in, outlining the position you defended. Format is 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font, 1-inch margins and APA style referencing. Minimum 10 references. This is an individual assignment so a group written identical piece is insufficient.

**Written reflection:** 500-words – this is a chance for you to reflect on what you learned during the course. You should focus on 3 take-aways from the course that could relate to the content you read, discussed or debated, or to any transferable skills you learned or honed.

### **Grade Calculation (tentative, subject to change)**

Video summary	15%
So-what? Discussion	15%
Debate (team score)	25%
Written assignment 1	10%
Written reflection	10%
Class contributions	15%
Attendance	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

#### **Absences & Missed Work:**

If you are absent from the university for a minor medical reason, lasting up to 3 calendar days, you may report your absence, once per term, without documentation, using the McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF). Absences for a longer duration or for other reasons must be reported to your Faculty office, with documentation, and relief from term work may not necessarily be granted. When using the MSAF, report your absence to course instructor or designate. You must then contact the instructor/instructional assistant/other immediately (normally within 2 working days) by email. Please refer to the contact list on the first page of this outline for appropriate email addresses. The instructor/instructional assistant will indicate what relief may be granted for the work you have missed, and relevant details such as revised deadlines etc. Please note that the MSAF may not be used for final deliverables, nor can it be used for a final examination or its equivalent.

#### **Student Services:**

A number of services are available on campus to assist students. Students are encouraged to visit the Student Wellness Centre (<http://wellness.mcmaster.ca>) for mental and/or physical health related issues, or the Student Accessibility Centre (<http://sas.mcmaster.ca/>) for academic or disability-related needs.

#### **Senate Student Policies:**

Students can view full policies here (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/>). Senate Policy Statements are also available from the Senate Secretariat Office, Room 104, and Gilmour Hall.

#### **Academic Integrity - <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>**

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

The following illustrate only four of many forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained;
- copying or using unauthorized aids in laboratory exercises
- improper collaboration in group work; and
- copying or using unauthorized aids in quizzes, tests and examinations

**All students are reminded of the importance of academic integrity, and the serious consequences of academic dishonesty.**

**Student Code of Conduct** - <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/StudentCode.pdf>

You acknowledge that your behavior in all aspects of this course should meet the standards of the McMaster University Student Code of Conduct. You understand that any inappropriate behavior directed against any of your colleagues, teaching assistants, or the instructional team will not be tolerated. Disruptive behavior during any session (e.g. lecture, seminar, lab, tutorial) such as talking, sleeping or non-class computing while an individual presents information, or constantly being late, will also not be tolerated. Abuse, ridicule, slander, inappropriate language, and discrimination towards instructors teaching staff, teaching assistants and other students will not be tolerated in any capacity. Shared spaces including e-spaces such as the Avenue to Learn course discussion board are to be considered inclusive and safe.

**Copyright Policy:**

In this course you will have access to material that is subject to copyright laws. This includes (but is not limited to) textbooks and all resources developed by the instructors such as lab manuals, demonstration videos, quizzes, assignments, tests, class notes and class slides. Under no circumstance are you allowed to share or redistribute this material in any printed or electronic form without the explicit written consent of the copyright holder. This includes posting any course material on Internet bulletin boards, course repositories, social networks, etc.

**The instructors and the university reserve the right to alter this outline if necessary.**

The instructors and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.