

**PSYCH 741: SEMINAR IN SOCIAL COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCE**  
McMaster University, Department of Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour,  
Faculty of Science  
Fall 2015

<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Sukhvinder S. Obhi
<b>Office:</b>	Psychology Building, room 306
<b>Phone:</b>	1-905-525-9140 x23030
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:obhi@mcmaster.ca">obhi@mcmaster.ca</a> [email is the best way to contact me]
<b>Office Hours:</b>	By appointment
<b>Course Webpage:</b>	via Avenue
<b>TA:</b>	There are no Teaching Assistants for this course

### **COURSE MEETINGS**

Tuesdays 10am-12.50pm, PC-311 (Psychology Building)

### **OBJECTIVES**

PSYCH 741 aims to introduce PNB graduate students to social cognitive neuroscience research through presentation and discussion of assigned peer reviewed theory/review papers (module 1) and presentation and discussion of self-selected empirical papers (module 2). The course also aims to encourage small groups of students to work together by thinking through the research process via the creation of a proposal for a hypothetical three year research program within one of several broad themes (module 3). There are a number of research areas that will be considered including but not limited to: Social Perception, Social Interaction, Mentalizing, Imitation, the Mirror System and Embodiment.

The course emphasizes critical thinking skills and communication in both verbal and written forms. Verbal communication skills will be honed through the presentation of research to peers and active participation in class discussions. Students are expected to come to class prepared to participate in a meaningful way. The emphasis is on providing a supportive environment in which students can develop their critical thinking and communication skills. Students will develop their specialized and general writing ability through creation of a lay summary of a research paper, a written research proposal, and a critique of a research proposal.

### **PSYCH 741 is organized into three modules as follows:**

Module 1: *Concepts in Social Cognitive Neuroscience* – the instructor assigns theory/review papers to students who present them and lead a class discussion. The main purpose is to provide students with an introduction to current trends and important concepts in the field.

Module 2: *Empirical studies in Social Cognitive Neuroscience* – students will be free to select a relevant empirical paper and present it to the class, again leading a discussion after the presentation. Each student will write a plain language summary of their paper and hand this in after their presentation.

Module 3: The research process in Social Cognitive Neuroscience – students will work in groups to create a three year research proposal which they will present and which they will write up and hand in as an assignment.

### General Format of Seminar sessions

The majority of seminar sessions will consist of student led presentations and discussions of research and theory papers. At various points throughout the course, sessions will be devoted to developing an understanding of core critical reading skills, as well as presentation and writing skills needed for various assessments and for graduate school in general. In student led sessions, the instructor will act as a facilitator and chairperson to steer the sessions and keep them on track. The sessions are meant to be interactive, and the instructor will try and avoid the sessions turning into “lectures”.

### Assessment

Your final grade for this seminar will be made up of marks from several different assessments. These are detailed below:

Criteria	Percentage of Overall Mark	Description
Review paper presentation  (20 minutes + 15 minute discussion)	15%  (10% on presentation+5% on leading a discussion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each student will present a full review paper or a portion of a review paper – to be assigned by instructor</li> <li>• Elements of a good presentation to be discussed in class</li> </ul>
Empirical paper presentation  (20 minutes + 15 minute discussion)	20%  (15% on presentation+5% on leading a discussion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each student to select an empirical paper to present, paper must be circulated to class at least one week prior to presentation</li> <li>• Elements of a good presentation to be discussed in class</li> </ul>
Group proposal presentation  (50 minutes + 10 minutes of	20% (group mark)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will present a three year research</li> </ul>

questions)		<p>proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elements of a good proposal to be discussed in class</li> </ul>
<p>Plain language summary of empirical paper</p> <p>(300 words)</p>	<p>10%</p> <p>(5% main ideas extracted + 5% quality and appropriateness of writing for a non-specialist audience)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each student will write a plain language summary of their empirical paper</li> <li>• Elements of a good plain language summary to be discussed in class</li> </ul>
<p>5 page written research proposal</p> <p>(12 point Times New Roman, 1 inch margins, max 2 figures embedded in text, references are not part of the 5 page limit, no appendices)</p>	<p>20% (group mark)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each group will work together to produce a group proposal (multi-author)</li> <li>• Elements of a good research proposal to be discussed in class</li> </ul>
<p>Two paragraph critique of research proposal by a different group</p> <p>(500 words)</p>	<p>5% (group mark)</p> <p>(2.5% for paragraph detailing strengths + 2.5% for paragraph detailing weaknesses)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each group will co-write a 2 paragraph critique on a written research proposal from another group</li> <li>• Elements of critical appraisal to be discussed in class</li> </ul>
<p>Participation in discussions</p> <p>(Quality and Quantity of input into class discussion)</p>	<p>10%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are expected to read relevant papers and come to each class prepared and ready to</li> </ul>

		participate in class discussions
--	--	----------------------------------

**Tentative Schedule** – To be finalized after final number of students in seminar is known

<b>Date</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>
September 15, 2015	Introduction and discussion about reading, critiquing and presenting papers
September 22, 2015	Concepts in social cognitive neuroscience 1 (review paper presentations)
September 29, 2015	Concepts in social cognitive neuroscience 2 (review paper presentations)
October 6, 2015	Concepts in social cognitive neuroscience 3 (review paper presentations)
October 13, 2015	Review and Reflect
October 20, 2015	Empirical papers in social cognitive neuroscience 1
October 27, 2015	Empirical papers in social cognitive neuroscience 2
November 3, 2015	Empirical papers in social cognitive neuroscience 3
November 10, 2015	Session on research planning and proposal writing
November 17, 2015	Group proposal presentations 1
November 24, 2015	Group proposal presentations 2
December 1, 2015	Group proposal presentations 3
December 8, 2015	Review and Reflect

**Policy Reminders:**

The instructor 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.

Please note 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. 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. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy at: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty: 1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained. 2. Improper collaboration in group work. 3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.