

Course Information – Neurosci 500: Undergraduate Neurobiology Seminar – Fall 2016

Course description

The course consists of a series of research seminars given by UW neuroscience faculty. Seminars will be on a diverse range of topics in neuroscience—from properties of neurons to the brain systems underlying complex mental phenomena. Speakers will include basic scientists and clinicians. Each seminar is self-contained and not necessarily related to the seminars before or after.

The class meets once per week (**Wednesdays 4:00-4:50pm, room 22 Ingraham Hall**).

The purpose of the course is to move beyond the “textbook” learning of neuroscience. You will gain a better sense of what doing research in neuroscience is really like, and learn about some of the current exciting areas in neuroscience. In the past, many students have used the seminar as an opportunity to meet neuro research faculty and arrange to work in their labs.

Course expectations

1. **Attendance:** You are expected to attend all the seminars. You are allowed to miss one seminar with no grade penalty. Additional excused absences may be allowed provided that you have a valid reason for missing class (e.g., illness, family emergency) and that you complete a make-up assignment. Upcoming exams or assignments for other classes are not valid excuses.
2. **Participation:** The course is designed to be casual and engaging. You are strongly encouraged to ask questions, generate discussion, and follow-up with the speakers. Each student is required to ask at least one question in class during the semester.
3. **Essays:** After each seminar, you will write a short essay (approximately a half-page) in which you provide some thoughts on the seminar. The essay content is quite flexible—you can mention something you found particularly interesting, ask questions, propose future experiments, etc. You will submit your essay through the Learn@UW D2L course website. Under the “Assignments” tab, click “Dropbox” and you will see a folder for each speaker. Upload your essay into the appropriate folder. Essays are due within 1 week. Late assignments will not receive credit. The Dropbox folder for each speaker will close by the start of the next class.
4. **Grading:** Your grade will be based upon three things: attendance, participation, and essays. All you need to do to earn an “A” is show up to every seminar (except one), ask at least one question in class during the semester, and submit a short essay within one week after each class. Each missed essay (after the first one) will result in the loss of a half-letter grade (0 or 1 miss = A; 2 misses = AB; 3 misses = B; 4 misses = BC; etc). Copying another student’s essay or writing an essay without attending the class will be considered cheating (academic misconduct) and dealt with accordingly.

Honors

You may register for honors for this course. For honors credit you will consult with Dr. Koenigs to determine a project that will enhance your exposure to neuroscience outside of the seminar series. Examples of honors projects include: (1) read and critique a news/popular media report of a neuro finding, based on a reading of the actual research article; (2) attend a lab meeting or observe an experiment of one of the course’s faculty presenters, and submit a summary of your experience; (3) seek out an additional campus/public neuro seminar on a topic that is not covered during the course, and provide a summary/commentary.

Course organizer

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