

Introduction to Neurophysiological Psychology (PSY 451)



Bill Griesar, Ph.D., Instructor, griesar@pdx.edu
(Please use this email address; NOT Canvas)

Instructor Student Hours: ZOOM, by appointment
 , TA;
 , Graduate TA,
 TA Student Hours: ZOOM, Fridays

FALL HYBRID, September 29 – December 12, 2025

IN PERSON classes Wednesdays, 1:30 – 2:35pm

PSU campus, Cramer Hall 269

Online ZOOM classes Mondays, 1:30 – 2:35pm

Online TA ZOOM reviews Fridays, 1:30 – 2:35pm

TEXTBOOK (optional; NOT REQUIRED):

Neuroscience: Exploring the Brain, by Bear, et al

This course satisfies pre-requisites for Advanced Neurophysiological Psychology (PSY 452)

GOAL OF THE COURSE: Neurophysiological Psychology is the study of the nervous system and how it underlies behavior. The goal of this class is to introduce you to the structure and function of the nervous system, some methods used to study the brain and behavior, and specific cognitive abilities (including attention, “default” rumination and emotional regulation) that are currently under study.

GRADES: Grades are assigned on a 90+ (A), 80-89 (B), 70-79 (C) and 60-69 (D) point scale. Points are awarded based on your understanding of the material as assessed by online quizzes, a midterm and a final exam. Additional points can be earned by participating in weekly discussion forums and completing a “found object” art project. Students taking this course “pass-fail” must maintain a C- average (70%) to receive a passing grade.

QUIZZES (20 points; 5 points each): Four timed, online quizzes will test your knowledge of course material presented during the previous few lectures. Each quiz will be available for several days, and you will be able to make one continuous attempt.

FOUND OBJECT ART PROJECT (20 points): Look around your own environment (your living space, neighborhood, the PSU campus - anywhere!) for objects and forms that reflect a neurobiological structure we've learned about in class. You are welcome to either arrange multiple objects, or take one as is, but once you have them (or it) organized, take a picture and then label five specific parts that you see. Write a short paragraph that both explains what the neurobiological structure is, and (briefly) describes its function.

DISCUSSION FORUMS (20 points): Students are required to post their own responses to questions in our ten weekly discussion forums, which cover topics we'll be learning about in Zoom class meetings, online video lectures and other resources and links on Canvas.

Each post must be at least 100 words (300 max) and you must respond to at least TWO peers in 50 words or more each. FORUM POSTS ARE DUE THURSDAYS (by 11:59pm); peer responses are DUE by SUNDAY (by 11:59pm).

MIDTERM EXAM (20 points): *The timed, online midterm will cover all the material presented in the class up to and including the lectures on the visual system.* The midterm will be available for several days, and you will be able to make one continuous attempt.

FINAL EXAM (25 points): *The timed, online final exam is comprehensive,* but will draw more from the lectures and reading assignments presented *after* the midterm exam. The final will be available for several days, and you will be able to make one continuous attempt.

*** DEADLINES ARE IMPORTANT: Late work earns half credit. It's difficult in a large class to track late assignments, so after one week, ALL late assignments will be zeroed out. No late assignments are accepted after Week Ten of term.**

Academic Honesty

Any evidence of cheating or plagiarism will lead to serious academic consequences, including possible failure of the course and/or dismissal from school. Plagiarism is also a violation of the PSU Student Conduct Code. For information: http://www.ess.pdx.edu/OSA/osa_b.htm.

Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities

Welcome to the course! PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useful, inclusive, welcoming and fun. Multiple perspectives and methods of expression are encouraged, including art projects, to help students explore compelling research on brain and behavior.

If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, **please notify me**. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, <https://www.pdx.edu/drc>.

If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discussed your accommodations.

- Students who need accommodations for tests and quizzes are expected to schedule their tests to overlap with the time the class is taking the test.
- For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the [Fire and Life Safety webpage](https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety) (<https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety>) for information.

NOTE: Incompletes are rare, and are based on criteria in the university catalog. Incompletes are not appropriate when less than ¾'s of course work has been scored.

CHALLENGES: Look over the course requirements in our syllabus, and on Canvas. If you are unclear about what's expected for an assignment, or assessment, please let me know. Life DEFINITELY has ups and downs, and everyone struggles sometimes with family, work, and other personal concerns and commitments. But not everyone has access to the same resources or experiences the world in the same way. If there is a serious, unexpected, documented and significant emergency, please get in touch! But be aware that I'm obligated to treat all students fairly, and that means each of you should ask questions, think ahead and plan for when assignments are due.

Everyone is subject to the same course expectations.

THE LECTURES:*Introduction to the nervous system***WEEK ONE (9/29 – 10/3): Introduction to Neurons and Glia**

***MEET:** Zoom Monday, In Person Wednesday, Zoom Review Friday, 1:30 – 2:35pm

***POST:** To Discussion Forum by 11:59pm Thursday; two responses due 11:59pm Sunday

Welcome to the course, course information, syllabus; dividing up the nervous system (PNS vs. CNS, ANS vs. somatic/“voluntary”), historical debates (localization vs. holism, evolving perspectives on the brain); what is a cell?, how many brains cells do we have?, how many do other animals have? basic intracellular components, what are glial cells?; new research on importance of glia; what are neurons?, neuron structure and function

WEEK TWO (10/6 – 10/10): Resting potentials

***MEET:** Zoom Monday, In Person Wednesday, Zoom Review Friday, 1:30 – 2:35pm

***POST:** To Discussion Forum by 11:59pm Thursday; two responses due 11:59pm Sunday

- **QUIZ ONE AVAILABLE ONLINE 10/8 – 10/12**

- Introduction to the course, neurons, glia, resting potential

What do neurons do?, **Resting potential**, *How are neurons set up to carry information?*

WEEK THREE (10/13 – 10/17): Action potentials, and the synapse

***MEET:** Zoom Monday, In Person Wednesday, Zoom Class Friday, 1:30 – 2:35pm

***POST:** To Discussion Forum by 11:59pm Thursday; two responses due 11:59pm Sunday

Action potential, current propagation, voltage-gated ion channels, voltage changes/time course; *How do neurons carry messages?* **The synapse**; neural networks; types of synaptic connections, peri-neuronal nets; myelin, multiple sclerosis, *What happens when the timing of neural signaling changes?* *How do messages travel between neurons?* Golgi and Cajal, parts of the synapse, presynaptic release of neurotransmitter; postsynaptic receptors (ionotropic/ligand-gated, metabotropic/GPCR), postsynaptic responses (EPSPs, IPSPs, summation); *How do neurons communicate with each other?*; neurotransmitters, hormones; “classical” vs. “non-classical” neurotransmitters, modulatory neurotransmitters.

WEEK FOUR (10/20 – 10/24): Neurotransmitters

** **NO CLASS ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22nd**

Outreach collaboration with TRIO in Astoria, Oregon

***MEET:** Zoom Monday, In Person Wednesday, Zoom Review Friday, 1:30 – 2:35pm

***POST:** To Discussion Forum by 11:59pm Thursday; two responses due 11:59pm Sunday

- **QUIZ TWO AVAILABLE ONLINE 10/22 – 10/26**

- The action potential, and the synapse

Acetylcholine (ACh), monoamines (including dopamine/DA, norepinephrine/NE, serotonin/5-HT; amino acids (glutamate and GABA); drugs, drug use disorders

WEEK FIVE (10/27 – 10/31): Basic brain structures

***MEET:** Zoom Monday, In Person Wednesday, Zoom Review Friday, 1:30 – 2:35pm

***POST:** To Discussion Forum by 11:59pm Thursday; two responses due 11:59pm Sunday

Large scale structures/networks in the brain: anatomical terminology; basic gross neuroanatomy (e.g., cortex, lobes, sulci and gyri, white matter vs. gray matter, CSF, ventricles, cerebellum), brainstem, hypothalamus, thalamus, basal ganglia, limbic system structures (including amygdala, nucleus accumbens, hippocampus, anterior cingulate,...)

WEEK SIX (11/3 – 11/7): The neocortex and the visual system

***MEET:** Zoom Monday, In Person Wednesday, Zoom Review Friday, 1:30 – 2:35pm

***POST:** To Discussion Forum by 11:59pm Thursday; two responses due 11:59pm Sunday

- **QUIZ THREE AVAILABLE ONLINE 11/5 – 11/9**

- Neuropharmacology, basic brain organization, neocortex

Primary motor and sensory cortices, corpus callosum, cortical structure/function, higher-level association cortex; distributed network development ; Introduction to sensory systems, general stimulus aspects; a focus on vision: eye, retina, photoreceptors, bipolar, horizontal, amacrine, ganglion cells, phototransduction (paradoxical “dark current”); central visual pathways, optimal stimuli, receptive fields

*Methodology***WEEK SEVEN (11/10 – 11/14): The auditory system and techniques**

***MEET:** Zoom Monday, In Person Wednesday, Zoom Review Friday, 1:30 – 2:35pm

***POST:** To Discussion Forum by 11:59pm Thursday; two responses due 11:59pm Sunday

Neuroanatomical techniques: microscopes, microtomes, retrograde/anterograde staining, electron microscopy, metabolic tracers, Brodmann areas/updates; Electrophysiology: direct electrical stimulation, single vs. multi-cell recording, EEG, Event related potentials (ERP), transcranial magnetic stimulation;

MIDTERM EXAM AVAILABLE ONLINE 11/12 – 11/23**WEEK EIGHT (11/17 – 11/21): More on techniques and review**

** **NO CLASS ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17th or WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19th**

Posters and outreach at the Society for Neuroscience conference, San Diego, CA

***MEET:** Zoom Review Friday, 1:30 – 2:35pm

***POST:** To Discussion Forum by 11:59pm Thursday; two responses due 11:59pm Sunday

Imaging techniques & Genetic techniques: Pictures! Structural vs. functional techniques; in-depth examination of CAT, PET, MRI, fMRI, rsfMRI, DTI, Western blots, knockout mice, in situ hybridization and more.

*Current Topics in Neuroscience Research***WEEK NINE (11/24 – 11/28): Emotional regulation/feeling**

**** NO CLASS WEDNESDAY (11/26) OR FRIDAY (11/28) - Happy Thanksgiving!**

***MEET**: Zoom Monday, 1:30 – 2:35pm

***POST**: To Discussion Forum by 11:59pm Thursday; two responses due 11:59pm Sunday

- **QUIZ FOUR AVAILABLE ONLINE 11/26 – 12/3 (extra days ☺)**
- Anatomy, electrophysiology, imaging, genetic techniques
- **FOUND OBJECT ART PROJECT DUE BY SUNDAY**

Emotion/Feeling and the Limbic System; Papez circuit (rationale and anatomy), Kluver-Bucy syndrome, the limbic system, role of the amygdala, motivation and reward, the hippocampus; contributions of emotion to memory; emotional regulation

WEEK TEN (12/1 – 12/5): Attention and "default"

***MEET**: Zoom Monday, In Person Wednesday, Zoom Review Friday, 1:30 – 2:35pm

***POST**: To Discussion Forum by 11:59pm Thursday; two responses due 11:59pm Sunday

Selective attention: various forms of attention; arousal vs. attention, alertness and attention; visual attention, what versus where visual pathways, selective attention increases cell response; attention enhances processing of specific visual features; hemispatial neglect syndrome, Balint's syndrome; the default mode network (rumination, taking the perspective of others, daydreaming, retrieving memories, planning future activities)

FINAL EXAM

Online December 5 – 10th

(PLEASE NOTE: Maximum DRC extensions to Thursday 12/11)

QUIZ TOPICS

- Quiz One: Introduction to the course, neurons, glia, resting potential
- Quiz Two: The action potential, and the synapse
- Quiz Three: Neuropharmacology, basic brain organization, neocortex
- Quiz Four: Neuroanatomy, electrophysiology, genetic and imaging techniques

TITLE IX REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

Portland State is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, gender or sex-based harassment and stalking). If you have experienced any form of sexual harassment, know that help and support are available. PSU has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, providing academic support and more. Information about PSU's support services on campus, including [confidential services](#) and [reporting options](#), can be found on PSU's [Sexual Misconduct Response website](#) or you may call a Confidential Advocate at 503.894.7982 or by scheduling [online](#). You may also report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to the [Title IX Coordinator, Office of Equity and Compliance](#), or the [Office of the Dean of Student Life](#).

Please be aware that all PSU faculty members and instructors **are required to report** information of an incident that may constitute prohibited discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual and relationship violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or discrimination, I have to share the information with the University's Title IX Coordinator or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. However, the information will be kept private and only those with a need to know will be provided with what you disclose.

Please complete the required student module [Understanding Sexual Misconduct and Resources](#) in Canvas, which provides information about PSU policy and resources. You may also report sexual and relationship violence to law enforcement on campus with [Campus Public Safety Office \(CPSO\)](#).

Or you may file an [anonymous report with Campus Public Safety Office](#) or a [Bias Incident report](#) with the [Bias Review Team \(BRT\)](#). PSU does not typically investigate the reports that are made through these two avenues. These reports help PSU understand what students and employees are experiencing on and around campus and provide support where needed.

The Center for Student Health & Counseling (SHAC)

Think SHAC First! [The Center for Student Health & Counseling \(SHAC\)](#) provides high quality, accessible, [medical](#), [counseling](#), [dental](#), and [health promotion services](#) to all PSU students taking 5+ credit hours, regardless of the type of insurance coverage. Office visits at SHAC are FREE!

Students taking 1+ credit hours can access [SHAC Dental Services](#). SHAC has an incredible staff of health care professionals who are dedicated to keeping you healthy so you can stay in the classroom and focus on learning. For a full list of services and more information visit pdx.edu/health-counseling.

Medical Excuse Notes: [The Center for Student Health and Counseling \(SHAC\)](#) does not provide medical excuse notes for absences from classes, labs, studios or exams, or for missed deadlines due to short-term illness, injury, or other clinical appointments. Visit the [SHAC Medical Excuse Policy](#) at pdx.edu/health-counseling/our-policies for more information.

Mental Health Emergencies: If you are having a mental health emergency and need to speak with someone immediately, come in to SHAC at ANY time during SHAC [hours of operation](#). After hours and weekends call the Multnomah County Crisis Line 503.988.4888 or use the 24/7 [mySSP mental health support resource](#) 866.743.7732.

Recordings in Zoom classes

We use technology for virtual meetings and recordings in this course. Use is governed by FERPA, the [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and PSU's [Student Code of Conduct](#). A record of all meetings and recordings is kept and stored by PSU, in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy and FERPA. Your instructor will not share recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include fellow students, TAs/GAs/Mentors, and any guest faculty or community based learning partners that we may engage with. **You may not share recordings outside of this course.** Doing so may result in disciplinary action.