

## Syllabus, Bisc 327, Introductory Neuroscience, Fall 2020

Classroom: Remote, Tu Th 04:00 PM – 05:15 PM

Dr. Lainy Day

[lainyday@olemiss.edu](mailto:lainyday@olemiss.edu)

Office Hours: Tu Th 5:15-5:30 and 3-5 pm Wednesdays, same Zoom as for class

Text: The latest print edition of your text book is Behavioral Neuroscience, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., S. M. Breedlove and N. V. Watson. The 9<sup>th</sup> edition is available only as an e-book. If you purchase the latest edition, you will have access to online quizzes, tutorials and animations. News articles related to topics are free on the website (<https://www.bn8e.com>). I have listed the chapters and page numbers for 8<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> ed (which had a different title Biological Psychology: An introduction to behavioral, cognitive, and clinical neuroscience). You may even use the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of this textbook and still have adequate coverage of topics, but pages will be off a bit from what I have in the syllabus and you will be responsible for determining the correct pages. Also, one section I cover is missing from the 6<sup>th</sup> edition that is in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, but the missing content will be in my slides and I will go over these materials in class. Lastly, a copy of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> edition are on reserve at the library. Library staffing is currently limited, check for availability.

Additional Reading of short articles will regularly be assigned in addition to your textbook chapters. These will be available on Blackboard and accessible by entering blackboard or links in Slack.

Course Format: This is a Remote course. This means that instruction is synchronous and you are expected to attend Zoom lectures. Zoom lectures will be recorded so that you can review or attend asynchronously if necessary. Office hours will also be via zoom. Just like regular office hours, I will be available via zoom. I will set up a Slack (go to *slack.com* for downloads to computer, phone, pads) group so you can chat with me and other students in the class. If you are unfamiliar with SLACK, don't worry. It has a pretty simple user interface and allows us to access multiple platforms, like text chatting, blackboard, and google drive from one location. Direct access to blackboard will also provide a copy of your syllabus, your grade book, and PowerPoints of old lectures. Tests will be provided to you and your answers will be submitted within the blackboard interface.

We will review all of the online platforms, how to access platforms, zoom meeting ID etc. during the first class session.

Course Description: This course is an introduction to how nerve cells work singly and in concert to guide the behavior of animals. We will take a comparative approach to understand how brains have evolved to allow animals to perceive stimuli, adopt particular mating strategies, learn and guide behavior, and communicate. We will also talk about variation in individual animals abilities to cope with a range of environmental and social stimuli by means of learning and epigenetics.

### Learning Objectives:

1) In first part of this course students should develop a basic understanding of how nerve cells work, how brains are divided into functional units, and how evolution and development shape the nervous system. 2) In the second part of the course students will learn that the nervous system filters external stimuli, processes information, and guides behavioral output. 3) Readings will help students to relate the text to current discoveries, politics, and the natural world.

Exams: There will be three 50 question in-class exams plus a 100 question comprehensive final exam. The exams will consist of questions from lectures and reading but will be focused on the material covered in class. You must take all four exams. You will have 1 hr and 15 mins to complete exams. Rather than use proctoring software, I allow you to use your text or notes if you want to. However, be aware that the time limit on exams (unless you have been given extra time via SDS) is VERY firm. If you have not organized your notes into a condensed "cheat sheet" in preparation for the exam, you will run out of time to complete it. If you typically run late on exams but do not have SDS time extension please speak with SDS or me about accommodations ASAP.

**Grades:** Each 50 question in-class exam will be worth 100 points. The 100 question final exam will be worth 200 points. Thus, the highest cumulative score you could obtain from the exams would be 500 total (100+100+100+200). We will use the +/- grading scale in this class (<http://www.olemiss.edu/info/grading.html>). Cut offs for + and – will be based approximately on top and lower third of students in the grade range. My focus is on learning rather than grades, thus point opportunities are numerous, but my grading system has a slimmer upper tail and a wider middle than the standard grading system and includes some wiggle room based on class attendance, attention to questions in class, and doing extra credit offered as well as potential detractors of success such as having child care or parent care responsibilities. Inform me early via the survey I will send out for consideration of these issues. The approximate cut off for an A is 97% of your total points, for an A- 94%, for a B+ 86%, for a B or B- 78%, for a C+ or C 70%, for a C- 68%, for a D 59%. This is a, “you can’t always get what you want..., but you get what you need” system.

If you have questions about your scores on any exams, feel free to ask about them. However, **all point related issues about each exam must be resolved before the following exam.**

**Extra Credit:** You will earn 1 point for each instruction day you attend all of the lecture for the day with a maximum of 25 extra credit points for the course. Other extra-credit opportunities will be offered.

**Make-up Exams:** If you miss an exam, you must contact the instructor **the day of the exam or before unless there is a legal or medical emergency.** Make up exams will only be given for reasonable and documented excuses at the discretion of the professor. Make-up exams will cover the same material as that given during the scheduled exam time but will not contain the same questions.

### **Covid-19 Statement**

Students are encouraged to visit the University’s Keep Learning site (<https://olemiss.edu/keeplearning/>) to access information and resources related to COVID-19 support. The site provides links to University student services to facilitate and support learning.

The University must have accurate contact information, including cell phone numbers, to facilitate student communications and contact tracing. Students should check and update their University contact information(<https://olemiss.edu/mystudentprofile>).

### **Disability Accommodations**

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individual basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or meet course requirements. Students with disabilities, which have been verified through the Office of Student Disability Services, are encouraged to contact their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations.