Course Information

Course Number

MCB W61

Course Name

Brain, Mind, and Behavior

Course Instructor

David Presti

Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs)

TBA

While the instructor will interact with the whole class and will oversee all activities and grading, as well as being available to resolve any issues that may arise, the GSIs will be your immediate contact. Your GSIs are responsible for assisting you directly with your questions about assignments and course requirements, as outlined in the course schedule. The GSIs will also facilitate ongoing discussion and interaction with you on major topics in each module.

Help & Support

Click on the Support link, in the "START HERE: Course Information and Support" folder on the Modules page for details on getting help. You may want to print this page for quick reference. For tech help, you can contact the 24/7 Help Desk.

Office Hours

The course instructors will set virtual office hours when students can communicate real time (synchronously). While these chats are optional they can be valuable for discussion, answering questions, and reviewing for exams.

Chats are optional; no points are awarded for participation.

Course Schedule

Please click on the Course Schedule link under the Modules tab page for an overview of due dates and projects. Use the Calendar, available from the Calendar tab page, to create your own class schedule and manage your coursework and assignments.

Course Credits

Three (3) semester credits
Course Description

This course deals with the structure and function of the human nervous system, with an emphasis on how brain physiology and chemistry are related to human behavior. This is a comprehensive introduction to the exciting field of contemporary neuroscience for students of ALL backgrounds and interests.

Textbook and Materials


Comments on the textbooks:

The primary textbook for this class is An Introduction to Brain and Behavior by Brian Kolb and Ian Whishaw. The current edition of this text is the 3rd edition, published in 2009. If you obtain a copy of the second edition, that will suffice, as the two editions are quite similar. Note that the chapter and figure numbers may, however, differ. Some copies of this text come with a CD containing supplementary material. This material is interesting, although not required.

The learning objectives of this class can be met by assimilating the material from the lectures and from reading The Double Helix. The exams will be based on material from the lectures and from The Double Helix. Thus, the Brain and Behavior textbook is not technically required. However, in order to get the most from this class and to truly appreciate this subject, reading along in the textbook is very highly recommended. There is a very large amount of material to assimilate in six weeks time and having the additional well-illustrated and well-written anchor of the textbook will likely prove highly beneficial.

Reading The Double Helix is required for this class and broad content questions from this book will be on the exams. Although this book does not deal specifically with the subject of “Brain, Mind, and Behavior,” it does describe a pivotal event in the history of 20th-century biology that sets the stage for events related to the unfolding of cellular and molecular neuroscience. Understanding the conceptual framework articulated in the story of The Double Helix is an important part of the philosophy of this class. The Double Helix was written by James Watson and first published in 1968. It has been reissued several times since then. Any edition of this book will suffice, as the original text has never been revised and is the same in all editions. The Norton Critical Edition edited by Gunther Stent is recommended because of the inclusion of excellent supplementary material. If you have this edition, then it is also recommended that you read Gunther Stent’s historical introduction and summary of the book reviews. You will not be responsible on exams for parts of the book other than the primary text by Watson. However, if you wish to get the most from this class, the reading of Stent’s historical commentary on The Double Helix is highly recommended.

Learning Activities

You are expected to fully participate in all the course activities described here.
This course is designed to provide the student with a survey of the mind, brain, and behavior. A variety of learning activities are designed to accommodate diverse learning styles and build a community of learners. Learning activities for this course include the following:

1. Read the assigned textbook pages.
2. Watch and listen to the PowerPoint lecture presentations.
3. Read web-based announcements and postings assigned during the course.
4. Compose and post assigned responses to lectures and readings.
5. Complete midterm exam and final exam.
6. Complete writing assignments.

**VERY IMPORTANT**

You won't be able to access your course material until you read and make Your Pledge to Academic Integrity. Go to the Modules page and click on the START HERE link. Click on the first link to learn about what constitutes cheating, plagiarism, and false information. If you think you already know, think again! You'll be surprised by what you find out. As a UC Berkeley student, you are expected to abide by these rules.

**Readings**

Read the assigned chapters for each weekly module. View the assigned multimedia presentations. The module’s Key Concepts and multimedia lectures will provide an overview to assist you in focusing your study for assignments and exams. Readings and multimedia are listed in each respective Week folder. Specific reading assignments are listed on the Course Schedule and in the specific weekly modules.

**Multimedia**

A list of PowerPoint lectures can be located on the Course Schedule and in the specific weekly modules. Links to the PowerPoint lectures can be found within each weekly module. Note that for each narrated PowerPoint lecture, there is also a PDF handout. This supplement is available for printing and note taking.

**Homework Assignments**

Students will be required to complete 4 writing assignments based on the reading assignments and weekly lectures.

1. Homework assignment 1 is a description and analysis of an article which you find from the news media and is due Week 2. Please refer to the course schedule and/or calendar for due dates.
   - Your assignment is to find a news report, appearing within the past 3 months, about a topic in neuroscience, brain research, biological psychology, or whatever we wish to call these areas of study. The report should be from a news-media publication, not from a scientific journal. Then, IN YOUR OWN WORDS, write a summary description (150 to 300 words in length) of the news item, including a COMPLETE REFERENCE CITATION to the source of the news item. See [www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/citations.html](http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/citations.html) for citation guidelines; use
either APA or MLA style. Your summary description should convey the essence of what the news report is about and why you find it interesting. If there are parts of the report that are not clear to you, indicate what these are. We repeat, it is important that your description of the article be IN YOUR OWN WORDS. You should not simply copy material from the text of the article.

2. Homework assignment 2 is drawn from your reading of The Double Helix and is due Week 2.
   - In reading The Double Helix, you come to learn not only about the process by which the great scientific discovery of DNA's structure was made, but also about the interplay that existed between many of the individuals who surrounded this discovery. Through Watson's eyes, you learned interesting qualities about the various characters in the drama.
   - In our own lives, we sometimes realize that although we have one perspective on the world around us, our friends, family members, and colleagues may have a completely different view of the same events that are taking place.
   - In 500 to 800 words, write a coherent story from the perspective of one of the other characters with whom Watson interacts in the path to the discovery of the double-helical structure of DNA.
   - Your story must have some basis in the information presented in The Double Helix, but it must also give a different perspective from that of Watson. This will necessarily involve some speculation and artistic/poetic license on your part. That is, you will be making this up! It is historical fiction, based in fact from The Double Helix and plausible, but ultimately you are creating it.
   - You are not attempting to retell the entire Double Helix story in 1-2 pages, just a small piece of it.

3. Homework assignment 3 is writing questions appropriate for an exam in MCB W61 and is due Week 4.
   - Create multiple-choice and short-answer questions appropriate for use on MCB W61 exams. Write one multiple-choice question and one short-answer question for each of the three (3) topics that you will be given. That means you will write a total of six (6) questions, 3 of which are multiple-choice and 3 of which are short-answer. Be sure to clearly indicate the correct answer to your questions.

4. Homework assignment 4 is a description and analysis of an article which you find from the news media and is due Week 5.
   - The assignment is IDENTICAL to homework assignment 1, reporting on a recent item from the news media.

Detailed instructions for the homework will be provided on the website.

Late assignments may not be accepted and will definitely not receive full credit.

The homework assignments are worth 8% of the final grade. However, you must turn in all four of the homework assignments and participate in all of the weekly discussion forums in order to receive better than a "C-" grade in the class.

**Discussions**

**Weekly Discussion Forums**
Threaded discussions in this course reflect topics designed to promote critical thinking about the module under study.

Each week, one or two discussion questions will be assigned for an original posting to the discussion forum within each weekly module. That same week you are to continue the discussion with a written response to at least one colleague's posted discussion.

- Threaded discussions are asynchronous (not real time) discussions about a particular topic, discussion question, problem, or case study.
- The topic may include a posting deadline date for the discussion to conclude or adjourn.
- Participants can readily read all the previous postings in chronological order and make pertinent comments that add to the discussion, or ask questions for clarification.
  - They post new thoughts, opinions, literature review, perspectives, or questions about the issue under discussion.
  - Instructors will add reaction and summation comments from time to time.

Questions and Answers Forum

Please use this forum to post questions about the course itself or the topics we are studying, if the answers will benefit others in the class. If you have questions of a more personal nature, please contact David Presti or your GSI through course mail.

Student Lounge

The Student Lounge is our place for informal discussion, a place to create new topic threads and share common issues or experiences, class-related or not.

Examinations

Exams will consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. The midterm exam covers the preceding portion of the course and draws from material in the lectures and The Double Helix. The final exam is comprehensive and covers material from the entire semester. The midterm exam will be administered online. There will be a designated 24-hour window of opportunity within which you may take the exam. The final exam will be administered in a proctored setting. Those students in the Berkeley area will take the exam on the UC Berkeley campus. For those individuals located at distant locations, individual proctoring arrangements will be made.

Both exams are closed book and notes; thus textbooks and notes should NOT be consulted during exams. Nor should there be any communication with fellow students. It is expected that students will abide by the UC Berkeley Student Code of Conduct and will demonstrate honesty and integrity while taking exams.

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam consists of 85 multiple-choice questions and will cover course material from Lectures 1-10 (first 2 and a half weeks) and The Double Helix. It is only required to read the main text of the book, written by James Watson. However, reading the opening historical essay by Gunther Stent will greatly enrich your understanding of the material. You will take this midterm within the course on June 7.
Final Exam
The final exam will be proctored from 6-9 p.m. Tuesday, July 2nd, room TBA. The exam will be comprehensive and will cover course material from Lectures 1-22 and *The Double Helix*.

*Note the following requirements:*

We will not change the days and times for these exams; mark your calendars now. There will be no make-up exams. If you miss an exam, you will receive zero points for that exam. Students may possibly arrange to have the examination proctored if they can not come to campus. Please contact your Program Coordinator Tracie Littlejohn at summer_online_support@berkeley.edu to make alternative arrangements.

**In order to pass the class ("C-" or above) you must pass the final exam. Regardless of your scores on the midterms, a passing grade must be obtained on the final exam in order to pass the class.**

**Reminder: Your Course End Date**

Your access to the online classroom will expire on the course End Date. As you work through the course, please keep the End Date in mind, and if you want to save any commentary or assignments for future reference, please make sure to print or copy/paste those materials before your access ends.

**Grading**

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>59%</td>
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**Grading Policy**

It will not be possible to get better than a "C-" grade in the class without turning in all four of the written homework assignments and participating in the discussion forums. If you are taking the course pass/not-pass, you must turn in all of the homework and participate in the discussion forums in order to pass the course.

As stated previously, you must pass the final exam in order to obtain a "C-" grade or better in the class. Regardless of your scores on the first two midterms, if you do not pass the final you will not pass the class.

The point ranges for the various letter grades will be determined at the end of the semester after all exams and other graded materials have been evaluated. In past years, it has generally been the case that 90% and above is the A-range and 80% and above is the B-range. The C, D, and F ranges are more variable and will depend on the range of scores.
that occur among the students this session.

Your letter grade in the course will be determined according to absolute standards of performance, which hopefully relate to your acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the material. You will not be competing against fellow students in the sense that we do not force letter grades to conform to a predetermined distribution. If everyone does extremely well, everyone could receive an "A" grade. If everyone does poorly (highly unlikely), then everyone could get a low grade. Rather than devoting energy to worrying about where grade cut-offs are, if you are truly interested in this subject and in getting the most from this class, we urge you to take the material seriously from the beginning, do the readings, and really make an effort to learn the material. Your efforts will be rewarded with deep knowledge and understanding of some truly fascinating topics. Good grades will be a side effect.

Policies

Promptness

Homework assignments and discussion forum postings all have specific final due dates and times. You will not receive full credit if assignments are submitted after the indicated due date.

Further, each online activity must be submitted through the course website by the due date. Fax or mail submission will not be accepted. Students who wait until the final hours prior to a submission deadline risk having problems with their ISP, hardware, software, or various other site access difficulties. Therefore, it is advisable to submit assignments and tests through the course website early. The multiple days allowed for submission are to accommodate the busy schedules of working professionals, not to accommodate procrastination. Students should plan accordingly and get into the habit of checking the course website several times each week, and submitting and posting early.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to abide by the UC Berkeley Principles of Community (http://berkeley.edu/about/principles.shtml) and act with honesty and integrity in this class. Documented policies related to academic integrity and other activities related to University policy can be found in the Code of Student Conduct (http://campuslife.berkeley.edu/code-of-conduct) and in the Official Campus Policies and Procedures (http://campuspol.chance.berkeley.edu). Any violation of these policies, including acts of cheating or plagiarism, will be dealt with on an individual basis according to the severity of the misconduct. All exams are closed book and notes. Any violation of this closed book and note policy brought to our attention will result in a failing grade for the course, as well as further disciplinary action.

Incomplete Course Grade

Students who have substantially completed the course but for serious extenuating circumstances, are unable to complete final exam, may request an Incomplete grade. This request must be submitted in writing or by e-mail to the GSI and course instructor. You must provide verifiable documentation for the seriousness of the extenuating circumstances.
According to the policy of the college, Incomplete grades must be made up within the first three weeks of the next semester.

**Students with Disabilities**

Any students requiring course accommodations due to a physical, emotional, or learning disability must contact the Disabled Students' Program (DSP), [http://dsp.berkeley.edu/services.html](http://dsp.berkeley.edu/services.html), at the beginning of the course with their request. The DSP will review all requests on an individual basis.

**End of Course Evaluation**

Before your course End Date, please take a few minutes to participate in our End of Course Evaluation to share your opinions about this course. The evaluation does not request any personal information, and your responses will remain strictly confidential. To access the evaluation, please follow the link near the bottom of the Modules tab page. You may only take the evaluation once.