

Psychology 3525A - Hormones and Behaviour

Department of Psychology
The University of Lethbridge
Fall 2009

Location:

M W F, 12:00-12:50, AH175

Instructor:

Dr. Margaret Forgie

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Office Hours: By individual appointment at a mutually convenient time.

Graduate Teaching Assistant:

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Course Description:

This course is designed to expand on the material covered at the second year level by providing an in-depth analysis of current theories and research in the field of behavioural endocrinology - the study of the relationship between hormones and behaviour. We will explore the proximate mechanisms via which hormones, and the endocrine organs that produce them, exert actions on the structure and function of the **mammalian** central nervous system and, thus, on behaviours. A wide range of topics will be covered including development, reproductive behaviour, parental behaviour, aggression and mood, feeding and drinking, biological rhythms, and stress to name a few. In each case, both the basic biology and physiology of each of the neural/hormonal systems, as well as the patterns of behaviour exhibited by the whole animal, will be addressed.

Course Prerequisites:

The prerequisites for this course are two, 2000-level courses (3.0 credit hours each) in Psychology or Neuroscience. The recommended prerequisite is Psychology 2700. Regardless of specific background, all students are expected to have a solid foundation in the scientific approach to understanding behaviour, and a willingness to learn about physiological psychology.

Required Texts:

Nelson, R. J. (2005). *An Introduction to Behavioral Endocrinology, Third Edition*. Sinauer: New York, NY.

Northey, M., and Timney, B. (2007). *Making Sense in Psychology and the Life Sciences. A student's guide to research and writing*, Fourth Edition. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, ON.

Course Requirements:

(1) Exams. There will be three short exams, approximately every 4 to 5 weeks during the semester (see the attached schedule of deadlines), and these will account for a total of 45% of your final grade (15% each). Exams will consist of short-answer, definitions, and multiple-choice questions. The last exam will take place on the last day of classes. There is no final exam in this course.

(2) Presentation. Students will be responsible for giving a short, conference length presentation (= total of 10 minutes for presentation; 3 minutes for question period, with length of time strictly enforced by the instructor). Students will present in groups of three. This presentation will be worth 20% of your final grade with 10% accorded to the group, and 10% to each individual's contribution. All students will be required to submit a one-paragraph statement of interest (see the attached schedule of deadlines) and then groups will be assigned based on matched interests.

(3) Annotated Bibliography Assignment. As a companion to your presentation material, each student will submit a written assignment that is adapted from the standard annotated bibliography. This assignment is due on the day that you give your presentation, and this assignment will be worth 15% of your final grade. There will be no opportunity to revise this assignment for re-grading. A handout will be distributed regarding content and will be discussed in the introductory classes.

(4) Journal Assignment. There will be a written assignment consisting of an essay explaining a single, original research article concerning any topic in the area of behavioural endocrinology. Approaches from all levels of psychological analysis are encouraged (e.g., depending on your interests, you might choose to focus on molecular processes in brain development or you might choose a topic in clinical endocrinology). The only caveat is that your target article **MUST** be a primary research paper that has published in a peer-reviewed/referred journal and it must have been published within the last 10 years. Your submission will be worth 20% of your final grade. Following initial grading, students will be given the option of submitting a revised version. A handout for the assignment and re-grading procedure will be discussed in the introductory classes.

NB.

Late submissions of the Journal Assignment or the Annotated Bibliography will result in a 25% penalty per day. In the case of the journal assignment, you will also forfeit your opportunity to submit a revised version. Failure to deliver your part of the in-class presentation will result in a grade of zero for both portions of the mark. Your group will be graded without your result. All assignments will be graded under the assumption that all students have read, and understood, the contents of the second required text by Northey and Timney (2007). In particular, all written assignments must be in your own words. Paraphrasing someone else's words, even if you reference it, is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and any case of suspected plagiarism will be dealt with severely, including the imposition of the maximum penalties allowable for such an offense. For information on what constitutes plagiarism - see Northey and Timney (2007), Chapter 4. This information is also available from the library.

Students with Special Needs:

If you have a documented condition that prevents you from fully participating in this course, including evaluation procedures, it is your responsibility to contact me if special arrangements are necessary to accommodate your individual situation. Please note that you must contact Counselling Services to acquire an official letter concerning your situation. No accommodations will be given without official notification from that office.

Grading:

Letter grades will be assigned to final percentages according to the following scale:

A+ (90+)	B+ (77-79)	C+ (67-69)	D+ (56-59)
A (85-89)	B (73-76)	C (63-66)	D (50-55)
A- (80-84)	B- (70-72)	C- (60-62)	F (< 50)