

Psychology 3535A - Drugs and Behaviour
Department of Psychology
The University of Lethbridge
Spring 2012

Location:

M W F, 1:00-1:50, C610

Instructor:

Dr. Margaret Forgie

Phone: 329-2437 (department: 329-2235)

Office: D850

Email: forgie@uleth.ca (preferred contact)

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

Teaching Assistant: TBA**Course Description:**

This course is designed to provide an in-depth introduction to the field of psychopharmacology, which is the study of the relationship between drugs and behaviour. In this course, we will address the underlying neural and physiological correlates of this relationship. In other words, we will explore a wide range of topics related to the proximate mechanisms by which psychotropic and psychotherapeutic drugs exert their actions on the functional properties of the nervous system and, thus, on behaviour. For each topic area the basic neurochemistry and neurophysiology of the drug's action, and the patterns of behaviour exhibited at the level of the whole person, will be addressed. Please note that the main theme of this course is not drug abuse, counselling, or sociocultural models of addiction.

Course Prerequisites:

The required prerequisites for this course are Neuroscience 2600 and one other 2000-level course in Psychology or Neuroscience. Students must have Neuro2600 or an equivalent. Regardless of specific background, I will assume that all students have a working knowledge of basic neurochemistry and physiological psychology.

Required Textbooks:

1. *Course Content*: Meyer, J.S. and Quenzer, L.F. (2004). *Psychopharmacology: Drugs, The Brain, and Behavior*. Sinauer Associates Inc.: New York, NY.

2. *Supplemental Research and Writing Reference Guide*: For many years I have required senior students to purchase a reference text to assist with written assignments, presentations, and so forth. This semester, due to a change at the level of the publisher, several versions of the *Making Sense* Text are in current circulation. Those students that are purchasing this text for the first time should choose either Options 1 or 2 as listed below. Those students that have already purchased Option 2 do not need to purchase a new edition. Students that have already purchased and used Option 3 should consider upgrading their text as the revised versions reflect current writing conventions and Internet usage in research.

Option 1: Northey, M., & Timney, B. (2012). *Making Sense in Psychology. A student's guide to research and writing*. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, ON.

Option 2: Northey, M., & von Aderkas, P. (2011). *Making Sense in the Life Sciences: A student's guide to research and writing*. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, ON.

Option 3: Northey, M., & 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 Information Online:

Moodle: For new or returning students, the University of Lethbridge has replaced Blackboard/webCT with Moodle (<https://moodle.uleth.ca/>). Although all tests for this course will be written during class time, I will use Moodle to provide an online grade book to allow you to track your standing in the course. I will also post supplemental material (e.g., information sheets explaining assignment details and any lecture or reading material for topics that are not covered in the text). If you are not familiar with Moodle, please contact the CRDC. **NB: With the exception of students with special needs, or students that encounter extenuating circumstances (on an individual, documented case-by-case basis), I will neither post my powerpoint slides to Moodle nor distribute them in any other way to the class.**

Email: My primary method of communicating with you for general notices and points of interest to supplement lecture material will be via email and in-class announcements. Please check your U of L email account on a daily basis, or have that account forwarded to your usual email provider. Please do your best to remember to do regular housekeeping so that you do not miss important notices that relate to this course due to a full mailbox. Any requests for information pertaining to matters of a confidential nature (e.g., your particular standing in the course) must be sent from your U of L account. Please include your student number and your full legal name as it appears on your registration. Please do not abuse the class listserv by sending communications that are not relevant to this course.

Course Requirements:

(1) Tests. There will be three tests in this course, each of which will account for 15% of your final grade. Tests will be based on both lectures and readings from the text and will consist of short-answer, definition, and multiple-choice questions (see attached course schedule for exam dates). There is no cumulative final exam in this course. **With the exception of extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness), all students must write the exam on the scheduled dates. You must provide supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor's note) should you miss an exam.**

(2) Oral Presentation. Students will be responsible for giving a short, conference-length presentation (10 minutes for presentation and 3 minutes for question period). Students will present in groups of three (maximum time for the group is 15 minutes, with length of time strictly enforced by the instructor). This presentation will be worth 20% of your final grade, with 10% accorded to the group and 10% accorded to each individual's contribution. Approaches from all levels of psychological analysis are encouraged (e.g., depending on your interests, you might choose to focus on the molecular processes of drug actions or you might choose a topic in clinical pharmacology). All group members are responsible for ensuring that the presentation is a cohesive group effort. Details related to this assignment will be discussed during the introductory classes and in an in-class workshop (see attached schedule). **One member of the group MUST provide me with an electronic copy of your final presentation slides (Keynote or Powerpoint only) by 1:00 pm on the day of your presentation.**

(3) Abstract Assignment. As a companion to your presentation each student must submit a written assignment that is adapted from several standard abstracted and annotated formats. The assignment consists of writing a one-page, critical abstract of each of five (5) primary research articles that address the same topic as your presentation. The articles must have been published in a peer-reviewed (refereed)

journal within the last six (6) years (i.e., 2005 or later). This assignment will account for 15% of your final grade and will be graded on a sliding pass/fail basis. Students that pass the assignment with their first submission will receive 15% toward their final course percentage. Students that do not pass the assignment with their first submission will be given ONE opportunity to submit a revision for full marks. An information sheet for this assignment will be available on Moodle and will be discussed during the introductory classes (see attached course schedule). **First submission of this assignment is due NO LATER THAN 4:00 pm on the day that you give your presentation. Assignments may be handed in during class time or placed in the dropbox located adjacent to D866.**

(4) Journal Assignment. Each student will submit a written assignment that consists of an essay explaining a single, original research article (hereafter, the target article) concerning any topic in the area of psychopharmacology, BUT THE TARGET ARTICLE MUST NOT be one that you used for your abstract assignment. As with the presentation and the abstract assignment, approaches from all levels of psychological analysis are encouraged, and your target article must be a primary research paper that has been published in a peer-reviewed (refereed) journal within the last six (6) years (i.e., 2005 or later). This assignment is worth 20% of your final grade. Following initial grading (according to the grading scheme given below), all students will be given an opportunity to revise their paper for a higher grade. An information sheet for this assignment will be available on Moodle and will be discussed during the introductory classes (see attached course schedule). **First submission of this assignment is due NO LATER THAN 4:00 pm on March 21. Assignments may be handed in during class time or placed in the dropbox located adjacent to D866.**

NB. Late submissions of the Journal Assignment or the Abstract Assignment will result in a 25% penalty per day. Failure to deliver your part of the in-class presentation will result in a grade of zero percent (0%) for both portions of the mark. Your group will be graded without your result. Students that contribute little to the group presentation will have their mark adjusted accordingly. All assignments will be graded under the assumption that all students have read, and understood, the contents of the *Making Sense* text. In particular, all assignments must be in your own words. Paraphrasing someone else's words, even if you reference those words, is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Any case of suspected plagiarism will be dealt with severely, including the imposition of the maximum penalties allowable (please consult the current U of L Calendar regarding academic offenses).

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 regarding your individual situation. Please note that no accommodations will be given without an official letter from the Disabilities Resource Centre (<http://www.uleth.ca/ross/disabilities/index.html>).

Grading Scheme:

Letter grades will be assigned to assignments and final course 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)