

# **Psychology 3535A – Drugs and Behaviour**

**Department of Psychology  
The University of Lethbridge  
Spring 2010**

## **Location:**

M W F, 10:00-10:50, PE264

## **Instructor:**

Dr. Margaret Forgie

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

## **Graduate Teaching Assistant:**

Ms. Daniella Schwindel

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## **Course Description:**

The aim of this course is to provide an in-depth introduction to the field of psychopharmacology - the study of the relationship between drugs and behaviour, and the underlying neural and physiological correlates of this relationship (i.e., the interactions of drugs with neurochemicals that results in alterations to behaviour). In other words, we will explore a wide range of topics related to the mechanisms by which psychotropic and psychotherapeutic drugs exert their actions on the functional properties of the central nervous system, and thus, on behaviour. For each topic area (see attached schedule) the basic neurochemistry and neurophysiology of the drug/psychiatric disorder, and the patterns of behaviour exhibited at the level of the whole person, will be addressed.

## **Prerequisites:**

Prerequisites for this course are two, 2000-level courses (6.0 credit hours) in Psychology or Neuroscience. Students should note that it is **strongly recommended** that they have **successfully** completed Neuroscience 2600, or an equivalent course, prior to taking this one. I will assume that all students have a basic working knowledge of the material that would be covered in such a course. 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 neurochemistry and behaviour.

**Required Texts:**

Meyer, J.S. and Quenzer, L.F. (2004). *Psychopharmacology: Drugs, The Brain, and Behavior*. Sinauer Associates Inc.: 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, and these will account for a total of 45% of your final grade (15% each). Exams will consist of short-answer, definition, 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 and then groups will be assigned based on matched interests.
- (3) Bibliography Assignment. As a companion to your presentation material, each student will submit a written assignment that is adapted from several standard bibliography formats and will consist of writing a critical abstract of five primary research articles. This assignment is due on the day that you give your presentation.
- (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 psychopharmacology. 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 action or you might choose a topic in clinical psychopharmacology). The only caveat is that your target article **MUST** be a primary research paper that has published in a peer-reviewed (refereed) journal and it must have been published within the last 6 years (i.e., 2004 or later). Your submission will be worth 20% of your final grade.

**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 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)