



**Psychology 215A A01 Spring 2012 (CRN 24337)**  
**Introduction to Biopsychology**



**Lectures:** ECS 123 TWF 1:30-2:30.

**Phone:** 250-721-8711

**Office Hours:** CORN A264. After class Tues and Wed or by appointment.

**Tutorial:** Friday after class, Room ECS 123

Note: Sorry, no consultations after noon the day before a test.

**Instructor:** Dr. R.W. Skelton

**Web:** <http://web.uvic.ca/psyc/skelton/>

**Teaching Assistant:** TBA

**Required text:** *Biological Psychology* (10<sup>th</sup> Edition), by James W. Kalat (2009).<sup>[RS1]</sup> (Text, eBook or combo is fine.)

FAQ: Is 9<sup>th</sup> Edition ok? A: No, not this year. Next year we will be using the 11<sup>th</sup>. The 9<sup>th</sup> Edition is no longer “supported”. Using it may make it harder to get the grade you want.

**Recommended supplements:**

1. *Study Guide to Accompany Kalat's "Biological Psychology"* (Helps you work with the material, but you will still need to focus on understanding the more important details)
2. *How to Study*, 4th Edition, by J. Deese & E. K. Deese, McGraw-Hill, 1994. (or current edition or the *UVic Study Guide*). (This is **strongly** recommended for sections on note-taking and studying for exams)
3. Web resources: eBook and online supplements are recommended
4. Other Web resources: Textbook website listed on my website – Practice quizzes and other activities.

PSYC 215A will introduce the fundamental principles of brain function and the biological basis of behaviour – including genetics, neurophysiology, neuroanatomy and neurochemistry. This material will be useful in upper-level courses in neuro-psychology, biopsychology, development, and sensation/perception. We will touch on more advanced topics such as vision, learning, memory, and recovery from brain damage to give you an idea of what is ahead in upper-level courses.

**Tentative schedule<sup>1</sup> of topics<sup>2</sup>, tests and exams<sup>3</sup>. (Watch for updates to dates and days in class)**

Dates	Chapter (and module)	Topic	Test Value
4-Jan-12	1.1-2	Introduction, Mind, Genetics and Evolution	
13-Jan-12	2	Nerve Cells and Nerve Impulses	
18-Jan-12	3.1	Synaptic integration	
25-Jan-12	3.2	Synaptic Transmission	
<b>27-Jan-12</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>1.1-2, 2, 3.1, 3.2</b>	<b>Test 1: Intro, Genetics, Cells, Synaptic Events</b>
31-Jan-12	3.3, 4.3	Synapses, Drugs and Behaviour, Research Methods	
3-Feb-12	4.1, 4.2	Nervous Systems Anatomy	
14-Feb-12		Reading Break (All week)	
22-Feb-12	5.1	Development of the Brain	
<b>28-Feb-12</b>	<b>Tues</b>	<b>3.3, 4(all), 5.1</b>	<b>Test 2: Drugs, Research Methods, Neuroanatomy, Development</b>
29-Feb-12	6.1, 6.2	Vision (excluding physiology of colour vision)	
14-Mar-12	13	Learning and Memory	
<b>23-Mar-12</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 13</b>	<b>Test 3: Development, Vision.</b>
27-Mar-12	5.2	Recovery from Brain Damage	
<b>Exam Period</b>	<b>All above</b>	<b>Final Exam (Cumulative and Integrative)</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>All Term</b>		<b>Experiential Learning (Online)</b>	<b>10%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Test dates are as firm as I can make them at this time, but watch for updates in class. There may be slight variation in the dates that modules start (e.g. Mod 4.1), but again, I will notify you in class. In case day-of-the-week does not match date, date is definitive.

<sup>2</sup> As usual, you are responsible for material or assignments presented in lectures that you do not attend. If you miss a lecture, find out what you missed from a classmate, not me. I will post my notes on my Website in PDF (Adobe Reader) format after the lecture for a limited time period (e.g., 2 weeks). Notes will be posted either on my own home page or in Moodle. This will be clarified in class.

<sup>3</sup> Use of material from tests I've given previously constitutes cheating, and will be subject to sanctions described below.

### **Marks, Tests and missed tests:**

Tests and exams will consist of multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions. All correctly answered questions will count ~1/2% toward your final mark (sorry, there are no 1/4 marks). There will be 3 in-class tests with 30 questions each and a final exam with 90 questions. In-class tests are worth 15% each and final is worth 45%. Material in this course outline is testable. If you have questions about your mark on a midterm test, must bring it to my attention within 2 weeks of the posting of the marks for the test. No changes to your mark will be made after that.

If you miss a test due to illness or family affliction (as per UVic policy on academic concessions in the calendar), and have valid documentation, you may write a make-up test ~~make it up~~ on the first Friday after the test was given. If you also need an academic concession for that 1<sup>st</sup> Friday (and have valid documentation) you may make it up on the second Friday following the test. If you need a concession longer than that, you are advised to drop the course. You must bring me a copy of your documentation for my files by the day you write the makeup. Documentation for being sick that day or that week must come from the University Health Centre. Because this course is so intensive, and it is very difficult to make up for lost study time, students are only permitted to write one make-up per term, even with a valid excuse for both. Make-ups are held Fridays at 2:30, most likely in CORN A221, but check with the PSYC office. If you miss Midterm 1 or 2 or the associated makeup **without a valid excuse** may be given permission to write a makeup as above, with a penalty of up to 3% (of the final mark) for each writing opportunity missed (including the in-class test). There is no makeup for Midterm 3. If you wrote a makeup for Midterm 1 or 2 and miss Midterm 3, you are not eligible to write the final and will be given an N in the course. If you miss Midterm 3 (having written both previous midterms), you will be given the average of your first two midterms as long as I receive your valid documentation by the end of classes (i.e., by the following Friday). Students who miss the final exam should see the regulations in the calendar in the “Deferred Status” section. Basically, students must apply to Records Services for a “Request for Academic Concession”, normally within 10 working days of the exam.<sup>4</sup> Failure to meet both of these deadlines will result in a 0 on the final exam and, most likely, an N (failing grade) in the course. For this course in the Fall term, students must contact me no later than the first week of January and must write a makeup by the end of the first three weeks of classes in January. For the Spring term, deferred exams are written in April or July. If you are unable to write make-ups within these parameters because of your affliction, then you are advised to drop the course because you are not well enough to complete it.

Note: No accommodations will be made for any marked component of this course worth less than 10%.

### **Experiential Learning (10%):**

In order to encourage your engagement in this course, throughout the term there will be short assignments to be completed online through the *Experiential Learning* web site (designed and managed by Dr. Grouzet): weekly journaling and website reviews. At the end of the term you will be asked to provide a final report on one or the other of these two components (at your choice).

**Component 1: Personal Journal (3%)** Over the course of the term you will make weekly entries in a guided, private, online journal. Dr. Grouzet will give you further instructions in class and on the website, but basically journal entries will consist of your weekly goals, records of your work for the course, how hard you found it, what tests or assignments you have coming up, and how you plan to prepare for them or complete them. I (your instructor) will never have access to these entries, though you will be graded on whether you make entries on a regular basis (e.g., at least 10 of the 13 weeks of the course). **Deadline:** noon Monday each week.

**Component 2: Course-relevant websites (3%)** This course is divided into 3 modules, each of which ends in a midterm test. In each of the 3 modules, you will be reviewing one or two external websites and completing a short assignment on one of them. The 3 assignments will, in general, ask you to comment on the website and relate the material in it to material being covered in the course or to your everyday life. **Deadlines:** Activities for Modules 1 and 2 are due by class time on the day of Midterms 1 and 2. Activities for Module 3 are due by Monday after the last day of classes.

**Component 3: Final report (4%) (Choose 1 of 2 options)**

**Option 1: Journal report.** You will identify what you found to be the most interesting aspect of the course, what links you were able to make between the course and your everyday life, and what links you were able to make between the experiential learning task and course contents.

**Option 2: Website Report.** You will comment on the 3 websites you previously reported on, relating the information to the course content and your everyday life and you will make a link between any two modules in terms

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<sup>4</sup> The Form can be found at: <https://registrar.uvic.ca/undergrad/records/forms/pdf/acad.pdf>.

of their similarity or differences, their relatedness to one another, and their ability to tie two portions of the course together. **Deadline:** Friday noon one week after the end of classes.

The Experiential Learning (EL) component in this course is the work of Dr. Frederick Grouzet (Psychology, UVic) who is particularly interested on the role of experiential learning on personal and academic development. The website will give you the opportunity to voluntarily complete additional short online questionnaires that are directly related to the topic. You will be asked whether you wish to contribute to research on student motivation and experiential learning. If you agree, Dr. Grouzet will analyze your responses and learning products confidentially (only Dr. Grouzet will have access to your responses). Although the assignments are mandatory, sharing your responses and data for research purposes is completely voluntary (and has no effect on your grade in this course). If you have problems with the EL website, follow the contact us link on the EL website. There is no point emailing me because there is nothing I can do to help you.

**Bonus marks (2%)**

You may earn up to 2% extra credit toward your final grade by participating in research studies conducted in the Department of Psychology. Each 15 minutes of participation will earn 0.5 point and up to 4 points may be credited toward this course, with 2 points required for a 1% increase in your final grade. Thus, two hours of participation would earn the full 2% extra credit. However, to earn this credit in this course you will also need to submit a report on one of the experiments you participated in describing aspects like hypothesis and measures. (A website will be given for you to download the form and submit your report.) For details on participating in research studies, go to the Department of Psychology web site (<http://web.uvic.ca/psyc>) and click on the “Research” link near the top of the page, then click on the Participant Pool link at the left of the new page to see instructions for participating.

**Percentage Scores to Grades:**

Letter grades will be assigned as per Department policy with course marks rounded to the nearest integer by my spreadsheet (i.e., from 0.5000000000000000% up, from 0.4999999999999999 down):

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	F
95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	50	>49.5

**Timely completion of tasks:** Your development as a student and as an adult includes taking responsibility for keeping up with the progress of the course and completing work within the allocated time period. This takes planning and discipline. Development of good time-management practice is a key component of your university education. PSYC 215A is a course in which the understanding of each lecture depends on understanding the material which came before it. In order to reinforce the concepts of keeping up and time management, posted lecture notes will be available for only 2 weeks after posting. No assignments will be accepted after their deadline, even if the EL website is not functioning continuously before the deadline. Do not leave assignments until the last minute – you risk being unable to submit it (or get a mark for it). I will not answer any questions during the 24 hours before any test or exam, so if you leave your studying to the night before the test, you are on your own.

**Contacting me:** If you have questions about course contents or tests, ask them in class, during the weekly tutorial or during office hours. I do not answer questions about course content by email. If you have questions about your test, ask within the 1<sup>st</sup> two weeks after the marks are posted. If you have questions about the EL website, or are having trouble logging on, follow the “Contact Us” link on the website. There is nothing I can do to help and may not even reply to your note. If there is a problem with my website, or related to an academic concession, please email [PSYC215A@UVic.ca](mailto:PSYC215A@UVic.ca). Be sure to put something informative in your Subject line. I get 60-70 emails every day and deal with those with no subject last (if ever). I am not likely to read “Moodle-mail”. If something is critical to your mark, make sure you see me: No email, phone call, or note under my door will be sure that I received your message. By the way, I do not use a departmental “Drop-Box”. If you have something to hand in, do so at the PSYC department office.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING PROCESSES OF THIS COURSE

### Goals:

1. Immediate: To help you learn and understand basic facts and principles of biopsychology.
2. Midrange: To help you retain this information for use in later courses.
3. Long-term: To help you improve your information processing and analytical skills, so you will be able to function better in whatever career you choose. (To help you learn to learn.)

### Learning Objectives

1. To be able to recognise and recall the meaning of words in the biopsychology vocabulary.
2. To learn and be able to apply at least 4 major principles of biopsychology, including
  - a. Behaviour is caused by brain activity.
  - b. Evolution wrote the growth plan (genetic code) for our brains. Experience guides its development.
  - c. Behaviour is determined by a combination of on-going events and previous experiences.
  - d. Biopsychology is a way of studying behaviour, not a body of knowledge. Researchers use specialized methods to produce observable effects. They interpret observations to draw conclusions.
3. To be able to identify the most important information and use judgement in deciding the best description of relations between elements in biopsychology.
4. To be able to read and understand scientific language and evaluate logical expressions for veracity (truth and accuracy).

Note: Knowledge of 215A material is required in PSYC 323, and when I teach it, I test on 215A material in the 1st 2 weeks of classes. I suggest you study in a way that lets you retain the material beyond the final exam.

### Learning Processes to be applied in this course.

1. *Self-teaching*: Most of what you learn and remember will derive from your own effort spent studying, by yourself and in groups. You should plan to spend approximately 3 hours of study time for **each** hour of lecture. Dr. Parsons in the Learning Skills Centre offers many innovative methods of studying and using study groups.
2. *Selective lecturing*: I will use class time to explain only a portion of the material you are required to know. My lecture pace will assume **you have read the relevant section of the text before coming to class**. I will usually lecture from one textbook module per class throughout the term, according to the schedule provided. If you do not prepare for these lectures by reading ahead, most of you ~~that you~~ will find the pace too fast and the material too complex, especially after the first 4 chapters.
3. *Cumulative understanding*. When you learn something new, it is good to start with a simple understanding. As you learn more, your understanding grows more complex. When I begin lecturing on a topic, I may start with simplified descriptions. If I expand on these, you will need to improve your understanding and later (e.g., on a test) the early simplistic version may not be considered correct. This may happen within a lecture, or over the term. When in doubt about what is correct, ask.
4. *Classroom activities*: During some classes, I hope to introduce exercises that will improve your understanding of the material, and help you develop your critical thinking skills, problem solving, creative thinking, and possibly even your ability to work with others.
5. *Classroom behaviour*: Some of you may have already discovered the “trick” to acing a course – **read ahead, come to lectures, listen actively, and take notes**. I and most of you take classroom time seriously, and work to make the most of it. Good learning and good interpersonal interactions require an atmosphere of security and mutual respect, as will any future career that requires you to work with other people. However, it is also good practice to ask questions. If something about the material is unclear or seems contradictory, please ask about it. Unfortunately, most students seem to wait until right after the test to ask for clarification, usually in the form: “Hey! Why isn’t my answer right!?” At this point, it’s about marks not education and it’s too late.

## AGREEMENTS/EXPECTATIONS FOR THIS COURSE

The purpose of the following agreements is to create a condition that allows all people in the class to get the maximum value from the course.

### As the instructor, I agree to:

1. Be prepared for each lecture and to present the material in the most understandable way I can.
2. Start and end lectures on time (If I start late, I will end early, minute for minute).
3. Evaluate you equitably, according to principles I will describe in class.
4. Try to help you maximize your long-term benefit from this course, by requiring more than just rote memorization.
5. Respect individuals and strive to maintain a secure and comfortable learning environment<sup>5</sup>.

### As a student in this course you agree to:

1. Keep up with the required reading in the course, and study the material on your own.
2. Seriously attempt to understand the material, in class and at home, asking questions when you don't understand.
3. **NOT CHEAT.** University regulations prohibit cheating, including copying from other peoples' exams and using exams from previous terms. Cheating on a test may result in a zero for that test or failure in the course.
4. Arrive **on time** for class and to remain until the class has ended, paying attention and not talking with friends.
5. NOT access social networking sites during the class.
6. Communicate any complaints and criticisms you may have to the instructor or class representative(s) (either in person or in writing, signed or anonymously) so that the instructor can try to remedy the situation.
7. Try to maximize your long-term benefit from this course by studying for more than just recognition of terms and short-term recall of facts.
8. Respect individuals and strive to maintain a secure and comfortable learning environment. This includes ceasing private conversations when the class begins.
9. Audio recording for personal use is acceptable. No using cell phones and no photography without explicit permission in writing.

If you feel that you cannot agree to these conditions, please transfer to a different course or section. Attendance at future lectures signifies your agreement.

## STUDY and LEARNING TIPS

1. **Come to classes** and listen actively. It's amazing how much you can understand if you listen carefully.
2. **TAKE NOTES** but do **not** try to copy all the notes from the overhead. This is superficial processing and largely a waste of time. Copy only what is important. You may be afraid that you will miss something critical but you will find that nearly all of the key details are found in the textbook, and with practice, you will be able to capture the most important information. What you want to be sure to get from lectures is the sense of what is important plus some key principles that organize the information. If you have not yet learned how to take notes from a lecture (other than by copying what is on the overhead), now is the time. It is a valuable skill. "How to Study" books provide good guidelines. Like any skill, you cannot acquire it without practice.
3. **Read ahead.** (Oooh, *déjà vu!*) Simply read the upcoming sections of the text prior to coming to class. We will be covering about 1 module per lecture so you can pretty well predict what we'll be covering next. You don't have to study it (yet). By familiarizing yourself with the concepts, terms and issues, you will find the lecture easier to understand and follow. Otherwise you will likely find that I "go too fast".
4. **Read all sections of the assigned chapters**, including introductory and closing comments. The summaries and review questions are extremely valuable study aids. The "In Closing", "Stop and Check" and "Thought Question" sections are valuable tools for encouraging you to think about the material more deeply. Talk them over with classmates. Talking to someone else about what you are learning will motivate you to understand the material better. Form a study group (the study skills centre can help.) **Study and understand the figures.** Focus on understanding the material, perhaps even making up your own questions. Study for retention. You may need this material in the future. Why learn it twice? You will find details more memorable if you learn them in the context of key principles and larger issues rather than a laundry list of trivia.
5. **Pay close attention to the Major/Key concepts:** Know what they mean. You can often find them in section headings or opening sentences of paragraphs. Note: "Knowing the key concepts" is **NOT** the same as "Getting the general idea". One is clear and precise; the other is loose and often inaccurate.
6. **On tests**, choose best answer, not based on answer sequences or what you think I want.

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<sup>5</sup> By the way, I use humour in the lectures to improve the learning environment by making the lectures more fun and the material more interesting and memorable. If any of it offends you, please let me know and we'll see what can be done.

**UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA**  
**Department of Psychology**

**Important Course Policy Information**  
**Winter 2011-2012**

***Prerequisites***

Students who remain in courses for which they do not have the prerequisites do so at their own risk. Students who complete courses without prerequisites ARE NOT exempt from having to complete the prerequisite course(s) if such courses are required for the degree program.

***Program Requirements***

For more information see pages 209-212 of the UVic Calendar 2011-12.

***Registration Status***

Students are responsible for verifying their registration status. Registration status may be verified using My Page, View Schedule. Course adds and drops will not be processed after the deadlines set out in the current UVic Calendar.

***Commitment to Inclusivity and Diversity***

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive and supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.

***In the Event of Illness, Accident or Family Affliction (See UVic Calendar, 2011-12, p. 35)***

- ***What to do if you miss an exam other than one scheduled during the formal examination period***

Do not apply at Records Services for a "Request for Academic Concession". Instead submit documentation of the illness, accident or family affliction directly to your course instructor (or designated teaching assistant).

- ***What to do if you miss an exam scheduled during the formal exam period***

Apply at Records Services for a "Request for Academic Concession", normally within 10 working days of the end of the formal examination period. Records Services will forward the form to the instructor. If the concession is granted the instructor will determine how to deal with the situation (for example, a deferred exam). Where a concession is not applied for or where such application is denied, an N grade will be entered on the student's academic record.

- ***What to do if you require additional time to complete course requirements***

Apply at Records Services for a "Request for Academic Concession", normally within 10 working days of the end of the formal examination period. Records Services will forward the form to the instructor. If the concession is granted the instructor will determine how to deal with the situation. Where a concession is not applied for or where such application is denied, an N grade will be entered on the student's academic record.

### ***Policy on Academic Integrity including Plagiarism and Cheating***

The Department of Psychology fully endorses and intends to enforce rigorously the Senate Policy on Academic integrity (<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2011/FACS/UnIn/UARE/PoAcI.html> , p. 33-34, UVic Calendar 2011-12). It is of utmost importance that students who do their work honestly be protected from those who do not. Because this policy is in place to ensure that students carry out and benefit from the learning activities assigned in each course, it is expected that students will cooperate in its implementation.

The offences defined by the policy can be summarized briefly as follows:

1. **Plagiarism.** You must make sure that the work you submit is your work and not someone else's. There are proper procedures for citing the works of others. The student is responsible for being aware of and using these procedures.
2. **Multiple Submission.** Only under exceptional circumstances may a work submitted to fulfill an academic requirement be used to satisfy another similar requirement. The student is responsible for clarifying this with the instructor(s) involved.
3. **Falsifying Materials Subject to Academic Evaluation.** This includes falsification of data, use of commercially prepared essays, using information from the Internet without proper citation, citing sources from which material is not actually obtained, etc.
4. **Cheating on Assignments, Tests, and Examinations.** You may not copy the work of others in or out of class; you may not give your work to others for the purpose of copying; you may not use unauthorized material or equipment during examinations or tests; and you may not impersonate or allow yourself to be impersonated by another at an examination. The Department of Psychology has a policy of not making old examinations available for study purposes. Therefore, use of old exams without the express written permission of the instructor constitutes cheating by the user, and abetting of cheating by the person who provided the exam.
5. **Being an Accessory to Offences.** This means that helping another student to cheat (for instance, by showing or communicating to them answers to an assignment, or by allowing them to view answers on an exam) is an academic offence.

Instructors are expected to make every effort to prevent cheating and plagiarism. This may include the assignment of seating for examinations, asking students to move during examinations, requests to see student identification cards, and other measures as appropriate. Instructors also have available to them a variety of tools and procedures to check for Internet and electronic media-based cheating. In instances of suspected or actual plagiarism or cheating, instructors, following prescribed procedures, are authorized to take steps consistent with the degree of the offence. These measures will range from a zero on the test or assignment or a failing grade for the course, probation within a program to temporary or even permanent suspension from the University.

Rights of Appeal are described in the Policy on Academic Integrity in the University calendar (on p. 33-34 in 2011-12).

**The definitive source** for information on Academic Integrity is the University Calendar (p. 33-34 in 2011-12) (<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2011/FACS/UnIn/UARE/PoAcI.html>)

#### **Other useful resources on Plagiarism and Cheating include:**

1. The Learning Skills program: <http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learning/index.html>
2. The Ombudsperson's office: <http://www.uvss.uvic.ca/ombudsperson/pubsguides/plagiarism.pdf>
3. The English Department: <http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/CitPlagiarism.html>