Class Schedule

Meeting time
Tuesdays:
12:50PM – 3:50PM (2 * 15 minutes break)

Location
MAT 15

Course Description

How does the brain change as we age and what are the implications for cognition, motivation, emotion, and social interaction? This course provides an overview of new developments in research on cognitive, affective, and social neuroscience, with a focus on “normal” human aging. Students will be guided to an understanding of the theoretical accounts and an integration of empirical evidence surrounding age-related structural and functional brain changes and their impact on cognitive, affective, and social aspects of older adults’ life. The course will use a seminar style that involves in-depth reading of recent introductory book chapters, review papers and empirical articles and will offer various opportunities for in-class activities and discussions as well as writing. Six guest speakers will present their work, allowing for interactive discussion, in the context of a course-integrated 'Hot Topics on Campus' series.

Required Reading

Readings for the course include a course pack of introductory book chapters and scholarly articles made available via the course website. This class introduces you to the literature on how the human brain changes with age and what the implications are for cognition, emotion, motivation, and social interaction. It provides experiences that help you digest what you read, but taking and benefiting from the class relies on you reading and reflecting upon the assigned articles/chapters prior to the class in which they will be reviewed. Additional readings will be associated with the 'research topic presentation' and the 'brief perspective paper' assignments (see below).
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments</th>
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Developmental Psychology, 23, 611-626. |
doi:10.1093/scan/nsn29 |
“Hot Topics” Reading:  
<p>| 5    | Tue., Sept 23| Connectivity and default network in the aging                       | Spreng, R. N. &amp; Schacter, D. L. (2012). Default network modulation and large-scale network |</p>
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<td>Hot Topics on Campus: Dr. Kimberly Sibille: Affect, Aging, Pain, and Resilience</td>
<td>“Hot Topics” Reading: Sibille, K. T., Kindler, L. L., Glover, T. L., Staud,</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tue., Nov 11</td>
<td>NO CLASS --- Veterans Day</td>
<td>No readings</td>
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“Hot Topics” Reading: TBA                                                                 |
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|      |            | Cognitive training | - Question & answer;  
- Submit brief perspective paper  
  doi:10.1177/1745691610388780  
  doi:10.1177/1745691610388774  
  doi:10.1177/1745691610388781  
  Note that for this session, each student will only read one of the three papers to reduce the work load and allow time for studying for the quiz. |
Course Website

Go to [https://elearning2.courses.ufl.edu/portal](https://elearning2.courses.ufl.edu/portal) to access the course website. A copy of the syllabus, course readings, a copy of the lecture slides (after each class), class announcements, etc., will be posted on this website. Use of this server will be reviewed during the first day of class. Also, please check your email accounts regularly as announcements may be sent via email as well.

Course Requirements & Grading

Grading follows the scale below:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 -100</td>
<td>470 - 500</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 93.9</td>
<td>450 - 469</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89.9</td>
<td>435 - 449</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86.9</td>
<td>415 - 434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82.9</td>
<td>400 - 414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79.9</td>
<td>385 - 399</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 – 76.9</td>
<td>365 – 384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 – 72.9</td>
<td>350 - 364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>67 – 69.9</td>
<td>335 - 349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>&lt; 67</td>
<td>&lt; 335</td>
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Note. The point values, NOT percentage values, will be used to calculate final grades. Do not plan on rounding up for calculation of final grades. The final grade is a composite of the following course requirements:

- **Attendance and active in-class participation**
  For optimal learning, it is important and required that students attend every class session and participate in class discussions and activities throughout the entire semester. To foster an environment that is conducive to all students’ learning, please arrive on time to class with phones turned off. There will be 15 class sessions that will offer various opportunities for lively and informed in-class participation. After each session points ranging from 0 to 3 (0 = not present, 1 = not actively participated, 2 = somewhat actively participated, 3 = very well actively participated) will be assigned, for a total of **45 points** (9% of the final grade) for attendance and active in-class participation over the course of the semester.
  If you know you need to miss a class session for an unavoidable reason, please contact Dr. Ebner via email beforehand so that we may discuss your situation and make appropriate arrangements. Any partial or full absence that has not been approved beforehand by Dr. Ebner will be considered an unexcused absence and results in 0 points for attendance and active in-class participation for this session.
In case of unforeseen emergencies or problems please be in touch via email with Dr. Ebner within 24 hours to explain your situation and petition for an excused absence. Documentation for illness and other emergencies may be required. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain notes from another member of the class for a missed class session. Dr. Ebner will not provide notes for missed classes.

- **Readings and discussion question(s)/comment(s)**
  All assigned readings must be completed before each class. For each session, come up with three discussion questions or comments and email them to Dr. Ebner by 12PM the day before each class. In addition, raise at least two of them during the class discussion. For each set of comments, points ranging from 0 to 3 (0 = no questions/comments, 1 = somewhat informed questions/comments, 2 = very informed questions/comments, 3 = very informed questions/comments accompanied by internet link to additional paper, video clip, radio broadcast etc.) will be assigned, for a total of **45 points** (9% of the final grade) for discussion question(s)/comment(s) over the course of the semester.

- **Quiz**
  There will be a quiz covering the entire course material at the end of the semester. The quiz will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Answer to the questions should draw on the assigned readings and the material presented and discussed in class. A block of 70 minutes will be allotted for the quiz. There will be block out time in the class session before the quiz for review and for students to clarify any questions they may have. The quiz accounts for **160 points** (32% of the final grade).

- **Research topic presentation**
  Each student will take over the session for a block of 50 minutes once during the semester to present a specific research topic related to this day’s class topic. There will be a sign-up sheet with suggested topics and dates on the first day of class. Students can also discuss with Dr. Ebner alternative topics they would like to chose, as long as they are related to the overall course content. For this assignment, each student will identify and read 3 additional research papers that are not part of the course readings. Dr. Ebner will be available for discussion of the paper selection. The presentation should comprise a brief summary (e.g., what are the major theoretical issues and key findings), analysis and discussion (e.g., methodological concerns, points of controversy, unresolved issues, challenges for future research) and contextualization within the class content. Creativity is encouraged, that is whatever learning exercises or activities the session leader deems useful for enhancing comprehension and application of the material (e.g., short debate, quiz, audio-visual aids, literature, film, examples, thought experiments, group exercises or ‘games’, etc.) may be employed. Prepare presentation slides using PowerPoint.
These slides need to be sent via email to Dr. Ebner the Thursday before the scheduled class by 12PM to allow for feedback and guidance in preparation for the presentation. Also, some general tips and notes for in-class paper presentations and discussion will be given on the first day of class.

Research topic presentation counts for **125 points** (25% of the final grade). Relevant grading criteria are: (1) Was the identification of papers self-directed? (2) Was the presentation submitted for review and feedback on time? (3) Was the presentation well prepared? (4) Was the presentation clear and comprehensible? (5) How interesting was the presentation? (6) How comprehensive was the presentation and did it help seminar members learn something new about the topic, solidify knowledge, or clarify something confusing? (7) Was additional material used, was an in-class activity involved, and, if so, was it fun?

- **Brief perspective paper**
  Each student will write a brief perspective paper on the specific research topic chosen for the in-class research topic presentation. The perspective paper will be based on 6-8 papers found in the literature on the topic (including the ones used for the in-class research topic presentation). Dr. Ebner will be available for discussion of the paper selection.
  The brief perspective paper will summarize on 6-8 pages (double-spaced; reference list counts toward extra pages) in APA-style the readings in a succinct fashion covering major theoretical issues and key findings, followed by a discussion of common themes, methodological considerations, points of controversy and/or unresolved issues. The paper will conclude with a short section on ideas and challenges for future research.
  The written research proposal is due on **December 2 at 5PM** and counts for **125 points** (25% of the final grade).
  Relevant grading criteria are: (1) Was the identification of additional papers (beyond the ones identified for the in-class research topic presentation) self-directed? (2) Was the summary of major theoretical issues and key findings comprehensive? (3) Were common themes, methodological considerations, points of controversy and/or unresolved issues identified and discussed? (4) Does the paper conclude with a short constructive section on ideas and challenges for future research?

Any requests for extension of deadlines or make-up exams must be based on University approved reasons and must include proper documentation as per University guidelines. Requests must be made before the deadline, if possible, or within 24 hours of the deadline for unexpected emergencies. Please contact Dr. Ebner directly via email for any requests so that we may discuss your situation and make appropriate arrangements. Late assignments that do not have approved extensions to the deadline will be assigned 0 points.
Feedback

Thoughts and opinion about the course are welcome, and Dr. Ebner will invite each student to provide anonymous feedback at two points during the semester. Dr. Ebner also welcomes you to be in touch via email or in person if you have additional questions, comments, or concerns.

University Policies

This course adheres to all University Policies. See http://www.dso.ufl.edu/ for useful information at the Dean of Students Office webpage. This course uses the definition and guidelines for academic honesty as described by the Dean of Students Office. See http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial.academic.php for details. Students with disabilities or conditions requiring accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Dr. Ebner when requesting accommodation. See http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/ for details.

If necessary, Dr. Ebner may change the specific topics, dates, and assignments on this syllabus. Students are responsible for all announcements made in class or posted on the course website.