



Undergraduate Academic Affairs

Byrne Seminars Program
Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs
Bishop House
115 College Ave
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

This is Your Brain on Learning

Spring 2019

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Time: **Mondays** 3:20pm-4:40pm

Dates: January 27, 2020—April 13, 2020

Location: SEC 220 on Busch Campus in Piscataway, NJ

See *RUmaps* for location: <https://dcs.rutgers.edu/classrooms/science-and-engineering-research-center-room-220>

Instructor: Kasia M. Bieszczad kasia.bie@rutgers.edu

Office: 848-445-8936

Office hours by appointment

Seminar Description

This seminar will highlight the many ways that the brain changes itself. The technical theme is “neuroplasticity”. You will be exposed to research and discoveries in neuroscience, psychology, and medicine that show how life experiences can induce the brain to reorganize itself from a neurobiological perspective. Learning induces neuroplasticity, which serves “good” things like memory for being able to recall facts and episodes. But neuroplasticity may not always be “good” since it is also at play in processes of disease and even drug addiction. We will together discuss various factors that change the brain, the good and the bad, and begin to appreciate how you and I are not hard-wired, but constantly changing. Experience-dependent brain changes affect how we feel, act, and interpret the world. A goal of discussing ***Your Brain on Learning*** is to help us understand how we become unique individuals in our strengths, weaknesses, and abilities over a lifetime of experiences.

Goals

Embrace the unknown
Nurture your curiosity
Participate with gusto
Listen with earnest attention
Treat others’ ideas respectfully and with an open mind
Consider definitions learning
Contemplate how experiences impact your own neurobiology

Requirements

Come to class – Participate – Experiment – Converse
Read the articles and respond
Discover your own reading material
Engage in creative research – and work in teams to present an idea to the class

Schedule Spring 2020 (Mondays 3:20-4:40pm)

Week 1	Jan. 27 th	Meet n' Greet and Course Overview - Format, Logistics, Q&A
Week 2	Feb. 3 rd	Learning – What is it?
Week 3	Feb. 10 th	Languages, Firsts and Seconds.
Week 4	Feb. 24 th	Music.*
Week 5	Mar. 2 nd	Video Games.
Week 6	Mar. 9 th	Drugs, Sex, and Food.
Week 7	Mar. 23 rd	Brain Awareness Week (BAW) Activities! FIELD TRIP!**
Week 8***	Mar. 27 th	AXON Conference at Rutgers Honors College (...more details to come!)
Week 9	April 6 th	Sport.
Week 10	April 13 th	Disease and Therapy.

*no class on Feb. 17th *President's Day*

**BAW FIELD TRIP may be on a different day this week or between the 16th-27th, TBD.

***no class on Monday March 30th—instead, you will attend a conference the Friday BEFORE.

Grading

This is a Pass/No Credit course. More than two class missed classes OR not submitting a final paper will result in a “No Credit” grade; see list below. An “incomplete” grade will not be assigned in this course.

1. Attendance & Participation (including class field trip) 75%
2. Reflection paper (two pages, due on the final day of class) 25%

Absence Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss a class, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

Materials

Assigned readings will be available on the Sakai course website – sakai.rutgers.edu

Assignments

TBD. Wherever, whenever, I indicate to “Read” – it means read it before that class meeting.

Disability Services

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a major offense at Rutgers University. You are responsible for understanding the academic integrity policy and following these principles. Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the University and the value of the degrees awarded to its students. Every member of the University community therefore bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld. The complete academic integrity policy can be found here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>.

Additional Resources

SAFETY: If you feel an individual might be a threat to him/herself or others, contact the number for Public Safety (732-932-7211) immediately and alert the Professor. Campus Police can be reached at (732-445-7111).

CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR MISSED CLASSES: In the event of a student absence, the student is required to report his/her absence on <https://sims.rutgers.edu>. In the case of multiple missed classes beyond reason, a makeup assignment will be agreed upon between the Student and Professor to account for missed classroom time. For more information on our course Contingency Plan in particular circumstances, please see the Sakai Class website.

Just In Case Web App <http://codu.co/cee05e>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884

17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 <http://www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu>

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181

3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 <http://www.vpva.rutgers.edu>

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848---932--1181.

Scarlet Listeners

(732) 247-5555

<http://www.scarletlisteners.com>

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.