

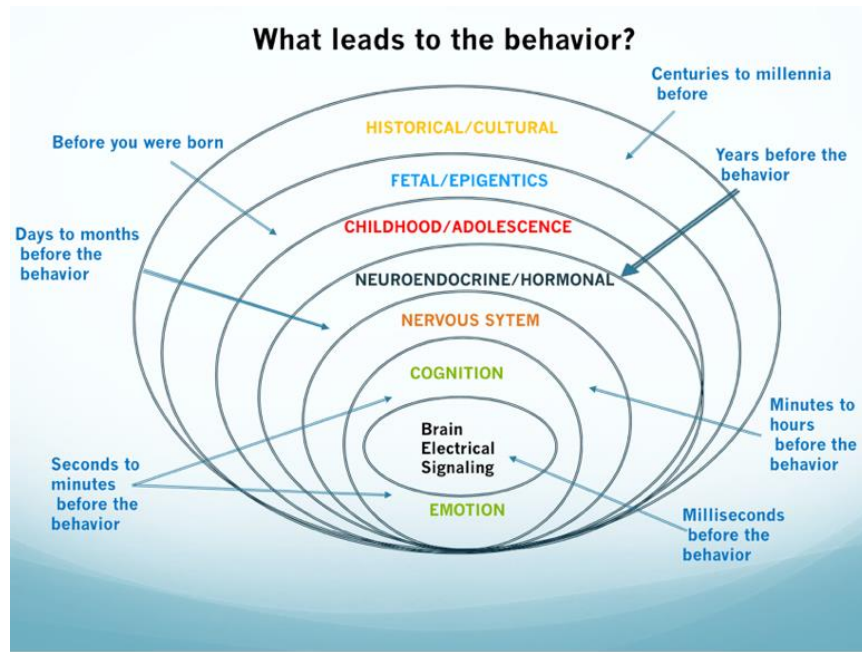
Throughout this course, we will confront profound questions: How does our brain work? What is reality, and how do we – or can we - determine it? Can we choose our behaviors, or are we bound by our biology and environment? How do our insights into these biopsychosocial interactions shape our perspectives on societal behaviors, especially those deemed poor? Join us as we unravel these fascinating connections, challenging and expanding our understanding of human behavior in the process.

The course will consist of a mixture of lecture material, active learning, and a great deal of lively and respectful discussion among peers.

Please know that it is my aim to make the classroom environment an inviting place to ask questions and learn from each other. If you are nervous about speaking in group settings, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can discuss ways to support your learning. **Discussion is an important professional – and life – skill and will be expected throughout the course.**

Themes:

Although we cannot begin to understand complex behaviors without considering neuroscience, equally, we cannot rely solely on neuroscience to make sense of our actions. Any given behavior is the end-result of a cascade of factors and events that precedes it. And the last step in this cascade is the brain. It is these factors and their influence on the brain and subsequent behavior that we will investigate.



By the end of this course, I hope it will be clear that there is little point in trying to describe some behaviors as biological and others as psychological or cultural: they are completely intertwined.

Textbook: None

This course combines neurobiology with psychology, physiology, and even a little philosophy. There is no single textbook that covers all our material. And I do not want you to buy multiple books. Instead, your learning will be supported by articles, peer-reviewed papers, and videos – everything will be posted alongside the relevant content on eLearning.

What Will You Learn?

Program Learning Objectives (PLOs): PLOs are the knowledge and skill sets that all graduating Psychology students will have mastered by the end of the Psychology Degree program. They are introduced and expanded upon in a variety of courses throughout the baccalaureate. Listed in the table below are the three major areas (PLOs) that we will focus on. **Course-specific Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)** are related to the program learning objectives but are particular to the course's subject matter and skill sets. You will see that each of our course-specific SLOs is directly aligned to one or more over-arching goals (PLOs) of your degree.

Career Competency and Readiness: The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) identifies core competencies in career readiness. By graduation, you will be adept at Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, Technology, Leadership, Professionalism, Career & Self-Development (See [HERE](#) for more details) The competencies that you will address in this course are also listed below. By enrolling in PSY 3352, you are not just taking a course, **you are acquiring skills that will prepare you for your career.**

Program-Learning Objectives in Psychology	Course-Specific Student Learning Outcomes	Career Competency
PLO1: Explain, analyze, and apply key concepts, principles, and theories in psychology's major subfields.	SLO 1: Describe the field of biopsychology and its approaches to the contribution of knowledge.	Critical Thinking
	SLO 3: Describe the anatomy of the brain and nervous system and discuss their influence on behavior	
	SLO 4: Explain the relevance of specific hormones to the development of behaviors.	
	SLO 6: Explain the influence of genetics on behavior.	
PLO2: Demonstrate scientific inquiry and critical thinking by classifying, interpreting, designing, and evaluating psychological research and scientific claims.	SLO 7: Apply appropriate knowledge to the analysis and evaluation of scenarios	Critical Thinking
PLO3: Effectively communicate psychological concepts to diverse audiences through written and oral formats, demonstrating proficiency in interpersonal communication, teamwork, and essential technological skills.		
PLO4: Demonstrate an understanding of individual and cultural differences, integrating this knowledge into psychological research, practice, academic endeavors, and professional interactions.	SLO 8: Describe the influence of society/environment on behavior SLO 9: Discuss one's own and others' biases in the evaluation of behavior.	Critical Thinking Self-Development Professionalism
PLO5: Apply ethical principles across various domains including psychological research, professional practice, academic pursuits, and related professional endeavors.	Student Honor Code	Professionalism

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is required and will be tracked. Although I will provide skeleton notes for you, please be aware that we will be investigating, discussing, clarifying, and adding information in real time during class; as such, **you must attend lectures to make additional notes and gain as much as possible from the lectures and discussions.** Please be present in mind, body, and spirit by fully attending to our material and to each other. Do not use your cell phone or access the internet during lectures, unless directed to.

University Approved Absences: Non-attendance is excused for illness, death of a close family member or friend, travel to conferences, religious observance, etc. Please let me know in advance of an expected absence, or as soon as possible in the event of an unexpected serious situation. On your return, please reach out to me for assistance with making up the missing material.

Other Absences: Please understand that in choosing to miss class you will be missing out on a valuable opportunity for learning and clarification. But I understand that life can be a little hectic from time to time, and that occasionally you may greatly need the extra time. Please know, however, that should you choose not to attend lectures, for reasons other than those accepted by the University (see above), you will need to obtain the missed material from a fellow student. I will not provide individualized lectures for non-approved absences.

Attendance and Participation Grade: Students who miss two or fewer classes across the semester will gain extra credit of 1%

Lecture Material

I will make **abbreviated** student notes available on eLearning prior to class. You should download or print them, bring them to class, **and add your own notes** as we go through the material. Importantly, research shows that the very act of attending lectures and writing notes helps to kickstart the learning process. There is **no assigned textbook** for the course: instead, peer-reviewed readings and media appropriate to the material will be posted on eLearning,

Formative Quizzes:

These open book quizzes will be available on e-Learning (see schedule) and are designed to help you check your understanding of some key course concepts. I **highly recommend that you use them as study tools.** Before checking your notes or readings, try to answer the question in your mind, and only then confirm or clarify your answer by referring to your notes. If you simply look up the answer, you won't be confirming your understanding or recall of the material, both of which are essential for doing well in exams. I understand that life can be hectic and so I will accept late quizzes. **But please be aware that these quizzes help you to stay up to date with the material. It is easy to fall behind – and difficult to catch up.** Please do your best to stay on track.

Assignments

Assignment due dates are listed in the syllabus. Grading rubrics will be shared in advance so that all expectations will be known to you ahead of time. A valuable part of the assignment will be **the follow-up discussion in class**. As such, part of the assignment grade will be dependent upon your presence and participation in the class discussion. There are only two assignments, and so **Late assignments** will lose 10% of the grade for each late day, to a maximum of three days. Assignments that are later than 3 days will receive no points.

Students with approved absences that affect the assignment due date should discuss the alternative date with me.

Study Guides

are provided for each module and will help guide your focus on the material. Please try to use the Study Guides as you go through the material in real time. **Cramming before an exam does not support lasting learning** (Our brains aren't made that way, as you will discover!) Please see the additional "How to Be Successful" material on eLearning for tips and suggestions on how to study.

Exams

Exams are intended to help you confirm what you know well and discover what areas may require some extra attention. Please try to see them as helpful to your learning – you will benefit enormously from this approach. Indeed, all assignments and exams are learning opportunities.

There will be **three mandatory exams** that will take place during the class period. There should be no baseball caps, books, lecture notes, internet, or cellphones accessible during the exam. There will be an **optional exam re-take** for either Exam 1 or Exam 2 **during Finals Week**. If your performance improves, the re-take grade will replace your original grade. If your performance on the re-take is worse, your original grade will stand.

You will require **Scantron 229630**.

A make-up exam will be made available only to students who missed the in-class exam due to a **university-approved absence**.

Academic Honesty

We are all on our own journeys of discovery. These journeys are personal and individual. We do harm to our integrity and learning – as well as disrespect others' journeys and lessen the value of our degrees - if we try to take short cuts, or present others' work (including that derived from Artificial Intelligence) as our own. I will do everything in my power to help or assist anyone who may be struggling with a concept. And I will also do my best to help students find any learning or emotional assistance that they may need. Please know that there is no shame in asking for help. Indeed, it shows courage and maturity. Be kind to yourself and please seek assistance where needed. I want you to succeed. And I am here to help you.

- Please familiarize and abide by the Academic Integrity standards laid out here:
[Academic Integrity - Community Standards and Conduct - UT Dallas](#)
- Avoiding Plagiarism [What is Plagiarism? - Library | The University of Texas at Dallas \(utdallas.edu\)](#)

In the event of cheating or dishonorable behavior, I would follow the guidelines laid out by the university policies on academic dishonesty, as much as it would pain me to do so. Please do not put me in that position.

Policy on Student Code of Conduct ([UTDSP5003 :: Student Code of Conduct :: UT Dallas Policy Navigator :: The University of Texas at Dallas](#)). We will be discussing some subject matter for which there are, as yet, no definitive final answers. We are all entitled to our own opinions, but we are not entitled to our own facts. We must substantiate any hypotheses with verifiable evidence. Please remember, too, that everyone has their own lived experience. Even – and particularly – when we cannot relate to others’ experiences, we must choose to listen respectfully, with an open heart and mind. We are all human: sometimes we stumble over words and/or make clumsy explanations. Please let’s agree to think the best of each other and to offer grace when needed. In my almost 30 years of teaching, I have never encountered a student who deliberately set out to cause hurt or harm to another. I don’t expect to see it now. But, of course, please know that disrespectful behavior would not be tolerated for any reason and would be dealt with in accordance with university policies.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Texas at Dallas is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for all persons with disabilities. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (2008), you are required to register with the [AccessAbility Resource Center \(ARC\)](#), located in the Administration Building, Suite 2.224. Their phone number is 972-883-2098, email: studentaccess@utdallas.edu and the website is <https://accessability.utdallas.edu/>. To receive academic accommodations for this class, please [register and request services](#) by completing the Request for Services form with the proper documentation and meet with the Director of ARC at the beginning of the semester.

Helpful Resources

Student Success Center [Let Us Help You Achieve Your Academic Goals - Student Success Center | The University of Texas at Dallas \(utdallas.edu\)](#)

Improving Study Habits [Academic Success Coaching - Student Success Center | UT Dallas](#)

Online Resources [Online Resources - Student Success Center | UT Dallas](#)

Student Counseling Center [Student Counseling Center | UT Dallas](#)

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Note, this schedule is dynamic and subject to change. The dates for each module are guidelines but **Exam Dates and Assignment Due Dates** would only be changed under exceptional circumstances. Should that happen, the dates would be postponed or cancelled, and notice would be given in class/ email/ eLearning.

MODULE	THEME	Dates	SLO & CC	ASSIGNMENT	Formative Quiz	DUE DATE	EXAM	EXAM DATE
#1: Weeks 1 & 2	Introduction to the field of biopsychology	(8/26 -9/4	1		Introductory Quiz Formative Quiz 2	8/31/2025 9/07/2025		
#2: Weeks 3 - 5	Neuronal Communication	(9/9–9/25)	2	Assignment A:	Formative Quiz 3 Formative Quiz 4	9/14/2025 9/21/2025 9/28/2025	Exam 1	9/30/2025 during class
#3. Weeks 6 – 8	Cognition and Emotion	(10/02 – 10/16)	3		Formative Quiz 5 Formative Quiz 6	10/05/2025 10/12/2025		
#4. Weeks 9 - 10	Hormones and the Brain	(10/21 - 10/30)	4		Formative Quiz 7 Formative Quiz 8	10/19/2025 10/26/2025	Exam 2	10/28/2025 during class
#5. Weeks 11-13	Childhood/ fetal developmental experiences and epigenetics	11/04 – 11/20/	5 & 6		Formative Quiz 9 Formative Quiz 10	11/09/2025 11/16/2025		
Week 14.....THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASSES.....								
#6. Week 15	Cultural and Historical Influences	12/02 - 12/09/	7		Formative Quiz 10	12/07/2025	Exam 3	12/09/2025 during Class
FINAL EXAM DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED BY THE REGISTRAR: OPTIONAL RE-TAKE OF EXAM 1 OR 2								

Evaluation Criteria: Your grades will be based on the information and skills garnered in class, and assessed through assignments, exams, and quizzes

Assignment	Percentage of Final Grade
Exams	75%
Assignments	5%
Formative Quizzes	20%
Extra credit	Up to 1%, as detailed in syllabus

Final Letter Grade Determinations are made according to the University of Texas at Dallas Guidelines, and will be calculated as follows:

Letter Grade	Minimum %	Maximum %
A	94	100
A-	90	93.8
B+	87	89.8
B	84	86.8
B-	80	83.8
C+	77	79.8
C	74	76.8
C-	70	73.8
D+	67	69.8
D	64	66.8
D-	60	63.8
F	0	59.8

A little about me: *I have a BS (Honors) in Biochemistry, a PhD in Physiology (Sleep), and a Post-doctoral Fellowship in Psychosomatic Medicine (Psychiatry). I have almost 30 years of experience working with undergraduate, graduate, and medical students, as well as medical residents. Prior to working in Higher Education, I trained in Sleep Medicine and ran a multi-disciplinary Sleep Disorders Center in Cambridge, England. I have always been fascinated by the “mind-body-spirit” connection in health and wellness. I consider it both a great responsibility and an enormous privilege to help support my students as they explore their ever-expanding world of learning experiences.*

I am so pleased to have you join me on this course and am very much looking forward to getting to know you.