NEUR 255
Introductory Neuroscience
Section EC
Fall 2026

This syllabus is subject to change and any changes will be posted in the Announcements section of your eConcordia portal.

Disclaimer: In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

About the Course

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This is a course in the Department of Psychology.

This course is intended to give students a broad introduction to the field of behavioural neuroscience

NOTE: Students registered in a psychology or neuroscience program may not take this course for credit. Students cannot take this course for credit if they have already taken NEUR 355

Instructor: Dr. Wayne Brake

Instructor Contact Information: neur255online@concordia.ca

This email address allows you to contact the Professor directly with any general inquiries. If you have any questions or concerns about the course, or if there is a delay in hearing back from your TA, please do not hesitate to use this email.

TA Contact Information: available through the course website

Note: Please email your TA with any questions or concerns you have, or if you require further feedback. Also, allow for a 24 hour response time during the week (Monday-Friday). Teaching Assistants check their messages once over the 48 hour weekend period and are not available on statutory or university holidays.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the biological bases of behaviour. The structural and functional anatomy of the central nervous system is presented, with particular emphasis on the neural pathways involved in behaviours relating to motivation, mood, learning and memory, and sensation and perception. This course explores how recent research helps in understanding how normal and abnormal brain functioning affect human behaviour.

Course Material

The material for this course consists of the required online textbook and the NEUR 255 course website which includes the quizzes, videos, discussion board and other course material.

The only text required for this course is available through the course website and is included in the online textbook fee.

Textbook

Bob Garrett. ***Brain & Behavior: An Introduction to Biological Psychology***, 4th Edition. Sage. ISBN 978-1-4833-1241-5 (web pdf).

Course Website

The course website can be accessed at www.econcordia.com
Your eConcordia account will be valid until the end of the term for which you are registered.

Your account will allow you to access the online course material, which includes videos, notes, discussion boards, all graded course components, useful links, readings and many more resources from the course website for the duration of the term.

Assessments

Graded Assessments

Online quizzes	10%
Midterm	15%
Term Project	15%
Final Exam In Person (Units 1 - 10) ***You must pass the final exam to pass this course**	60%

Description of Graded Assessments

Each quiz will contain questions randomly pulled from the question banks with different levels of difficulty (easy, medium, and difficult). There will be 10 Unit quizzes that you will take that are worth 1% of your grade each for a total of 10%. This is a helpful way to learn course material, practice your understanding, prepare for the final exam, and boost your grade! Quizzes are due the last day of classes. There will be no extensions. **You must pass the in-person final exam to pass this course.**

Midterm Exam

The Midterm will consist of multiple choice and questions. The Midterm exam can be written anytime between 8 am and midnight (but only one attempt).

Term Project

The term project will require you to write a paper about a specific topic covered in this course. Term Project due at midnight. Late penalties will be 10% per day up to a maximum of 5 days, after which it will receive a grade of 0.

Final Exam

This exam will be cumulative. The final exam will be the same format as the midterm exam albeit with many more questions that cover the entire course and it will be in person. You cannot pass this course if you are unable to write the final exam in person. **You must pass the final exam to pass this course.**

Grades

In order to view your grades throughout the semester, click on the My Grades link in your eConcordia portal.

It is your responsibility to ensure your work has been received (to be verified as outlined in your assignment instructions) and to contact your TA via e-mail for clarification if you have any questions concerning your grades.

Your final letter grade for the course will be posted in your MyConcordia Portal at the end of the term.

Mark Breakdowns

Letter Grade	**Percentage (%)**	**Letter Grade**	**Percentage (%)**
A+	95 to 100	C	64 to 66
A	87 to 94	C-	60 to 63
A-	80 to 86	D+	57 to 59
B+	77 to 79	D	54 to 56
B	74 to 76	D-	50 to 53
B-	70 to 73	F	Less than 50
C+	67 to 69		

Class Policies and Expectations

i. Communications: Students are expected to display proper etiquette and professional conduct at all times, including their communications with the instructor, with the TAs, and with other students. This includes being polite, disagreeing courteously when necessary, and practicing mutual respect. Overtly inappropriate or negative comments will **not be tolerated** on the discussion boards or in email communications.

ii. Emails: All emails should be written in a professional manner. Include the following information in all of your e-mail communications:

- Your full name
- Your Concordia student ID number
- The course name and number (NEUR 255) pertaining to your inquiry

Emails regarding course content should include specific questions and should also clearly state your current understanding of the topic. Questions related to course content can also be posted on the discussion board (see below).

We strongly encourage you to use a Concordia University e-mail account or an account from a provider such as Sympatico, Videotron, etc. Free e-mail accounts such as Hotmail, Yahoo, etc. are NOT recommended and very often lead to communication problems. **Your e-mail address must be registered** in your MyConcordia Portal as well as in the Student Profile of your My eConcordia Portal

iii. Discussion Boards: You may post questions about course content on an appropriate thread on the Discussion Board. This is a great way to ask a general question that others might also be interested in reading. For more urgent or personal matters, please send an email instead (see above).

The Discussion Board is a versatile tool in an online course. It is akin to putting your hand up in class, but with a bonus: each and every student can read the questions and the various answers posted, at their leisure. Before you post on the Discussion board, read the other postings to confirm that any question you pose has not already been answered repeatedly.

The Discussion Board is meant for the academic discussion of the course material. **Do not post your telephone number, student ID, or any other personal information on the Discussion Board**. Do not post questions pertaining to grades, technical issues, or questions of a personal nature on the discussion board (Instead, direct these to your TA via email). The Forum Administrator will remove Discussion Board posts that are inappropriate or contain personal information.

Of vital importance is respectful behavior on the Discussion Board. Refrain from making offensive statements and derogatory comments. Students who fail to respect these rules will be

removed from the discussion. It is within our discretion and authority to edit or remove any posting at any time. Please see the Code of Rights and Responsibilities here: http://www.concordia.ca/students/rights.html.

iv. Announcements: Important information regarding the course will be communicated to you via the Announcements Section of the course website on a regular basis. The Announcements are located in the centre of the main page upon logging in to your eConcordia account. Please make sure to read the postings frequently, at least twice per week.

v. Quiz policies: Students are responsible for scheduling and completing the online quizzes at home by the deadlines. Completion of these unit quizzes is required and there will be **no supplemental quizzes** or alternative assessments given for this portion of the course. You will receive a zero for a missed quiz for reasons such as conflicts with work or travel, academic workload, sleeping in, feeling sick, forgetting there was a quiz, etc. Please note that the **quizzes are considered closed-book assessments** – you should **not** have your notes open or use any other resources to complete the quiz. Students are expected to uphold academic honesty and integrity when taking the quizzes at home. This will help you prepare for the final exam, which will also be a closed-book assessment.

vi.Exam policies: Final exams are scheduled by the University Examinations office and take place during the final exam period. The schedule is released partway through the semester. Your presence at the final exam is required and there will be **no supplemental exams** in this course. You will receive a zero for a missed exam for reasons such as conflicts with work or travel, academic workload, sleeping in, feeling sick, forgetting there was an exam, etc. You will **not** be granted permission to write a deferred exam due to travel plans. For more information on deferred final exams, visit this page: http://www.concordia.ca/students/exams/accommodations/def-note.html

vii. Course materials: Any intellectual property (including but not limited to notes, quizzes, examinations) displayed or distributed to students during this course by the professor remains the intellectual property of the professor. This means that the student **may not** distribute, publish or provide such intellectual property to any other person or entity for any reason, commercial or otherwise, without the express written permission of the professor.

viii. Cheating and plagiarism: Concordia University has very strict policies on cheating and plagiarism and expects all students to uphold the principle of academic honesty. As such, there is a **zero tolerance policy** in this course on all instances of cheating and plagiarism. If you get caught, you will be reported to the office for Academic Integrity, who will determine what sanctions to levy against you. As described on the University's website, the Academic Code of Conduct defines plagiarism as "the presentation of the work of another person, in whatever form, as one's own or without proper acknowledgement" (Article 19a).

You are encouraged to visit the University webpage on Academic Integrity to learn more about how to protect yourself from accidental plagiarism: http://www.concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity/plagiarism.html

You are encouraged to visit the **GenAI Quickstart for Students**. These interactive 15-minute modules are a starting point for thinking about when and how to use GenAI in academic contexts—or not! Explore scenarios and dilemmas to think through the role AI tools might have in your academic life: https://library.concordia.ca/learn/genai-students/index.html

ix. General expectations: As outlined on the eConcordia website, you should expect to spend an average of four to six hours each week for each online course you are taking. The time spent on each course is dependent on the course material itself as well as the rate at which each individual can learn the material. Therefore, four to six hours is an estimate only and should be adjusted based on your ability to learn the material. In this particular course, there is a lot of new terminology to learn. The best way to learn this material is to spend time with it and engage with the material as much as possible: watch the online lectures, complete the readings, post on and read the discussion board, use the additional resources, attend the live discussions with the instructor (or watch them later), and email your instructor throughout the semester if you have further questions. Research has repeatedly shown that spaced studying is more effective than massed studying (cramming): Create a study schedule for yourself and stick to it each week.

Important Information

Topic	Link
Academic Integrity	Academic Integrity
Educational Technology Guidelines	Concordia Educational Technology Guidelines for Faculty and Students (the "Guidelines")
Access Centre for Students with Disabilities	ACSD
Concordia Library Citation & Style Guides	How to cite...
Course Communication Tools	Communication
eConcordia Policies	Policies
Final Exams Information	Final Exams
Helpdesk/Support	FAQ
Refunds	Refunds
Technical Requirements	Technical Requirements
Tips for Studying Online	Studying Tips
Tips on how to reach online learning goals (learning modules)	How to Succeed @ eConcordia
How to install and use Zoom	Zoom Information

NEUR 255 - Introductory Neuroscience
Agenda
Fall 2026

All deadlines indicated are on the due date listed by 11:59 p.m. unless otherwise indicated.

Week 1: September 7 - September 13	
	Review the Course Outline and Agenda
	Unit 1: Organization of the Nervous System
September 07	**Labour Day, university closed**
September 08	**Classes begin**
Week 2: September 14 - September 20	
	Unit 2: Brain Cells and How They Communicate
Week 3: September 21 - September 27	
	Unit 3: How the Brain Senses the World Around Us
September 21	**Deadline to add fall-term courses**
September 21	**Deadline for withdrawal with tuition refund (DNE) from fall-term courses**
Week 4: September 28 - October 4	
	Unit 4: How the Brian Makes us Move
Week 5: October 5 - October 11	
	Unit 5: Learning and Memory
October 10	**Reading week begins**
Mid-term break: October 12 - October 16	
October 12	**Thanksgiving Day, university closed**
October 16	**Reading week ends**
Week 6: October 19 - October 25	

	Unit 6: Emotion and Stress
October 22	**Midterm Exam.** Exam will be written on Moodle. Students can log in between 8 am and midnight to write the exam. Only one attempt is allowed.
October 23	Last day to submit required documentation to register with the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities and request exam accommodations for the fall 2026 final examination period
Week 7: October 26 - November 1	
	Unit 7: Drugs and Addition
Week 8: November 2 - November 8	
November 08	**TERM PAPER DUE**
	Unit 8: Psychotherapeutic Drugs
Week 9: November 9 - November 15	
	Unit 8: Psychotherapeutic Drugs
Week 10: November 16 - November 22	
	Unit 9: Sleep and Consciousness
November 16	**Deadline for academic withdrawal (DISC) from fall-term courses**
Week 11: November 23 - November 29	
	Unit 10
Week 12: November 30 - December 7	
November 30	**Last day for instructor-scheduled tests or examinations**
December 07	**Last day of classes, fall term**
Examinations Period: December 9 - December 22	
	Final Exam date and time is posted on your Student Hub