

## Psych 3960 section 001

### YOUR BRAIN AND ITS EMOTIONS

**DRAFT—SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

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<b>Semester Time</b>	Fall 2009 Wednesdays, 6:00 to 8:30 pm
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<b>Office Hours</b>	By appointment
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#### Description

Our ability to experience emotions is so much a part of our everyday life that it virtually defines us: What makes us laugh, what makes us upset, who and what we like--our emotional reactions seem to be an inextricable part of ourselves that could never be taken away—or could it?

This course will explore how common neurologic disorders, such as traumatic brain injury, stroke, or Alzheimer's disease, can alter our emotional experience and processing. Sudden inability to empathize with others, uncontrollable crying and laughing, loss of fear, and maladaptive euphoria represent only a few examples of the wide array of emotional changes and abnormalities that can result from brain disease. What is more, disorders of emotional processing ironically interfere with rational thought and behavior.

The course will provide an in-depth analysis of five basic components of emotional processing. For each component, we will address the following:

- Relationship to the brain
- Relationship to cognition
- Emotional deficits associated with various neurologic and psychiatric illnesses
- Unusual and bizarre syndromes associated with deficits in a given aspect of emotional processing

**Accommodations**

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

**Course requirements:**

- Participation in class discussions
- Participation in class exercises
- Student presentations of selected topics
- Midterm and final

**Grading:**

A = 94-100    A- = 90-93    B+ = 87-89    B = 83-86    B- = 80-82  
C+ = 77-79    C = 73-76    C- = 70-72    D+ = 67-69    D = 63-66    D- = 60-62

## Course Outline

*The following outline may be adjusted throughout the semester.*

WEEK	DATE	LECTURE TOPIC	Lecture readings
1	8/22	<u>Introduction to Class:</u> Syllabus Expectations Introduction to the topic	n/a
2	8/29	<u>“Brain for dummies”</u> Basic introduction to the anatomy and function of the brain, focusing on structures that are of critical importance to the topic of the course.  DO NOT LET THIS TOPIC SCARE YOU AWAY: I’ll make sure that by the end of this lecture everyone is on the same page regardless of their prior course work.	Handouts
3	9/5	<u>Historical perspective</u> Where does our knowledge of the emotional side of the brain come from? The ancient theory of four humors, medieval recordings of brain activity, frontal lobotomies, and more...	Suchy Chapters 1 and 2
4	9/12	<u>Emotional trigger 1</u> How do you notice what is emotionally important to you, and why emotions make you smart?	Suchy Chapter 3 Handouts
5	9/19	<u>Emotional trigger 2</u> What would happen if your ability to notice emotionally important situations went away?	Suchy Chapter 3 Handouts
6	9/26	<u>Automatic emotional reactions 1</u> From the butterflies in your stomach to the reflexive wincing in the face of danger, the neuroanatomy of the basic automatic reactions to emotional triggers will be discussed.	Suchy Chapter 4 Handouts
7	10/3	<u>Automatic emotional reactions 2</u> Can you feel anxious without the butterflies?	Suchy Chapter 4 Handouts
	10/17	<b>MIDTERM</b>	
9	10/24	<u>Conscious awareness of emotional experience1</u> Are you feeling anything, and do you know what it is?	Suchy Chapter 5 Handouts

10	10/31	<u>Conscious awareness of emotional experience2</u> Who would you be if you didn't <i>feel</i> your emotions?	Suchy Chapter 5 Handouts
11	11/7	<u>Emotional communication 1</u> "It is not <i>what</i> you said, it is <i>how</i> you said it..." The importance of nonverbal communication.	
12	11/14	<u>Emotional communication 2</u> Can you understand words without feelings?	Suchy Chapter 6
13	11/21	<u>Emotion regulation 1</u> Can you control how you feel?	Suchy Chapters 7 and 8
14	11/28	<u>Emotion regulation 2</u> What would happen if you couldn't control your feelings?	Suchy Chapter 7 and 8
15	12/05	<b>Review for final</b>	