

**Drug Addiction
NROD66 (Rm PO-101)**

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Office hours: Tues 1-3 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide an overview of current topics in the field of drug addiction research, with a specific focus on the neuroscience of addiction. In the first part of the course, consideration will be given to the prevailing "Disease Model" of addiction, including current theories on which it is based, what are its main tenets, and how it informs public policy. Subsequently, a critique of the "Disease Model" will be offered and alternative views will be considered. The second part of the course will comprise a series of student-led seminars and discussions on a specific problem in the addiction field, with a focus on how neuroscience research is addressing the problem, and what its implications are for the "Disease Model" of addiction.

SUMMARY OF COURSE EVALUATION

Term Test	25%
Seminar	30%
Position Paper	30%
Discussion questions	8%
Class attendance	7%

BLACKBOARD

This course will be organized and managed using the U of T *Blackboard* system. Blackboard will be used to make class announcements, and to manage course materials.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Week 1 Sept 5	Introduction and overview
Week 2 Sept 12	"Disease Model" of Addiction: Consideration of the "NIDA paradigm" <i>(assigned readings will be posted on Blackboard)</i>
Week 3 Sept 19	An alternate (non-medical) view of addiction: "Dislocation Theory" (Bruce Alexander, 2008) <i>(assigned readings will be posted on Blackboard)</i>
Week 4 Sept 26	Reconciling (or not) disease- and non-disease models of addiction; Drug policy and addiction <i>(assigned readings will be posted on Blackboard)</i>
Week 5 Oct 3	Term Test
Week 6 Oct 10	Individual student meetings on seminar topics
Week 7 Oct 17	READING WEEK
Week 8 Oct 24	Drug addiction <u>is</u> an addiction like any other behavioral addiction (e.g., gambling, sex) <i>(Student-led seminar/discussion)</i>
Week 9 Oct 31	Drug addiction <u>is not</u> an addiction like any other behavioural addiction (e.g., gambling, sex) <i>(Student-led seminar/discussion)</i>
Week 10 Nov 7	"Food addiction <u>is</u> akin to drug addiction <i>(Student-led seminar/discussion)</i>
Week 11 Nov 14	"Food addiction" is <u>not</u> akin to drug addiction. Is there even such a thing as "food addiction"? <i>(Student-led seminar/discussion)</i>
Week 12 Nov 21	Drug addicts become "out of control" of their drug-taking behaviour <i>(Student-led seminar/discussion)</i>
Week 13 Nov 28	Drug addicts remain "in control" of their behaviour; addiction is a disorder of choice <i>(Student-led seminar/discussion)</i>

COMPONENTS OF COURSE EVALUATION

TERM TEST

25%

The test will comprise a series of short answer questions based on the assigned readings and lecture material in Weeks 1-4.

SEMINAR

30%

In groups of approximately 4, Students will lead a full class period aimed at addressing a specific and provocative problem in the addiction field. In an oral presentation and guided discussion, students will explore how research in neuroscience informs the problem, and what the current opinion/s on the problem are in the field. Each problem will be considered over two weeks, with one group presenting one position on the problem one week and another group presenting the alternative position on the problem the next week.

The questions that will be the focus of the presentations and discussions are indicated in the "Schedule of Classes" for each of the last 6 weeks of the course. Students are asked to submit to Prof Erb, by Sept 19, the 3 questions they would most like to present on (in order of preference); students wishing to present together should submit their preferences on a single sheet, with all names in the group listed. I will assign groups and dates by Sept 26.

For each presentation, a reading germane to the topic must be assigned to the rest of the class, one week before the scheduled presentation. Citations of articles can be sent to me and I will post them on *Blackboard*.

POSITION PAPER (REVIEW)

30%

The second Position Paper will evolve from the student's seminar topic. Papers should be 10-12 pages in length and include reference to a minimum of 10 key papers from the primary literature, in addition to any of the assigned readings from the first half of the course. In the paper, the student will take a specific position on the question that was the basis of their seminar, and develop an argument based on ideas from the first part of the course and readings from the primary literature. Students may take the same position that they took for the seminar, or they may chose to take the alternative position. Papers will be graded for the strength and clarity of the argument that is developed, the pertinence of the literature reviewed, the accuracy of the literature review, and the quality of the writing. Papers are due to me in hard copy by 5 pm, Dec 1.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

8%

By the Wednesday before each Fri class in Weeks 8-13, students will post 2 questions to the Blackboard discussion board that are based on the assigned reading for the upcoming class. The questions should reflect a critical reading and understanding of the assigned paper. Presenters will select 3-4 of these questions for the class discussion component of

their presentations. Students must post questions in a minimum of 4 of the 5 classes that they are not presenting in.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

7%

Students can achieve this full component of their grade (i.e., 7%) by attending at least 11/12 classes.