

# Advanced Neuroscience Laboratory

## NROD63H3

University of Toronto Scarborough  
Winter 2017

Wed 1-4pm: SW316 (lecture) + SW148 (lab)

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**Instructor: Maithe Arruda Carvalho**

Office hours: Tues 1-3 pm, SW533

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*\*Your TAs are the first point of contact for any questions you may have.*

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### **Course Overview**

This course aims to introduce students to a variety of cellular neuroscience techniques used in a neuroscience laboratory to investigate the biological mechanisms underlying complex behaviour. This course is the cellular neuroscience counterpart to NROC63, and will feature a theoretical and a practical component. For the practical component of the course, students will follow up on the behavioural findings described by their NROC63 colleagues and conduct a hands-on mini research project investigating the cellular mechanisms behind the findings from NROC63. Specifically, students will learn how to prepare brain slices, perform immunohistochemistry and cell counting on the brains prepared by their NROC63 colleagues. This will allow students to *conduct a research project from start to finish* which will integrate the theoretical and practical components of the course, while pursuing a novel research question regarding the cellular mechanisms underlying behavioural deficits in a model of schizophrenia. Students will concomitantly learn the theoretical basis behind a variety of cellular neuroscience techniques used to assess neural structure and function at different levels of analysis, including neuronal morphology, and gene and protein expression, as well as their applicability and limitations. The technical skills learned in this course are at the core of neuroscience research, and will serve as an important basis for students pursuing graduate school as well as employment in biomedical research outside of academia.

### **Course Materials**

Students will be required to read course materials which will be posted on blackboard or be available on short-term loan in the library.

### **Course Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Perform cellular neuroscience techniques commonly used to measure changes in protein expression in the brain.
- Design experimental strategies to answer specific and challenging research questions in a cellular neuroscience setting.
- Improve their interpretation of scientific results by deepening their understanding of the rationale for using each of those techniques, and their limitations.
- Master the use of specific laboratory equipment used for slicing of fixed brain tissue, perform immunohistochemistry and cell counting in different brain regions.
- Test the effects on a novel therapy strategy for schizophrenia using those techniques to generate novel findings.
- Write a scientific paper based on the data collected by the students during the lab portions of the course.

**Course Evaluation**

Summary of Evaluation:

	<u>Percent of final grade</u>	<u>Date</u>
Laboratories (3 in total)	3 X 10%	Jan 25-27, Feb 8-10, Mar 8
Quizzes	5 X 3%	Jan18, Feb 1, Feb15, Mar 15, Mar 22
Research paper	10% + 5% + 20%	Intro (Feb8), Methods (Mar 8), Full paper (Mar29)
Final Exam	20%	Exam Period

Description of course components:

**1. Laboratories (3 x 10%):**

Students will be required to complete 3 laboratory assignments over the course of the term. In Lab 1, students will learn how to section brain tissue for histological processing. In Lab 2, students will perform immunohistochemistry on the brain sections they prepared in Lab 1, and mount those immunostained sections in preparation for confocal imaging. In Lab 3, after learning about the fundamentals of optical imaging, students will learn and perform cell counts to quantify and compare the number of immunopositive cells in different brain regions in their experimental groups.

At the end of each laboratory students will complete a short assignment aimed at assessing the students’ understanding of the theoretical and practical components comprised in the Lab. PDF files containing the background and instructions necessary to complete the assignments will be posted on blackboard in advance; in addition, students will be given in-class instruction on all components of these assignments. Given the practical nature of Labs 1 and 2, **attendance is mandatory for the completion of the respective assignments.**

Please note: For Lab 1 (scheduled for Week 4), the class will be divided into groups of 3 students (groups A-F) and two groups of 2 students (groups H and I). Following training on tissue sectioning, each group will be responsible for sectioning one rat brain. Groups will choose among specific time slots for access to the vibratomes in the presence of a TA. Due to equipment constraints, these time slots may be outside of the original class schedule:

**Lab 1:**Jan 25<sup>th</sup>

2-4pm - Groups A, B, C

4-6pm - Groups D, E, F

Jan 27<sup>th</sup>

10AM-12PM – Groups G, H, I

Similarly, for Lab 2, given the nature of the technique, there will be three experimental sessions (see below). Students will be divided in groups of 13 (group  $\alpha$ ) and 12 (group  $\beta$ ), and sign up for the following time slots:

**Lab 2:**Feb 8<sup>th</sup>2-4PM – Session 1 - Group  $\alpha$ 4-6PM – Session 1 - Group  $\beta$ Feb 10<sup>th</sup>9-10AM – Session 2 - Group  $\alpha$ 10AM-11AM - Session 2 – Group  $\beta$ 12PM-1PM - Session 3 – Group  $\alpha$ 1PM-2PM - Session 3 - Group  $\beta$ 

Please be flexible in signing up for a specific Lab time slot. It is the student's responsibility to be present in their chosen time slot and complete the Lab and assignment.

**2. Quizzes (5 x 3%)**

As noted on the calendar, five of the lectures will be followed by a multiple choice or short answer in class quiz aimed at assessing the student's understanding of the content covered in the previous weeks' lecture. The quiz will be administered in class at the beginning of class and therefore *attendance is mandatory* to complete it.

**3. Final Exam (20%) – Exam period**

The final exam will be scheduled during the exam period and will assess the students' ability to integrate the technical knowledge gained during the course within the context of designing experimental strategies to address a specific experimental question. Students will be assigned one research question and be asked to design theoretical experiments to prove or disprove the scientific hypothesis given to them. These must include a minimum of two techniques. Students will be free to choose any technique but must make a convincing case for their choice of experiments. Each experiment will be broken down into the following categories:

**Rationale:** Justify why this experiment is ideal for the purpose described and what it will measure

**Methods:** Describe how the technique is used

**Predicted Outcomes:** Describe how the hypothetical results from that experiment will address the given scientific hypothesis

Lastly, students will fill out a **Potential Pitfalls** section which must discuss the limitations of the chosen techniques and propose one additional technique which might be used in case the proposed experiments fail.

This test will put into practice the students' knowledge of the scientific method and the cellular neuroscience techniques learned in the course, applying critical thinking and problem solving skills.

### Resources

Lecture slides and additional assigned reading will be posted on blackboard by midnight at the latest the night before the lecture.

### Overview of Lecture, Lab, and Tutorial Schedule:

The following table presents the schedule of lectures, labs, and tutorials, as they will occur over the course of the term, and the due dates for assignments. Please note:

- Lab times for Labs 1 and 2 will vary according to student group. A sign-up sheet will be passed along on the first week of class. Please be sure to write down your respective groups and consult the schedule to make sure you attend the right time slot.
- All laboratory assignments are due at the end of the lab component of the class as indicated below.

WEEK	DATE	CONTENT	LOCATION	Advance Reading	TO DO
1	Jan 4	Lecture: Course Introduction and Overview	SW316		
2	Jan 11	1-3PM: Lecture: Overview of cellular neuroscience techniques and our mini research project 3-4PM: Library research workshop (Sarah Guay)	SW316		
3	Jan 18	1-3PM: Lecture: Using the Brain Atlas to navigate brain circuits 3-4 PM: Writing Centre workshop: Synthesizing research	SW316		
4	Jan 25	1-2pm: Lecture: Introduction to Lab 1: Brain sectioning <i>Quiz</i> 2-6 PM: Lab 1, see group distribution and schedule above	SW316 SW148	Lab 1 manual	
	Jan 27	10AM-12PM: Lab1, see group distribution and schedule above	SW148		
5	Feb 1	1-3PM: Lecture: Techniques to measure protein expression 3-4PM: Tutorial: writing a scientific paper: Introduction	SW316		
6	Feb 8	1-2pm: Lecture: Introduction to	SW316	Lab 2 manual	Introduction

		Lab 2: Immunohistochemistry <i>Quiz</i> 2-6 PM: Lab 2, see group distribution and schedule above	SW148		of research paper due
	Feb 10	9AM-2PM: Lab 2, see group distribution and schedule above	SW148		
7	Feb 15	1-3PM: Lecture: Microscopy 3-4PM: Tutorial: feedback on introduction; how to write methods and discussion	SW316		
8	Feb 22	Reading Week – No Class			
9	Mar 1	1-2pm: Lecture: Introduction to Lab 3: Cell counting <i>Quiz</i> 2-4 PM: Lab 3	SW316	Lab 3 manual	
10	Mar 8	1-3PM: Lecture: Data analysis and interpretation 3-4PM: Tutorial	SW316		Methods and list of discussed papers due
11	Mar 15	1-3PM: Lecture: Methods for imaging neuronal activity 3-4PM: Tutorial	SW316		
12	Mar 22	1-3PM: Lecture: Methods for measuring neuronal morphology <i>Quiz</i> 3-4PM: Tutorial and feedback	SW316		
13	Mar 29	1:3PM: Lecture: Wrap up and course review <i>Quiz</i> 3-4PM: Tutorial	SW316		Full research paper due

### Course Grading Scheme:

Following the University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy:

(<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>; <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/newstudents/transition/academic/grading>):

Letter Grade	Grade point value	Numerical Mark	Grade Definition
A+	4.0	90 - 100%	Excellent: Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
A	4.0	85 - 89%	Excellent
A-	3.7	80 - 84%	Excellent
B+	3.3	77 - 79%	Good: Evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability;

			reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.
<i>B</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>73 - 76%</i>	Good
<i>B-</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>70 - 72%</i>	Good
<i>C+</i>	<i>2.3</i>	<i>67 - 69%</i>	Adequate: Student who is profiting from his/her university experience; understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.
<i>C</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>63 - 66%</i>	Adequate
<i>C-</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>60 - 62%</i>	Adequate
<i>D+</i>	<i>1.3</i>	<i>57 - 59%</i>	Marginal: Some evidence of familiarity with subject matter and some evidence that critical and analytic skills have been developed.
<i>D</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>53 - 56%</i>	Marginal
<i>D-</i>	<i>0.7</i>	<i>50 - 52%</i>	Marginal
<i>F</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0 - 49%</i>	Inadequate: Little evidence of even superficial understanding of subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; with limited or irrelevant use of literature.

*Note:* Consistently poor spelling/grammar will be penalized. Please make use of the resources available at the UTSC writing centre for additional help with writing: <http://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/>.

### **Course Policies:**

#### Missed Labs/assignments:

Students are expected to make every effort to be present at the Labs and complete their assignments. Absence from a Lab and consequent inability to prepare its respective assignment will only be considered in cases of documented family emergency or severe illness (see below). *In the case of accepted justification, students missing a lab will undergo a written test to compensate for that mark.*

#### Missed Term Work due to Medical Illness or Emergency:

All students citing a documented reason for missed term work (this includes assignments and midterm exams) must bring their documentation to the Undergraduate Course Coordinator, Ainsley Lawson, **within three (3) business days** of the term test / assignment due date. All documentation must be accompanied by the departmental [Request for Missed Term Work form](http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW) (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>).

In the case of missed term work due to illness, only an **original copy** of the [official UTSC Verification of Illness Form](http://uoft.me/PSY-MED) (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MED>) will be accepted. Forms are to be completed in full, clearly indicating the start date, anticipated end date, and severity of illness. The physician's registration number and business stamp are required.

In the case of other emergency, a record of visitation to a hospital emergency room or copy of a death certificate may be considered.

**Forms should be dropped off in SW427C between 9 AM - 4 PM, Monday through Friday.** Upon receipt of the documentation, you will receive an email response from the Course Instructor / Course Coordinator within three business days. The Course Instructor reserves the right to decide what accommodations (if any) will be made for the missed work.

Note that this policy applies only to missed term work (assignments and midterms). Missed final exams are dealt with by the Registrar's Office (<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/registrar/missing-examination>).

**Failure to adhere to any aspect of this policy may result in a denial of your request for accommodation.**

### Contesting a grade

Re-grade requests will only be considered within two weeks of the grade being received. These will only be considered if adequate written justification is provided by the student. If granted, re-grading will consist of re-evaluation of the complete assignment, potentially leading to a change in the grade in either direction, i.e. a grade increase, no change, or decrease. Requests without a solid rationale will not be considered (e.g. higher grade needed for entering grad school, etc.).

### Video and Auditory Recording

For reasons of privacy and copyright, unauthorized video or audio recording in classrooms is prohibited. This is in accordance with the Provost's guidelines on Appropriate Use of Information and Communication Technology. Please note that these guidelines include the provision that students may obtain consent to record lectures and, "in the case of private use by students with disabilities, the instructor's consent must not be unreasonably withheld".

### Copyright of lecture material

As protection of copyright, unauthorized copying, use, or uploading on www of any of the lecture slides, lecture handouts or course materials produced by Professor Arruda-Carvalho is **strictly prohibited**.

### AccessAbility statement:

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services as soon as possible.

AccessAbility Services staff (located in Rm SW302, Science Wing) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations [416-287-7560](tel:416-287-7560) or email [ability@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:ability@utsc.utoronto.ca). The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

### Academic integrity

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters ([http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppi\\_un011995.pdf](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppi_un011995.pdf)) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement;
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor;
- Making up sources or facts;

- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing unauthorized aids;
- Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test;
- Misrepresenting your identity; and
- When you knew or ought to have known you were doing it.

In academic work:

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades;
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes; and
- When you knew or ought to have known you were doing so.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If students have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, they are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from their instructors or from other institutional resources.

*Note:* You may see advertisements for services offering grammar help, essay editing and proof-reading. Be very careful. If these services take a draft of your work and significantly change the content and/or language, you may be committing an academic offence (unauthorized assistance) under the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*.

It is much better and safer to take your draft to the Writing Centre as early as you can. They will give you guidance you can trust. Students for whom English is not their first language should go to the English Language Development Centre.

If you decide to use these services in spite of this caution, you must keep a draft of your work and any notes you made before you got help and be prepared to give it to your instructor on request.

### Turnitin

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site

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### **MAJOR WRITING ASSIGNMENT:**

#### **Research paper (10% + 5% + 20%):**

In this assignment students will write a research paper following the guidelines of the Journal of Neuroscience: [http://www.jneurosci.org/sites/default/files/files/JN\\_Information\\_for\\_Authors.pdf](http://www.jneurosci.org/sites/default/files/files/JN_Information_for_Authors.pdf) This research paper will feature the data collected during the labs and will consist of the following segments:

**Introduction (10%) – Due Feb 8th:** This section will include a concise literature review providing the background of the research leading to an explanation of the rationale of the study. It must not exceed



650 words. It must include a minimum of 10 citations of published, peer-reviewed research papers, at least half of which must be empirical, not review papers.

**Materials and Methods (5%) – Due March 8th:** This section will include a description of the techniques used in the practical component of the course, including a description of the brain sectioning, immunostaining, imaging and cell counting protocols. It must not exceed 1500 words. Students must at that time also include a list of 5 additional (not cited in the introduction), empirical peer-reviewed papers which will be featured in the Discussion section of the paper.

**Final Research paper (20%) – Due March 29<sup>th</sup>:**

The final research paper will include the following sections:

**Title page** – Containing a title (50-word maximum, be creative!), abbreviated title (50 characters), your name, and word counts for the introduction, methods and discussion, as well as page number (maximum of 5) and number of figures.

**Abstract** - This section will clearly and briefly state the background, rationale, methodology and results of the paper, and must not exceed 250 words.

**Introduction** – as above.

**Materials and Methods** – as above.

**Results** – This section will describe the results and statistical analyses you found. It will include a description of the experimental rationale and of the findings.

**Discussion** – This section will include a one-paragraph summary of the main findings and a discussion of their significance and potential alternative interpretations. It should discuss how your results compare to closely related articles in the field, and conclude with future directions of the research. 1500 words maximum.

**References** - List all the references cited in the text in alphabetical order by first author's last name following Journal of Neuroscience citation style.

Here is one example of Journal of Neuroscience citation style:

Drew MR, Denny CA, Hen R (2010) Arrest of adult hippocampal neurogenesis in mice impairs single- but not multiple-trial contextual fear conditioning. *Behav Neurosci* 124:446–454.

For more examples see <http://www.jneurosci.org/content/preparing-manuscript#organization>

**Figure Legends** - These must include a brief description of the figures in the order they appear in the text.

**Figures** - These will include 2 bar graph figures with the final data.

Additional instructions for each of these sections will be given in tutorials throughout the course as noted on the calendar.