

Cellular Neuroscience Spring 2026: NEUR/BENG 327_001
T/Th 12:00pm – 1:15pm

Instructor: Patricia Sinclair

Email: psincla2@gmu.edu

Office Hours: Monday 1pm – 3pm (in-person/Zoom, or by appointment)

Office: Krasnow 207

Classroom: Horizon Hall 3010

Course Overview

The object of this core neuroscience course is to introduce basic concepts of cellular and molecular level neuroscience, including neuronal functions, cellular anatomy, cell membrane functions, electrical properties of neurons, and cellular basis of plasticity. Some neuropharmacology will be covered where these drugs are used to elucidate neural cell and circuit function.

Presentation Mode

This class will be delivered *in-person* with NO REMOTE option. The learning management system (LMS) for the course is **Canvas**. You have access to the class syllabus and lecture slides. However, this is NOT a hybrid or online course and presence in the classroom is required to maximize success.

Textbook

Neuroscience, Augustine et al., 7th Edition, Sinauer Associates, Inc. Any format is fine (hardcover, paperback, looseleaf, or ebook).

Communication

1. We are using the Canvas (lms.gmu.edu) learning management system. Use your Mason credentials to log in and navigate to this class (NEUR/BENG327_002).
2. Lecture slides will be posted to Canvas after class. Unfortunately, missed discussions and activities cannot be posted on Canvas but will be included on exams and quizzes, therefore class attendance is paramount to your success.
3. I will use Canvas to communicate about the course and *you are responsible for checking announcements*. If you need assistance with Canvas settings please reach out for more guidance or resources on navigating Canvas. Not checking announcements will not be an accepted excuse for missing an assignment or exam.

Late Work

Late assignments will incur a deduction of 10% of the earned grade per day missed. See below for specific policies applied to quizzes, exams, and participation/in-class assignments.

Student Services

- Learning services (learningservices.gmu.edu)
- University Libraries (library.gmu.edu)
- Writing Center (writingcenter.gmu.edu)
- Counseling and Psychological Services (caps.gmu.edu)
- See [a longer list of Mason student support services posted on The Stearns Center website.](#)

Add/Drop Deadlines

Deadlines for the Spring 2025 semester can be found on the [Mason Academic Calendar page](#).

Grades*

Final grades will be calculated based on exams (2 midterms, 1 final), a presentation, quizzes (8), and assignments.

Percent	Letter	Percent	Letter	Percent	Letter
98+	A+	92-97.9	A	90-91.9	A-
88-89.9	B+	82-87.9	B	80-81.9	B-
78-79.9	C+	72-77.9	C	70-71.9	C-
60-69.9	D	< 60	F		

Exams (70%)

There will be 3 mid-term exams worth **15%** each. The final exam worth **25%** will be cumulative. **Make-up exams will only be allowed for emergent or preapproved extenuating circumstances. Written documentation supporting that missing the exam is REQUIRED within 24 hours of the missed exam and before a make-up will be administered!**

Quizzes (10%)

There will be ~eight 10-point chapter quizzes that will account for 5% of the final grade. Expect quizzes to occur at the start of class following the end of a unit. The single lowest quiz grade will be dropped. **No make-up** will be given for missed quizzes.

Assignments and Participation (5%)

There will be activities completed in-class (participation) or homework assignments. Assignments will be graded for completion and subject to point deduction as described in "Late Work." **No make-up** will be given for missed in-class participation.

Presentation (15%)

Each group will present a on a *primary research article* chosen by your group and approved by the instructor. The article must be from a peer reviewed journal on a topic relevant to the concepts covered in *this* class. The final presentation will be *no more than 25 minutes*. Score will be a combination of an individual score (peer review, delivery) and a group score (visualizations, content, organization, cohesiveness). More detailed guidelines will follow.

**Rounding up will be considered upon student request at the end of the semester if the final grade is less than 0.5% from the next letter grade. Granting an increase will be influenced by qualitative aspects of the student's performance in including but not limited to attention during attendance, contribution to class discussions, and attitude.*

PLEASE NOTE:

1. This page presents an overview of the assignments. Full instructions for each will be presented during class and on Canvas within the submission links. Be sure to READ all instructions carefully and ask for clarification if confusion persists.
2. Presence and participation are required to successfully achieve all learning outcomes.
3. Life is busy and unpredictable therefore forgiveness will be granted for a *single missed summary and a single missed participation*. "Missed" includes illness, appointments, interviews, and other reasons for not attending class. Any class in which you are not present will be considered "missed." Be cognizant of your obligations in and outside of class.

Course Schedule**

	Dates	Tuesday	Thursday
1	January 20, 22	Course overview and Chapter 1	Chapter 2
2	January 27, 29	Chapter 2	Chapter 3
3	February 3, 5	Chapter 3	Exam 1 Review
4	February 10, 12	Exam 1 (1-3)	Chapter 4
5	February 17, 19	Chapter 4	Chapter 4
6	February 24, 26	Chapter 5	Chapter 5
7	March 3, 5	Chapter 5	Exam 2 Review
8	March 10, 12 (SPRING BREAK)	NO CLASS	NO CLASS
9	March 17, 19	Exam 2 (4-5)	Chapter 6
10	March 24, 26	Chapter 6	Chapter 7
11	March 31, April 2	Chapter 7	Exam 3 Review
12	April 7, 9	Exam 3 (6-7)	<i>All presentations due</i> Presentations 1 & 2
13	April 14, 16	Presentations 3 & 4	Presentations 5 & 6
14	April 21, 23	Presentations 7 & 8	Chapter 8
15	April 28, 30	Chapter 8	Final Exam Review (LAST DAY OF CLASS)
16	May 5, 7	Reading Day	FINAL EXAM (10:30 – 1:15)

**** This course schedule is subject to change at any time. Students are responsible for being aware of all announcements and syllabus modifications posted to Canvas. Check your Mason email and Canvas announcements daily**

Common Policies Affecting All Courses at George Mason University Updated August 2025

Academic Standards

Academic Standards exist to promote authentic scholarship, support the institution's goal of maintaining high standards of academic excellence, and encourage continued ethical behavior of faculty and students to cultivate an educational community which values integrity and produces graduates who carry this commitment forward into professional practice.

As members of the George Mason University community, we are committed to fostering an environment of trust, respect, and scholarly excellence. Our academic standards are the foundation of this commitment, guiding our behavior and interactions within this academic community. The practices for implementing these standards adapt to modern practices, disciplinary contexts, and technological advancements. Our standards are embodied in our courses, policies, and scholarship, and are upheld in the following principles:

- **Honesty:** Providing accurate information in all academic endeavors, including communications, assignments, and examinations.
- **Acknowledgement:** Giving proper credit for all contributions to one's work. This involves the use of accurate citations and references for any ideas, words, or materials created by others in the style appropriate to the discipline. It also includes acknowledging shared authorship in group projects, co-authored pieces, and project reports.
- **Uniqueness of Work:** Ensuring that all submitted work is the result of one's own effort and is original, including free from self-plagiarism. This principle extends to written assignments, code, presentations, exams, and all other forms of academic work.

Violations of these standards—including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating—are taken seriously and will be addressed in accordance with university policies. The process for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating violations is outlined in the university's [academic standards procedures](#). Consequences of violations may include academic sanctions, disciplinary actions, and other measures necessary to uphold the integrity of our academic community.

The principles outlined in these academic standards reflect our collective commitment to upholding the highest standards of honesty, acknowledgement, and uniqueness of work. By adhering to these principles, we ensure the continued excellence and integrity of George Mason University's academic community.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for understanding how these general expectations regarding academic standards apply to each course, assignment, or exam they participate in; students should ask their instructor for clarification on any aspect that is not clear to them.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. Under the administration of University Life, Disability Services implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities. Students can begin the registration process with Disability Services at any time during their enrollment at George Mason University. If you are seeking accommodations, please visit the [Disability Services website](#) for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu. Phone: (703) 993-2474.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for registering with Disability Services and communicating about their approved accommodations with their instructor in advance of any relevant class meeting, assignment, or exam.

FERPA and Use of GMU Email Addresses for Course Communication

The [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) governs the disclosure of [education records for eligible students](#) and is an essential aspect of any course. Students must use their GMU email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. Instructors will not respond to messages sent from or send messages regarding course content to a non-GMU email address.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for checking their GMU email regularly for course-related information, and/or ensuring that GMU email messages are forwarded to an account they do check.

Title IX Resources and Required Reporting:

As a part of George Mason University's commitment to providing a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environment for all members of the University community, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities. Accordingly, **all non-confidential employees, including your faculty member, have a legal requirement to report to the Title IX Coordinator, all relevant details obtained directly or indirectly about any incident of Prohibited Conduct** (such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based stalking, dating/domestic violence). Upon notifying the Title IX Coordinator of possible Prohibited Conduct, the Title IX Coordinator will assess the report and determine if outreach is required. If outreach is required, the individual the report is about (the "Complainant") will receive a communication, likely in the form of an email, offering that person the option to meet with a representative of the Title IX office.

For more information about non-confidential employees, resources, and Prohibited Conduct, please see [University Policy 1202: Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#). Questions regarding Title IX can be directed to the Title IX Coordinator via email to TitleIX@gmu.edu, by phone at 703-993-8730, or in person on the Fairfax campus in Aquia 373.

Student opportunity: If you prefer to speak to someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential employees in [Student Support and Advocacy \(SSAC\)](#), [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#), [Student Health Services \(SHS\)](#), and/or the [Office of the University Ombudsperson](#).

This document is updated annually and maintained by the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning, in cooperation with GMU Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee