

# Course Syllabus

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**Department of Biology**

**BIO6021-1: Readings in Biology: Biology of Mental Health**

**1 Unit**

Spring 2021 | Online

**PLNU Mission**  
**To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send**

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

## **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Dr. David Cummings

[DavidCummings@pointloma.edu](mailto:DavidCummings@pointloma.edu) *(Links to an external site.)*

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this readings course we will focus our attention on the biology of mental health. Topics will include the role of the amygdala in our emotional life, the neurological impacts of stress, functions of dopamine and dopamine receptors, and some of the effects of oxytocin and vasopressin on brain function.

## **Course Logistics**

Because of the social distancing protocols currently in place, we will not meet face-to-face in this class. We will, however, meet weekly on Zoom (Tuesdays 5:30-6:30 pm). You can also request a one-on-one Zoom meeting with me by email. All of the course requirements are available as Modules in Canvas, so you will want to work your way through those Modules week-by-week. Assignments and Quizzes are due by 5:30 pm of the date they are listed on the course schedule and in the Modules. We will use class time on Tuesdays to discuss the Assignments and Quizzes.

## **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Given a specific paper, do the following:

- (a) Identify the larger context, with an understanding of its broadly reaching benefits.
- (b) Make claim(s) based on evidence in the paper, and justify the claim(s).
- (c) Explain the methods used to obtain key results.

## **REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES**

There will be eight articles to read for this course, each of which is available free on the Internet. Additionally, you need a copy of the booklet *Reading Primary Literature: A Practical Guide to Evaluating Research Articles in Biology* by Christopher M. Gillen.

## **COURSE CREDIT HOUR INFORMATION**

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 1 unit class delivered over 15 weeks.

### **Distribution of Student Learning Hours**

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Hours</b>
Readings/assignments	22
Zoom discussions	15
Quizzes	8

<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>45</b>
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## **COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

All answers to Assignment and Quiz questions must be written in your own words to demonstrate that you understand the content of the articles. Direct quotes are rarely ever used in primary scientific research articles and should not be used at all in this class.

<b>Module 1   January 12 - February 9   How to Read a Scientific Research Article</b>	
January 12	Introduce Yourself Personal Approach
January 19	Title Main Point Specific Question
January 26	Introduction and Discussion
February 2	Methods and Results
February 9	Quiz 1
<b>Module 2   February 16 - March 16   Focusing on Methods and Results</b>	
February 16	Diagramming the Experimental Workflow Diagramming a Protocol
February 23	Interpreting a Figure Interpreting a Table
March 2	Interpreting a Figure and its Methods

March 16	Quiz 2
<b>Module 3   March 23 - April 6   Focusing on Introduction and Discussion</b>	
March 23	Significance of the Topic Background Context of this Study
March 30	Major Findings Overall Relevance
April 6	Quiz 3
<b>Module 4   April 13 - May 4   Major Claims</b>	
April 13	Overall Relevance and Specific Question
April 20	Major Claim #1
April 27	Major Claim #2
May 4	Quiz 4

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assignment	Points
Assignments	135
Quizzes	135
Attendance and participation	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>

Student grades will be posted in the Canvas grade book no later than midnight on Monday of each week beginning in week two of this course. It is important to read the comments posted in the grade book as they are intended to help students improve their work.

## **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

All assignments (including Quizzes) are to be submitted by 5:30 pm on the due dates posted.

While there are due dates for weekly assignments, you are welcome to submit your work earlier in the week.

Assignments will be considered late if submitted after 5:30 pm Pacific Standard Time on the day they are due. Late assignments will only be considered with **prior** approval of the instructor.

## **PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY**

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

## **PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY**

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#)[Links to an external site.](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

## **PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY**

While all students are expected to meet the minimum standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may require academic adjustments, modifications or auxiliary aids/services. At Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU), these students are requested to register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. ([DRC@pointloma.edu](mailto:DRC@pointloma.edu) ([Links to an external site.](#)) or 619-849-2486). The DRC's policies and procedures for assisting such students in the development of an appropriate academic adjustment plan (AP) allows PLNU to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Section 504 (a) prohibits discrimination against students with special needs and guarantees all qualified students equal access to and benefits of PLNU programs and activities. After the student files the required documentation, the DRC, in conjunction with the student, will develop an AP to meet that student's specific learning needs. The DRC will thereafter email the student's AP to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester. The AP must be implemented in all such courses.

If students do not wish to avail themselves of some or all of the elements of their AP in a particular course, it is the responsibility of those students to notify their professor in that course. PLNU highly recommends that DRC students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester about the applicability of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not desire to take advantage of some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

## **PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY**

Students taking online courses are expected to attend each week of the course. Attendance is defined as participating in an academic activity within the online classroom which includes posting in a graded activity in the course. (Note: Logging into the course does not qualify as participation and will not be counted as meeting the attendance requirement.)

Students who do not attend at least once in any 3 consecutive days will be issued an attendance warning. Students who do not attend at least once in any 7 consecutive days will be dropped from the course retroactive to the last date of recorded attendance.

**\* Attending and participating in each class period is valued at 5 points for a total of 75 points over the semester.**

## **SPIRITUAL CARE**

PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our graduate students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith. If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain, or prayer requests you can send an email to: [gradchaplainmissionvalley@pointloma.edu](mailto:gradchaplainmissionvalley@pointloma.edu) ([Links to an external site.](#)) In addition, there are resources for your Christian faith journey available at the [Graduate & Professional Student Spiritual LifeLinks to an external site.](#) web page.

## **USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

In order to be successful in the online environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [Technology and System Requirements](#) information.

Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.