

**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA**  
**COLLEGE OF MEDICINE SYLLABUS**  
**NEUROSCIENCE**

**GMS 6029 New Developments in Neuroscience (2 credits)**

Delivery Format: Online

**Instructors Names:**

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Office Hours: Students request and schedule online Zoom meetings  
Preferred Course Communications: Email through Canvas course platform

Prerequisites: Completion of GMS 6007 or consent of instructor. Designed for graduate students in online MSc or PhD programs.

**Course Overview:**

This 2-credit course is a required course in the online Master's program in Biomedical Sciences with a concentration in Biomedical Neurosciences. This course will introduce students to the underlying steps that can be taken to successfully read and understand published, peer-reviewed papers in the top science and neuroscience journals. By the end of the course, students will be able to apply what they learn in this course to their future efforts to read and understand scientific papers.

**Course Objectives and/or Goals:**

To introduce students to strategies that can be used to improve their ability to read and understand scientific papers published in the primary scientific literature. At the end of this course students will be able to confidently research neuroscience topics unfamiliar to them and systematically read through top research articles in those topic areas. Students will develop tools that will enable them to evaluate the appropriateness of the methodologies used to carry out specific experiments, the quality of the results obtained from those experiments, and the significance of the results in the context of the topic area under investigation.,

**Instructional Methods:**

All assignments and interactions within this course will be asynchronous and will take place within the online course platform, Canvas. The assignments will include quizzes, short answer surveys, and posting comments and materials to the Voice Threads associated with each module in the course.

### Description of Course Content:

The course is a 13-week course and is divided into a course introduction module that is followed by five modules that will each focus on a specific published research paper. The topics for the paper will be representative of a broad cross-section of the major fields in Neuroscience.

### Course Schedule

Week(s)	Topics
1	Mod 1 - Course Introduction
2-3	Mod 2 – Paper 1
4-5	Mod 3 – Paper 2
6-7	Mod 4 – Paper 3
8-10	Mod 5 – Paper 4 (student paper)
11-13	Mod 6 – Paper 5 (student paper)

### Course Materials and Technology:

#### Course Materials

- All reading assignments are assigned from the primary literature. No textbook is required
- Recorded VoiceThread lectures are accessible through the Canvas course website. Students are encouraged to post any questions they have about the lecture material directly within the lectures using the text, audio, or video + audio commenting features of VoiceThread.
- Short quizzes and/or graded surveys will accompany each module. Their purpose is to help students determine if they are understanding the module materials.
- Discussion boards are available for posting questions about the readings and general questions about the course and course materials.
- Online, scheduled synchronous meetings between individual students and the instructor will be available by request throughout the semester using Zoom Conferences.

#### Required Technology

- Laptop or desktop computer equipped with microphone and video camera. The microphone and video camera can be used to post comments/questions to VoiceThread and will be used to create the final Circadian Project. There are

VoiceThread apps that are available for free for iOS and Android devices that can be used to view the VT and comment on them. I strongly recommend that you use a laptop or desktop computer when working on your VT projects for this course.

- High speed, broad band internet connection such as DSL or cable. A broadband Internet connection is strongly recommended. Slower connections may affect your ability to interact with materials in the course. It is also recommended that you try to submit all course exams and assignments well ahead of the deadline since I have found that network speeds can significantly slow as the deadlines approach due to increased use by students.  
SPECIAL NOTE: Some users with satellite Internet service may find their online courses do not load quickly or consistently due to satellite network design issues.
- Installation of LockDown Browser on computer that you will use for this course. The computer you use to take exams should be “hard wired” to the internet. WiFi is not stable enough to support a reliable connection while taking quizzes or exams.
- Canvas courses are best viewed using Chrome or Firefox. For specific questions about browser compatibilities and general questions about e-learning at UF please go to <https://elearning.ufl.edu/keep-learning/>

## **WHEN DO I CONTACT THE UF HELPDESK?**

In the event that you have **technical difficulties with E-learning (CANVAS)**, please contact the UF helpdesk at [learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:learning-support@ufl.edu), or (352) 392-4357 - select option 2. If your technical difficulties will cause you to miss a due date, you **MUST** report the problem to E-learning. Include the ticket number that you are given in an e-mail to the instructor to explain the late assignment/quiz/test.

Types of questions that should be directed to the Help Desk:

1. I can't log into E-learning
2. I have clicked on the "submit" button for my quiz and nothing is happening
3. I can't upload an assignment (be sure that you have reviewed the tutorial on how to do this BEFORE you contact the Help Desk)
4. E-learning has given me an error message and I can't submit my assignment.

***NOTE:*** Late work that involves technical difficulties with E-learning **MUST** be accompanied by a ticket number from the Help Desk.

***ALSO*** - Be sure to be familiar with the hours of operation for the UF help desk since they are oftentimes not available after 10:30pm on workdays and after 8:00 pm on weekends. There hours are posted at <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/about/business-hours/>

## Academic Requirements and Grading

### Assignments

Assignments will include short quizzes, surveys, and short presentations related to the specific materials in the assigned scientific papers.

### Grading

This course is an S/U course. In order to receive an S for this course, students will be required to submit all assignments. In instances where the assignment is formally graded (quiz) students should strive to obtain 80% of the total points available by the end of the course. Grading rubrics will be used to evaluate student presentations and discussion of the discussed papers. The rubrics will be provided to you so that you will understand what is required to successfully complete these assignments and how they will be evaluated.

Three scientific papers are formally presented by the instructors to the students in Modules 2-4. Each section of each paper is presented to the students using VoiceThread lectures that complement and expand upon their reading of the assigned sections of each paper. The students will work through the assigned paper sections in the order stipulated and their understanding of the materials in each section is assessed by having the students complete a short essay exam.

In addition to the assignments associated with the three papers that will be covered extensively by the instructors during Modules 2-4, students will be asked to use the analytical reading approach demonstrated in the Modules 2-4 of the course to create a presentation of a paper of their choosing.

Students will be given 3-weeks (Module 5) to create a presentation of their paper using VoiceThread. Each presentation will be assigned a peer reviewer who will be charged to post 4 rigorous scientific questions about the paper on the VoiceThread. Finally, the presenting student will provide answers to scientific questions during a Zoom meeting involving the presenting and reviewing students and the instructor. These assignments will be assessed using rubrics. The rubric for Evaluation of the Presentation is attached.

To receive an S for this course, students will be required to submit all assignments. All assignments are equally weighted and students must obtain 80% of the total points available to receive an S. There are 237 points possible – 80% of these points is 189 points.

Assessment Type	Number of Assessments	Points / Modules 2-4	Total Points (237)
Essay Exams	12 (4 exams each Mods 2-4)	Mod 2 – 65 pts; Mod 3 – 56 pts; Mod 4 – 46 pts	167 points
Paper Project	1	Select paper – 6 pts; Instructor Evaluation of Presentation – 24 pts	30 points

Paper Peer Review	1	Instructor evaluation of quality of Peer Questions – 20 points	20 points
Scientific Responses to Review Questions	1	Instructor evaluation of quality of scientific answers to peer questions – 20 points	20 points

### ***Late assignments, quizzes and tests***

We recognize that personal circumstances arise that may interfere with your ability to meet a deadline. If you anticipate missing a deadline, please let the instructor know as soon as possible and they will work with you to resolve the issue. Your emails will be responded to within 24 hours (typically sooner). Please see the [UF Attendance Policies](#) concerning absences, religious holidays, and illness. In general, late assignments, quizzes, and tests will not be accepted unless you have obtained a deadline extension from the instructor.

If you encounter technical difficulties with assignments (e.g. LockDown browser malfunction), be sure to include a UF helpdesk ticket number in your request for a deadline extension if you plan to request one. The extension request **MUST** be submitted within 24 hours of the technical difficulty.

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/graduate/regulations/#text>

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at the end of the course. You will receive an email from UF when your evaluation is ready to be completed. These evaluations are very important to instructors since they help instructors to identify areas of a course that are working well and those that might require improvement. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of student evaluations are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

### ***PLAGIARISM***

Students must understand what plagiarism is and must not engage in this behavior when completing assignments and tests in this course. The University of Florida Student Honor Code states that plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. Submitting a document or assignment that in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

Students whose assignments/tests exhibit evidence of plagiarism will receive zeros for those assignments and tests for the first offense and will receive a warning. Students who continue to engage in this behavior after the warning will be reported to the UF Dean of Students Office.

### ***PROHIBITED COLLABORATION OR CONSULTATION***

Student found to be involved in sharing answers and/or collaborating on exams or assignments will receive zeros for those exams and assignments. Students who continue to engage in this behavior after the warning will be reported to the UF Dean of Students Office.

### ***HOW TO SUCCEED IN ONLINE COURSES***

First, you need to be aware that online learning poses its own unique challenges. Because the online classroom is available to you 24 hours a day it is easy to delay work on course material, forget deadlines, and not put enough time in to prepare for exams. These challenges are exacerbated when a student is not a 'self-starter' or if does not possess good time management skills including use of reminders.

Unlike traditional instructional settings in which each student goes to the same class, the online setting enables every student to “create” the class of his or her choosing. In theory, this type of instruction should be more adaptable to a variety of learning styles; however, the reality is that some students have not yet determined what their optimal learning style is. Poor performance in online courses often can be directly linked to procrastination and poor time management (trying to do a week’s worth of work just before the deadline). Rushing to complete assignments before the 11:59 pm deadlines on Sundays is NOT a good strategy because you forfeit your opportunity to ask questions about material you do not understand. Completing the self-check quizzes during the work week can help you to pinpoint topic areas you are finding difficult. In general, I answer questions you have about course content within 12-24 hrs of your posting of your question. Oftentimes, I answer much more quickly. Questions posted Sunday afternoon/evening may not be answered before you take tests that are due at 11:59 pm on Sunday.

You are expected to adhere to the posted assignment deadlines but you may submit assignments before the deadlines. There are two things you can do to insure that you are informed of deadlines. **First**, it is important that you take advantage of the notification features of Canvas so that you receive reminders when assignments are due and can receive notices when new information is posted in the course. You should take a moment to modify your notification preferences so that you can take advantage of what Canvas offers. Your preference settings can be accessed by clicking on your account icon in the left menu panel on the Canvas page (your photo or icon on top of icon listing) and by selecting Notifications from the list. **Second**, it is important that you check your ufl.edu email on a daily basis which is the email address that Canvas and I will use to communicate with you.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” [The Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/> . It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester. The College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to assist students in their coursework.

### **Counseling and Student Health**

Students sometimes experience stress from academic expectations and/or personal and interpersonal issues that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing issues that have the potential to or are already negatively affecting your coursework, you are encouraged to talk with an instructor and/or seek help through University resources available to you.

- The Counseling and Wellness Center 352-392-1575 offers a variety of support services such as psychological assessment and intervention and assistance for math and test anxiety. Visit their web site for more information: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu>. On line and in person assistance is available.
- You Matter We Care website: <http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/>. If you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, you can reach out for help through the You Matter We Care website, which is staffed by Dean of Students and Counseling Center personnel.
- The Student Health Care Center at UF Health is a satellite clinic of the main Student Health Care Center located on Fletcher Drive on campus. Student Health at UF Health offers a variety of clinical services. The clinic is located on the second floor of the Dental Tower in the Health Science Center. For more information, contact the clinic at 392-0627 or check out the web site at: <https://shcc.ufl.edu/>

- UF Health Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32698, [ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center](http://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center).
- University Police Department: Visit [police.ufl.edu/](http://police.ufl.edu/) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- Crisis intervention is always available 24/7 from:

Alachua County Crisis Center:

(352) 264-6789

<http://www.alachuacounty.us/DEPTS/CSS/CRISISCENTER/Pages/CrisisCenter.aspx>

Do not wait until you reach a crisis to come in and talk with us. We have helped many students through stressful situations impacting their academic performance. You are not alone so do not be afraid to ask for assistance.

## Academic Resources

**E-learning technical support:** Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

**Career Connections Center:** Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services [career.ufl.edu/](http://career.ufl.edu/).

**Library Support:** [cms.uflib.ufl.edu/](http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/) ask various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

**Teaching Center:** Broward Hall 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. [teachingcenter.ufl.edu/](http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/)

**Writing Studio:** 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. [writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/](http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/)

**Student Complaints On-Campus:** [sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/](http://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/)

**On-Line Students Complaints:** [distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process](http://distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process)