

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

Course number: GMS 5XXX (1 credit)

Course Name: Navigating the Neuroscience PhD Program
Fall 2024

In person (except where noted), 4-5pm Wednesday

Instructor Name: Dr. Jada Lewis

Phone Number: 352-273-9666

Email Address: jada.lewis@ufl.edu

Office Hours: BMS J485, Friday, 3-5pm

Graduate Teaching Assistant (TA):

Ethan D. Smith, senior graduate student (post-qual), ethandsmith@ufl.edu

Sruti Rayaprolu, PhD, associate scientist (faculty), sruti.rayaprolu@ufl.edu

Preferred Course Communications: email or Canvas

Prerequisites: No prerequisites. Student must be in the first year of the Neuroscience PhD program.

Purpose and Outcome: Provides first year PhD students with the basic knowledge that they need to succeed in graduate school and position them to achieve their career goals. This class will help align the students' expectations with those of the neuroscience program.

Course Overview: Provides students with fundamental skills, knowledge, and strategies to thrive in graduate school and beyond. PowerPoint slides will be used to review each topic and to stimulate interactions and discussions. The course director will draw on her own experiences to stimulate discussion and periodically invite other faculty to join the class when the discussion will be enhanced by their inclusion. A senior graduate student and an associate scientist will serve as teaching assistants who will also share their experiences and help stimulate discussion.

Relation to Program Outcomes: Prepares students for a career in neuroscience. Introduces relevant professional skills and personal strategies to the students to help them to thrive in graduate school and prepare for their desired career trajectory after graduation.

Course Objectives and/or Goals: The students will interact with their peers, the TAs and the course director on critical topics of interest to them as well as topics that our faculty view as important for the students' success within our program and in a career in neuroscience. The peer support network that is built through these discussions will support student success in their PhD studies. Based on in-class and individual discussions, this course will be used to shape how the Neuroscience program individualizes each student's experience in their graduate training.

Instructional Methods: A mixture of instructor-led didactics, out of class self-assessment, and interactive discussions.

What is expected of the student?

Students are expected to actively engage in the course throughout the semester. Students must introduce questions or issues that they have questions about program, graduate studies and research and actively participate in discussion. As students must engage programmatic faculty to identify rotation mentors and they should employ skills learned in the class to choose their graduate laboratory. Students should develop strong understanding of resources that exist to address questions/issues that arise in the program and identify issues where resources do not exist that they can justify needing for their own individual success.

Attendance is required and failure to attend may result in the student struggling to build critical knowledge and skills needed to thrive in the Neuroscience PhD program. Similarly, individuals are expected to actively participate in class discussions and self-reflection. Their participation fosters a rich course experience for the student and their peers that facilitates overall mastery of the course objectives.

Weekly Schedule of Topics:

Week	Title	Topic
1	Guess Who 8/21	<i>Finding and Identifying Matches in Mentor, lab and research focus</i> Students will be guided through ways to engage potential mentors and their lab members, how to determine if the lab meets their needs, and to self-assess what their individual needs and learning styles are. Timelines and expectations of the program will also be conveyed.
2	Trivial Pursuit 8/28	<i>What are the topics of your questions as you enter and navigate graduate school education?</i> Students will be engaged to determine their self-identified needs and address questions they have about graduate level education and neuroscience careers. These items will be addressed in this specific class or in other classes throughout the semester
3	Jenga 9/4	<i>Finding Balance in School, Work and Life</i> A guest faculty will join the course director in discussing common struggles for school, work, and life with the students. Students will be encouraged, but not required, to offer their own challenges (in an anonymous survey) that they face and discussions will include those shared in the survey. Students will be directed to existing resources

		that are available within UF and otherwise in the event that additional support or need a confidential forum in which to engage professional services arises in the future.
4	Dungeons and Dragons 9/11	<i>Responsibilities of each party as you quest for your success</i> A graduate program director and the course director will convey general expectations and reasonable metrics that should be used for assessing student's own performance and progress in graduate school. Additionally, the graduate program director and course director will convey what the responsibilities of the program, mentor, and lab members should be to each other and the students. This class will also provide students tools to ensure that expectations are met by each entity and how to address issues that may arise.
5	Pandemic 9/18	<i>What to Expect and the Unexpected as a Graduate Student</i> A guest faculty member and the course director will openly discuss the impact of the pandemic and other unexpected set-backs on their research and encourage students to share their experiences. Resilience strategies for negative impacts and strategies to position themselves for unexpected positive outcomes will be discussed.
6	Clue 9/25	<i>Using clues to solves research mysteries</i> This class will focus on rigor, reproducibility, unbiased, open and team science and how to incorporate that into their research. This class will also discuss strategies for reading, assessing and interpreting publications or research presentations, particularly in the context of limited time and many time demands.
7	Monopoly 10/2 (Class will not be held 10/9 due to SFN)	<i>Owning your own project</i> This class will discuss expectations for owning their research project and when and to what extent that is expected. We will also guide their understanding of authorship roles, authorship order and reasonable and unreasonable expectations. This class will also cover who should be deemed an appropriate author, touching on "courtesy" authorship and how to avoid that. Conflicts of interest will also be discussed.

8	Connect Four 10/16 (Note the previous week is skipped)	<i>Finding and Being Allies</i> This class will focus on building community in graduate school and in future careers and will include discussions on doing so when one is under-represented in research.
9	Axis & Allies 10/23	<i>Establishing Collaboration and Cooperation</i> This class will discuss how to find and build collaborations, how to cooperate and comprise in collaborations, and when a collaboration should be started and stopped.
10	Outburst 10/30	<i>Managing Internal and External Conflicts</i> This class will discuss inevitable self-comparisons that give rise to internal and external conflicts as well as strategies for having difficult conversations with peers, supervisors and, eventually, mentees.
11	Werewolf 11/6	<i>Identifying and Overcoming Imposter Syndrome</i> A guest faculty will be invited and will join the course director in discussing imposter syndrome and how to recognize, avoid and confront their own imposter syndrome. The course director and guest faculty will convey their own experiences and strategies.
12	Chutes and Ladders 11/13	<i>Persistence and Resilience in the Face of Setbacks</i> A guest faculty will join the course director in discussion with the students about how they have faced perceived failures of set-backs, strategies that they have deployed to be resilient in setbacks, and when a new direction might be the solution.
13	Scrabble 11/20	<i>How to spell authorship and "words" that are not allowed</i> This class will specifically deal with plagiarism, retraction, rigor, and reproducibility.
14	Deal or No Deal 12/4	<i>Qualification and Defense Exams</i> One of the program directors will join the course director in a discussion about programmatic expectations for qualification and defense exams and how to prepare for those exams. Additionally, strategies on how to listen and provide focused answers will be discussed.
15	Scattegories (exam period)	<i>Careers that Start with PhD</i>

		<p>A pre-class survey will be given to determine the careers that our students are interested in and the presentation/discussion will focus on those careers. Additionally, careers that may be less well-known will be introduced as potential.</p>
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Final Exam: Students will have two weeks to complete a student project on one topic covered in the course. Each student will develop a critical question/issue that graduate students in the program may have and detail what solutions or resources currently exist at UF and/or detail and justify what resources should be created to help graduate students navigate the issue.

Supportive Course Materials and Technology: “Piled Higher and Deeper: A Graduate Student Comic Strip Collection”, Author: Jorge Charm, June 1, 2002 (not required)

For technical support for this class, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- [UF eLearning](#)

Academic Requirements and Grading:

10% Monthly individual discussions with Course Director and/or Teaching Assistants

30% Individual Project

60% Class Participation / In-class activities. Note: attendance is not sufficient for participation.

This category will consist of in-class problems, discussions, or other activity during the scheduled course time. Attendance will not be taken, but if you fail to show up to class, you will miss opportunities to get participation credits, see attendance policy below.

Grading:

S/U

Exam Policy: No exams, Individual Project serves as final exam

Policy Related to Required Class Attendance: Attendance is expected for all classes. Anticipated absences should be discussed with the instructors as far in advance as possible.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the Graduate Catalog (<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=2020#attendance>). Additional information can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Expectations Regarding Course Behavior:

Attendance is required, with excused absences handled as describe above.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Communication Guidelines: <http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to act in accordance with the University of Florida policy on academic integrity. As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge:

“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.”

You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit 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.”

It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For additional information regarding Academic Integrity, please see Student Conduct and Honor Code or the Graduate Student Website for additional details:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

<http://gradschool.ufl.edu/students/introduction.html>

Please remember cheating, lying, misrepresentation, or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and inexcusable behavior.

Online Faculty Course Evaluation Process:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at

<https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/> . Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their

Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Policy Related to Guests Attending Class:

Only registered students are permitted to attend class. However, we recognize that students who are caretakers may face occasional unexpected challenges creating attendance barriers. Therefore, by exception, a department chair or his or her designee (e.g., instructors) may grant a student permission to bring a guest(s) for a total of two class sessions per semester. This is two sessions total across all courses. No further extensions will be granted. Please note that guests are **not** permitted to attend either cadaver or wet labs. Students are responsible for course material regardless of attendance. For additional information, please review the [Classroom Guests of Students policy](#) in its entirety.

Support Services:

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.
- University Police Department: Visit 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.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services career.ufl.edu/.

Library Support: 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/

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/

Student Complaints On-Campus: sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/

On-Line Students Complaints: distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process