Course Objectives

1. Improve written skills
2. Encourage students to integrate in their thinking

This course is different from many other courses you may have taken. The primary goal here is to improve your writing; a secondary goal is to enhance your understanding. As such, it is the clarity of writing that is being evaluated. In order to do this effectively, the writing assignments are highly constrained with very specific requirements. While some of the requirements may seem trivial, each is equally important (word count, page formatting, sentence structure, etc.).

Instructor: Dr. David I. Shore
Teaching Assistants: Hannah Anderson, Hanna Haponenko, Laura Jin, Andrew LoGuidice, Lisa Lorentz, Rubina Malik, Sophia Roth, Michael Wan

Guest lecturers: TBA.

Primary Contact: pn2xx3@psychology.mcmaster.ca

Class place & time: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday @ 9:30 in MDCL 1105

Tutorial place & time: Wednesday @ 11:30. Various Locations

Office hours: By appointment.

Required Texts:
- Various articles posted to Avenue and retrieved from the Library.

Recommended Reading:
Evaluation breakdown (see Master Rubric posted on Avenue2Learn):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of assessment</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays</td>
<td>2 + final resubmission</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Précis writing</td>
<td>4 + final resubmission</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>4 (in tutorial)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Editing</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Re-Submission</td>
<td>1 Precis, 1 Essay, 1 Reflection</td>
<td>40%</td>
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**Grading Policy:** The instructors reserve the right to adjust final marks up or down, on an individual basis, in the light of special circumstances and/or the individual's total performance in the course. Final grades may also be adjusted up or down on a class-wide basis depending on overall performance. Details of the course requirements may be subject to change. If requirements are altered, a revised course outline will be posted on the webpage and the details will be announced in class. Attention is drawn to Statement on Academic Ethics and the Senate Resolutions on Academic Dishonesty as found in the Senate Policy Statements distributed at registration and available in the Senate Office. Any student who infringes on these resolutions will be treated according to the published policy.

**Missed Work Policy:** See: [https://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/](https://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/)
When using the MSAF, report your absence to the course e-mail address (see above). You must speak to the instructor in person before or after class within 5 business days. Grades will be adjusted accordingly. Misuse of the MSAF form to gain an unfair advantage will be considered a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy.

**Communication policy:** E-mail communications must originate from your designated McMaster e-mail account. Should we need to communicate with you about individual matters, the e-mail will be sent to this account. You should monitor this account regularly. E-mail sent from third-party providers (yahoo, hotmail, cogeco, sympatico, gmail, etc.) will not be answered. The fastest avenue for feedback concerning course-related problems is the course e-mail address <pnb2xx3@psychology.mcmaster.ca>. This will be monitored daily and a response will be sent within two business days. Instructors and TAs cannot return long distance telephone calls.
In this course we will be using Avenue2Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Students should also be aware that they will be providing feedback and evaluations of other students. In doing this, your identity will be communicated to the other student. Be honest in your assessment of their material and provide constructive comments. Do not inflate your assessments as the instructors will consider this inappropriate and it will give the submitting student a false sense of accomplishment. We will talk, during lectures, on how to edit and evaluate a piece of written work and you will be given clear guidelines on how to conduct your assessment. Any concerns or questions regarding this process should be address to the instructors of the course as soon as possible.

To be absolutely clear, it is a requirement of this course that other students read and evaluate your writing. The sooner you are comfortable with this process, the sooner you will develop your writing skills.
Essay Writing: You will submit two essays during the term. Each essay will capture and communicate an idea related to Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour. This is an expository essay focused on teaching and informing the audience. The essay must include at least 5 citations (more is better) to the primary literature.

You are allowed 5 paragraphs: a lead paragraph with the hook as the first sentence and the thesis as the last; three body paragraphs representing the beginning, middle and end of the exposition of your thesis; and, a final paragraph with your conclusion as the first sentence. The thesis, the topic sentence of each body paragraph, and the conclusion sentence must be simple sentences without subordinate clauses or phrases. 750 words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay 1</th>
<th>Essay 2</th>
<th>Item due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 23</td>
<td>March 6</td>
<td>Lead and Outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 6</td>
<td>March 13</td>
<td>First draft (extended outline &amp; cue cards)</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 9</td>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>PEER EDIT</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 12</td>
<td>March 22</td>
<td>Final Submission including:</td>
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1. A cover page with your name and MacID (e.g., dshore; not your student number); course name, professor name, and TA name; the title, assignment number, and date of submission; and, word count.
2. The extended outline with citations.
3. The rubric posted on avenue (page 2; single sided)
4. A reflection on your writing process including major decisions and sources of feedback (max one page).
5. The essay itself (on a new page), including proper in-text and full APA citations. Put your simple outline at the start of the essay (see Ghilic et al. for examples).
7. An annotated bibliography—two articles to a page; each article has one sentence each for: question, hypothesis, method, results, implications.
8. A copy of your first draft & your original lead and outline.
9. Appendix A. All edited versions of your first draft (your own and others)
10. Appendix B. All edited version of your original lead and outline.

No spiral submissions, no duo tangs, no folders. Sections 1-6 should be stapled together with the cover page as the front page. Final submissions will be delivered to a physical drop box in the Psychology Building before 5:00 pm on the date noted above. All submissions should be double spaced.

You will also submit an electronic copy of your Essay: method TBA.
**Précis Writing:** A précis is an accurate summary of a text or lecture—it should include all of the important ideas, and avoid all of the secondary ideas. The writing must be your own—you own words, phrases, and sentences. An excellent précis will capture the thesis, outline, and conclusion of the original work. You may cite work other than the original work, but it is not required. Your précis will be 100 words.

The entire submission must be double sided. On one side, provide your name and student number; course name, professor name, and TA name (in bold); the title (including the APA citation), précis number, and date of submission; running head, and word count; and, this rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Précis</th>
<th>Grade (/3)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Logic</td>
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<td>Grammar</td>
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<td>Clarity &amp; Clutter</td>
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<td>Style &amp; Interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary Sentence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Format</td>
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<td>Total:</td>
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EACH SUBMISSION MUST BE ONLY ONE SHEET OF PAPER.

Précis are due by 5:00 pm to the dropbox in the Psychology Building on the following Fridays on the following topics:
- Jan 18: Negal article
- Feb 1: Representing the external world
- March 15: Memory
- April 2: TBD

NOTE: Lectures slides from the guest lectures will NOT normally be available to students. Also, there will be no electronic devices allowed in the guest lectures—no laptops, phones, tablets, etc. If you have a concern with this policy, please address it to the instructor as soon as possible.

An overall score for précis writing will be based on these four (4) submissions.

You must keep your graded copies of each assignment for submission in the final package. Additionally, you are responsible for recording your grade for each assignment on the master rubric for the course.
**Final Submission:** The final submission is due on Friday April 12 in the Dropbox in the Psychology building before 5 pm. The submission will be covered by the Master Rubric (will be posted on Avenue later this term)—you are responsible for entering all grades that you have available to you (Précis, Essays, Points). The submission will consist of a reflection (max 500 words), a précis resubmission, and an essay resubmission. You must include all relevant previous drafts of your work and all graded copies of previous submissions.

**Peer Editing:** Peer editing forms a foundational component of this course. You learn from reading your colleagues’ writing, and you help them improve at the same time. You are expected to edit as many submissions as you can throughout the term. Each time you edit another student’s work you will receive a point: you will complete an on-line assessment of the writing. Each time you have your work edited, you will enter it into a spreadsheet (to be posted to Avenue) and submit that spreadsheet with your final submission. An electronic submission will also be necessary on Avenue2Learn. It is your responsibility to keep track of your points and enter them in the appropriate place on the master rubric.

**Quizzes:** There will be four (4) quizzes in the tutorials held on Jan 16, Jan 23, Jan 30, and Feb 6. Quizzes cover the required readings on writing (Strunk & White, Zinsser).

**Students with accommodations.** The standard accommodations are not available in this class. You must complete the quizzes in the tutorial with the other students, since we take up the quiz and grade it during the tutorial. If you feel that this task will not adequately reflect your abilities, I can reweight your grade to exclude the quiz component, but you must still write the quiz and participate in its take-up and grading.

It is not possible to provide extensions for the submission deadlines since once you complete one assignment you will be starting the next and any delay of one will have a negative cascade effect. Again, speak to me if you have concerns about meeting the proposed schedule.

**Final note.** If you manage to read the entire syllabus to this point, then send an e-mail message with the subject “made it to the end” to the course email. The first 50 students receive a bonus point.