

Neuroscience of Consciousness

PSB4934 Fall 2024

Time: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 8th Period (3:00-3:50 PM)

Location: Psychology Building Room 130

Instructor

Ryan Mears, PhD

mears@ufl.edu

(352) 266-9656

Office Hours: Following class M/W/F.

Other days/times by request.

Teaching Assistants

Graduate

Please contact through the Canvas website

- Trevor Caruso

Undergraduate

- Ashley Correa
- Kailey Newman

Course Description

Conscious awareness is a hallmark of human experience. In this class we will consider cutting edge neuroscience of mechanisms and neural signs as we discuss abnormal, disrupted, and non-human consciousness. The subject of consciousness is vast. Study of consciousness encompasses a wide range of disciplines, including psychology, neuroscience, philosophy, language, culture, politics, religion, and societies. Given the breadth of the topic, this course will focus on key questions related to consciousness from a neuroscientific framework. This narrow scope is essential to provide a clear and in-depth understanding of the biological and cognitive processes underlying conscious experience, while acknowledging the broader interdisciplinary context. Early in the course we will define how our scope relates to the broader context. Relevant topics in this course presented from the perspective of a neuroscientific framework include anesthesia, altered states, artificial intelligence, coma, dreams, delusions, free-will, gestalt, hallucination, hallucinogens, illusion, imagination, imagery, mindfulness, prediction, quality of life, reality, sentience, sleep, and wakefulness.

Required Readings and Course Content

Harley, Trevor (2021). *The Science of Consciousness*. Cambridge University Press.

Recommended Materials

The main textbook and all other reading materials will be on Perusall. Basic Internet access is required for Perusall.

Course Schedule

Class Activities and Due dates the week level.

		ASSIGNMENTS	TEXTBOOK	OTHER READING
1	Aug 19 – Aug 23			
2	Aug 26 – Aug 30		The Problem of Consciousness-1	
3	Sept 2 – Sept 6		Mind-Body-2	
4	Sept 9 – Sept 13		Free-Will-3	
5	Sept 16 – Sept			
6	Sept 23 – Sept	Take Home Exam 1		
7	Sept 30 – Oct 4			
8	Oct 7 – Oct 11		Cognition-8	
9	Oct 14 – Oct 18			
10	Oct 21 – Oct 25		Perception-9	
11	Oct 28 – Nov 1			
12	Nov 4 – Nov 8		Neural Correlates-10	
13	Nov 11 – Nov 15			
14	Nov 18 – Nov 22			
15	Nov 25 – Nov 29	Thanksgiving	Break	
16	Dec 2 – Dec 6	Take Home Exam 2		
17	Dec 9 – Dec 13			

Grades and Scores

Attendance & Participation 15%	Perusall 15%	Assignments 30%	Exams 1 & 2 50%
-----------------------------------	--------------	-----------------	-----------------

Grading Scale

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
<i>Range</i>	100	92.5	89.5	86	82.5	79.5	76	72.5	69.5	66	62.5	59.5
	92.5	89.5	86	82.5	79.5	76	72.5	69.5	66	62.5	59.5	0

Group Presentations & Topics

Our goal here is to pick a topic that interests you and others in your group and to apply concepts and knowledge from the course with regard to mechanisms or processes that support consciousness. Your goal will be to enhance the depth and breadth of your classmates in understanding how neural structures and systems integrate and interact to contribute to consciousness. Often, individual aspects of sensation, perception, affect, and cognition are insufficient to individually account for the complex neural interactions that are required for the emergence, sustaining, and control of consciousness.

Aspects, Levels, and States of Consciousness, Consciousness in Animals, Machine Consciousness, Loss of Consciousness, Disordered Consciousness, Enhanced Consciousness

Class Attendance and Make-Up Policy

Class attendance is expected. Each unexcused absence will result in a 10 point reduction in the final grade. Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>) and require appropriate documentation. Students who can demonstrate that they were unable to submit an assignment by the deadline due to an excused absence and who can provide appropriate documentation for the absence will be given a reasonable period of time to make up the late work.

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu> . 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 these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/> .

Materials and Supplies Fees

There are no additional fees for this course.

University Honesty Policy

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 (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-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.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<https://counseling.ufl.edu/> , 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at

<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 302 Tigert Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.