

Coordinator: Dr. Karen Parfitt

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description and Goals: The senior seminar in neuroscience is designed to be the “capstone” experience for majors in Pomona College’s Neuroscience program. As such, it has two goals: to assist students in identifying and thinking critically about current topics in neuroscience and to help them apply this skill in completing their senior exercise. This course is NOT a substitution for meeting with your thesis advisor on a regular basis.

Course Organization: Class will meet on Tuesdays from 1:15-2:30 pm. Attendance at class is mandatory. If you need to miss class due to an interview or medical emergency, contact KP by email or phone.

- At least four sessions will be spent discussing issues that the faculty have identified as key to the successful completion of a thesis in neuroscience. These include the nature of the senior thesis requirement, strategies for finding and organizing information, using electronic data bases, and how to organize your information into a thesis. Please let Dr. P if there are any other topics that you would like to have covered.
- Each student will lead a discussion on their senior thesis topic (see “Senior thesis seminar—presentation guidelines”). Students not leading a discussion for a given session will read a paper related to each talk for that day, and will submit three questions related to each speaker’s talk, prior to each session.
- Attendance at one or more Neuroscience seminars during the course of the semester is mandatory. These will be held on our campus or at Joint Sciences, at various times. Students will turn in a summary of the seminar after attending the talk.

Homework/ Class Participation: Obviously, in a course designed to foster critical thinking and discussion of current issues in neuroscience, active participation is a major factor in the assessment of your performance in this class. To facilitate discussion of thesis topics and to further your preparation for class, you will be reading papers related to your colleagues’ theses and thinking about what questions to ask about each topic. These can be clarification questions, but better yet are questions that could help your colleagues think about their topic from different angles. Because these papers and questions will be discussed in class, late assignments will not be accepted unless there is a medical emergency involving yourself or your family. There will be time for discussion of thesis topics during and/or after each student presentation.

Grading: Your grade in this course will be determined as follows:

Presentation of your thesis topic	45%
Homework	25%
Participation	5%
Seminar summary	5%

Your grade in this course is independent of your grade on your senior thesis.

Sept. 4	Intro: What is a thesis and how do I “do” one? Presentations by Drs. Kevin Jones and Jon King
11	Strategies for picking a topic, and finding/organizing information
18	Using Electronic data bases (Jason Price)
25	Experimental Thesis talks (30 min. each):
Oct. 2	Experimental Thesis talks (30 min. each):
9	How to pull a thesis together
16	Experimental Thesis talks (30 min. each):
23	FALL BREAK
30	Experimental thesis talks (30 min. each):
Nov. 6	Grant proposal talks (20 min. each):
13	Society for Neuroscience meeting (no class)
20	Grant Proposal talks (20 min. each): (Nov. 20: spring thesis contracts due)
27	Grant Proposal talks (20 min. each):
Dec. 4	Grant Proposal talks (20 min. each):
11	Wrap-up; course evaluations (Dec. 12: final draft proposal theses due; 1 st semester draft experimental theses due)

There is no Final examination in this course.

Neuroscience Grant Proposal Thesis Deadlines

	Fall Proposal	Spring Proposal
Contract submission*	Sept. 7, 2007	Nov 20, 2007
First Draft	Oct. 26, 2007	Mar. 21, 2008
Final Draft	Dec. 12, 2007	Apr. 25, 2008

Neuroscience Experimental Thesis Deadlines

Contract Submission*	Sept. 7, 2007
Progress report	Oct. 19, 2007
Ist Semester Draft	Dec. 12, 2007
Complete Draft	Mar. 28, 2008
Public Presentation	Week of Apr. 21st
Final Draft	Apr. 25, 2008