

Moravian College
Neuroscience Seminar (NEUR 373) – Neurocinema
Spring 2016

Instructors:

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Office hours: W & Th 12:30pm-
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Class Meeting Time:

Fridays 12pm-3pm, PPHAC 301, unless otherwise noted

Prerequisites:

Senior status or permission of instructors. This is the capstone course in the Neuroscience curriculum.

Readings:

Neurocinema: When Film Meets Neurology by Eelco Wijdicks, Taylor & Francis (ISBN: 978-1-4822-4286-7)

Other readings will be chapters and journal articles distributed by the instructors or researched by the class

Course Description:

Characters portrayed in popular films captivate society. Many of these portrayals are compelling, because they illustrate extremes of human behavior that do not necessarily affect all people but that represent struggles to prevail in times of suffering or adversity. Commonly, this distress is due to the presence of a neurological condition or psychological disorder. In this course, students will have the opportunity to examine from the cellular to behavior/cognitive level, the neuroscience underlying several of these character portrayals. Films related to conditions such as Parkinson's disease, ALS, Alzheimer's disease and disorders of anxiety, body perception, cognition, psychosis, development and personality will be discussed.

Students will research current scholarly literature within the discipline of neuroscience on either the cellular or behavior/cognitive basis of selected films. They will compose research papers, lead class discussions, and provide oral presentations based on this seminar theme. Emphasis will be placed on searching the literature effectively, using appropriate citations, analyzing and interpreting research data, developing and communicating a thesis bringing together disparate points of view within neuroscience and engaging in critical thinking about how neuroscience is depicted within film.

Students will also develop a portfolio requiring them to reflect on their undergraduate academic experiences within the Neuroscience Program as well as consider their intended career goals

Course Objectives:

1. Read and discuss important biological and psychological theories and findings related to neurological conditions illustrated in film. To think critically about how genetic, hormonal, societal, and other factors contribute to these conditions and their perception in film.
2. Generate class ownership of the material—students will be required to lead discussions on select films and give presentations using primary and secondary literature.
3. Strengthen skills used in reading, analyzing data, displaying results and forming conclusions from scientific literature.
4. Develop an understanding of the interdisciplinary approaches in examining how film is used *accurately or inaccurately* to illustrate neuroscience.
5. Strengthen skills used in presentation design and public speaking.
6. Reflect actively on aspects of their academic and extracurricular experiences over their undergraduate careers, in relation to both the material being covered and personal career goals.

Course Evaluation:

Attendance: Each student is allowed two absences (not including days when they are expected to present). Except where arranged with the instructors on a case-by-case basis, for each absence beyond those that are allowed, **your final class participation grade will be reduced by 1 letter grade** (e.g., B+ → C+). Of course, a legitimate reason for being late can occur, but repeated lateness is disrespectful to the other members of the class. Please see Dr. Johnson or Dr. Fox if you have a legitimate reason for repeated lateness or absence.

Movie Viewing: You will be expected to watch the selected movies prior to the date they are listed on the schedule, unless otherwise notified. The instructors will provide details regarding film access.

Class Participation/Reading Responses: You will earn a grade based on your participation in class discussions and questions/reactions to the readings and films. We expect each set of assigned readings to have a 1-page maximum reaction prepared and brought to class. *In addition to this paper, you are to electronically submit three questions or comments you hope to share with the class by 9pm on Thursday (the evening before the topic is discussed) to both professors.* Then, at the end of class, you will have the opportunity to add further reaction based on the day's discussion. These reading responses will be marked as completed, provided they reflect a reasonable degree of understanding of the readings and film. You will also be evaluated for your participation during the class discussion. **Participation includes the following: asking questions, providing contributions that reflect an understanding of the material, responding to other students' points of view, answering questions in a manner that demonstrates reasonable preparation (having read the appropriate readings thoroughly and viewed the film of the week), etc.,** Please be mindful not to overly dominate the discussion.

Ideas that go beyond the assigned readings for the day that are incorporated into your own comments or those synthesized across readings from different classes are especially encouraged.

Being attentive and engaged in what others are saying and taking notes is expected, but a high grade will require you to go beyond that and participate spontaneously (not just when called on). Students who arrive late to class disrupt the flow of the session and distract their peers. Please be prompt! Lateness will also negatively impact your participation grade, especially if chronic.

Group Movie Discussion Leader: As part of a group, you will be responsible for selecting an article to be read by the class and leading the discussion of that reading for part of the class period on that day. Your responsibilities will include organizing a list of questions and key larger themes for the class to discuss. You can start off with a brief overview of the *reading* for no more than 10 minutes, and then you will engage the class in active discussion of that reading. You will bring in a handout to help guide the class through the ideas/questions you have prepared. It is your responsibility to keep the class discussion going for the length of the assigned portion of class; however, other students are, as always, responsible for being active participants—each student's participation on those days will factor particularly heavily into their class participation grades. Having hands-on activities, in-class writing, demonstrations, or other unique ways of engaging with the material is encouraged!

Critical Analysis Research Paper and Presentation: Toward the end of the semester, you will be responsible for composing a critical analysis paper related to the theme of neurocinema. You will be expected to engage in a meaningful literature review related to a topic within neurocinema of your choosing. You will also give a formal presentation of your review/analysis to the class. More information will follow about the paper and presentation as the course progresses.

Portfolios: The purpose of the portfolio assignment will be to address various facets of your academic growth within the Neuroscience major. You will reflect on abilities such as oral and written communication, research skills and development of career goals. The portfolio will be composed of the following: self-statement, writing assessment, research skills assessment, service learning/advocacy assessment and resume. More information will be provided in a separate document as the course progresses.

Late Policy: Late assignments or papers will be accepted for up to four days after the due date and, unless otherwise noted, will result in **a reduction in points equivalent to one letter grade (10%) for every calendar day late** beginning at 5pm on the day the assignment is due (unless otherwise noted). After the four-day period, a paper will not be accepted and a grade of 0 will be applied. No exceptions will be made for minor technical difficulties (printer or email mishaps), but other circumstances may allow for exceptions as determined by the instructors on a case-by-case basis.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Any work that you turn in for this class must be entirely your own work. Any sources used must be properly documented and **we will ask you not to use any direct quotes in**

papers or presentations. For more information on plagiarism and cheating, refer to the Student Handbook and the following website regarding academic responsibility at Moravian College: <http://www.moravian.edu/studentlife/handbook/academic/academic2.html>. As this site clearly explains, the consequences for cheating or plagiarism can range from failing the assignment to receiving an F for the final course grade to expulsion, depending on the severity of the case and prior history of offenses. All of the work you submit must be entirely your own. It is your responsibility to communicate with Dr. Johnson or Dr. Fox if you have any questions about your use of sources.

Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides for some accommodations to be made for students with certain disabilities. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center, located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling [610-861-1401](tel:610-861-1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392.

Extra Help: If any difficulties arise during this course from selecting a discussion topic to designing your presentation, please contact one of the instructors. *We will be happy to help!* The reference librarians in Reeves Library are also willing to assist you with reference materials.

Grading:

Class participation	200 pts
Class-led discussion (75pts x 2)	150 pts
Film Promotion Piece	50 pts
Advocacy project/paper	100 pts
Critical Analysis Research paper draft	100 pts
Critical Research presentations	100 pts
Final portfolio	100 pts
Research paper final version	200 pts
Total	1000 pts

Note that it is within our purview as instructors to use qualitative judgments in determining grades for presentations, papers, participation, or other aspects of the course.

Tentative Class Schedule: *Any changes will be announced in class or via Blackboard.*

Date	Class topic/activities:	Assignments:
1 Jan 22	Introduction to course; Start portfolios	
2 Jan 29	<i>Awakenings</i>	Neurocinema – pages 63-68, 134-138
3 Feb 5	<i>Iris</i>	Neurocinema – pages 127-134
4 Feb 12	<i>Group movie 1</i>	<i>Film Promotion Piece</i>
5 Feb 19	<i>Group movie 2</i> Resume Workshop	<i>Resume draft due</i>
6 Feb 26	<i>Group movie 3</i>	
7 Mar 4	<i>Group movie 4</i> Service Learning/Advocacy project	
8 Mar 11	No class – Spring break	
9 Mar 18	<i>Group movie 5</i>	<i>Preliminary 3 scholarly sources & film source for paper due for approval</i>
10 Mar 25	No class – Easter recess	
11 Apr 1	<i>Group movie 6</i> Writing assessment workshop	
12 Apr 8	e-portfolios (NCUR Conference)	<i>Outline of critical analysis</i>
13 Apr 15	<i>Class-chosen movie</i> <i>Mandatory conferences regarding final research project this week</i>	<i>Research paper draft</i>
14 Apr 22	<i>Critical analysis presentations</i>	<i>Completed portfolios due Monday, April 18th</i>
15 Apr 29	<i>Critical analysis presentations</i>	
Finals Week	<i>Final Paper due (date TBD)</i>	