

Basic Course Information

Semester:	Winter 2026	Instructor Name:	Joseph Pipkin, PhD
Course Title & #:	Biological Psychology - Psy -200	Email:	joseph.pipkin@imperial.edu
CRN #:	15045	Webpage (optional):	http://www.imperial.edu
Classroom:	Online	Office #:	203-E (winter online)
Class Dates:	1/5 – 2/4/26	Office Hours:	By appointment
Class Days:	Online	Office Phone #:	(760)355-6149 ext. 6149
Class Times:	Online	Emergency Contact:	(760)355-6144
Units:	3	Class Format:	Online

Course Description

An exploration of the biological basis of human behavior. The development, structure and functions of the nervous system is thoroughly examined to provide insight into its complex relationship with human behavior, thought, and feelings. The history of neuroscience and methods of scientific inquiry are reviewed. (C-ID PSY 150) (CSU, UC)

Course Prerequisite(s) and/or Corequisite(s)

Prerequisite: PSY 101 with a grade of "C" or better.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon course completion, the successful student will have acquired new skills, knowledge, and or attitudes as demonstrated by being able to:

1. Describe the action potential and how communication takes place between neurons. (ILO1, ILO2, ILO3)
2. Critique current research in biopsychology including the ethical methodology and safeguards used in animal and human studies. (ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5)
3. Demonstrate an understanding of psychological theory regarding the relationship between physiology, cognition and emotion. (ILO1, ILO2, ILO3)
4. Identify the biological and endocrine based causes of neurological and mental disorders. (ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4)

Course Objectives

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Outline major events in the history of neuroscience and describe related advances in experimental methodology.
2. List and describe the functions of the structures and organelles of the neuron and discuss synaptic

transmission.

3. Identify the functional organization of the human nervous system and the structures which make up the functional subsystems.
4. Summarize the development of the vertebrate nervous system throughout the lifespan and identify problems that may result from delayed or impaired development.
5. Identify and describe sensory structures and processes and discuss how the nervous system initiates and controls movement.
6. Explain the physical regulation of homeostasis and discuss the effect of homeostatic drives on human behavior.
7. Discuss circadian and other cyclical rhythms of the brain and resultant effects on human behavior.
8. Describe the biological controls of emotions and explain the significance of emotions in human behavior and cognitive processes.
9. List and describe the major diseases of the nervous system and explain modern views on the bio/psycho/social nature of mental disorders.
10. Relate current research findings on the biologic elements of human learning and memory.

Textbooks & Other Resources or Links

Kalat, J. W. (2019). Biological Psychology (13th/e). Wadsworth/Cengage Learning: Belmont, CA ISBN: 9781337408202

It is possible to use an earlier edition as far back as the 10th edition as long as it is the same author. You might have to look a little harder for some information in earlier editions, but it is all there.

Course Requirements and Instructional Methods

Students are expected to comply with the following classroom norms:

- Arrive to Class on time (Zoom).
- Remain in the classroom during each class session until excused by the instructor (unless emergency).
- Be respectful of fellow students, the instructor, and any guests.
- Maintain confidentiality of information shared by fellow students.
- Actively listen during class, and participate in class activities and/or discussion.

Method of evaluation: Class Discussions, Exams, Journals, Research Paper, Welcome email and discussion.

Instructional Methodology: Audio, visual, demonstration, discussion, individual paper, and lecture.

Hours: Even though this class is online, I am still expecting you to participate on Canvas as much as you can. How much time you put into the class is how much you will get out of it. I highly encourage you to participate in all discussions – they are part of your end grade.

- **WELCOME EMAIL:** Email/messaging is an effective communication tool for this class. There is one welcome email required, detailed instructions are on Canvas.
- **WELCOME DISCUSSION:** Because our class discussions are the primary way of communicating – we have weekly discussions – there is a welcome discussion due the first week of class.

- **EXAMS:** There will be a total of **Three exams**, each worth **100 points**. The exams administered are based on text readings and lecture. There will be **no make-up exams**, only under extreme circumstances. Preliminary dates for each exam are provided in the schedule section of this syllabus.

Note: Importantly, these exams are not the only part of your grade. By attending discussions and weekly activities and applying your knowledge is a key element in the success of this class.

- **JOURNALS:** There will be **4** journals each worth 25 points, these papers are what you feel is important about psychology, current topics pertaining to your interests and how psychology plays a role in your life. The papers are minimum of two pages, typed, and double-spaced. The thought papers will add up to **100 points**.

Note: The fourth journal of this class will be an assessment. Detailed instructions are on Canvas.

- **CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE:** Class attendance and participation are expected and is worth **50 points**. Most classes will include discussions, and/ or homework designed to increase your understanding of the material. It is critical that students feel comfortable participating in a classroom environment, thus, common courtesy and mutual respect are expected. Weekly discussions make up these points.
- **RESEARCH PAPER:** Finally, there will be one research paper worth **100 points**. Students will carry out library research on a special topic of interest related to psychology. More specifically, focusing on a brain area. At the end of the course, students will have the option to present their work in seminar format for extra credit (PowerPoint).
- **Late work:** There is **no late work accepted. All work is due by the due date. If work is accepted late under extreme circumstances, it will be marked as half credit.**

Out of Class Assignments: The Department of Education policy states that one (1) credit hour is the amount of student work that reasonably approximates not less than one hour of class time and two (2) hours of out-of-class time per week over the span of a semester. WASC has adopted a similar requirement.

Course Grading Based on Course Objectives

Grading Criteria:

Adding all up, grades will be divided in six categories:

- Three exams = 300 points (100 points each)
- Four Journals = 100 points (25 points each)
- Class Participation and Attendance (Weekly Canvas Discussions) = 50 points
- Research Paper = 100 points
- Welcome Email Assignment 5 points
- Welcome Discussion 5 points

Total = 560 points (90% or higher = A, 80 to 89% = B, 70 to 79% = C, 60 to 69% — D, 59% or lower = F).

DEADLINES: There will be **no make-up exams or late papers**, only under extreme circumstances. It is expected as a college student to be responsible and organized. I will be open for discussion regarding missed deadlines; however, please make an extra effort to be on time with all class requirements.

Course Policies

Attendance:

- A student who fails to attend the first meeting of a class or does not complete the first mandatory activity of an online class will be dropped by the instructor as of the first official meeting of that class. Should readmission be desired, the student's status will be the same as that of any other student who desires to add a class. It is the student's responsibility to drop or officially withdraw from the class. See [General Catalog](#) for details.
- Regular attendance in all classes is expected of all students.
- A student whose continuous, unexcused absences exceed the number of hours the class is scheduled to meet per week may be dropped. For online courses, students who fail to complete required activities for two consecutive weeks may be considered to have excessive absences and may be dropped.
- Absences attributed to the representation of the college at officially approved events (conferences, contests, and field trips) will be counted as 'excused' absences.

Classroom Etiquette:

- **Electronic Devices:** Cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off and put away during class, unless otherwise directed by the instructor.
- **Food and Drink:** are prohibited in all classrooms while class is in session. Water bottles with lids/caps are the only exception. Additional restrictions will apply in labs. Please comply as directed by the instructor.
- **Disruptive Students:** Students who disrupt or interfere with a class may be sent out of the room and told to meet with the Campus Disciplinary Officer before returning to continue with coursework. Disciplinary procedures will be followed as outlined in the [General Catalog](#).
- **Children in the classroom:** Due to college rules and state laws, no one who is not enrolled in the class may attend, including children.

Online Netiquette:

- What is netiquette? Netiquette is internet manners, online etiquette, and digital etiquette all rolled into one word. Basically, netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online.
- Students are to comply with the following rules of netiquette...
 1. Identify yourself
 2. Include a subject line
 3. Avoid sarcasm
 4. Respect others' opinions and privacy
 5. Acknowledge and return messages promptly
 6. Copy with caution
 7. Do not spam or junk mail
 8. Be concise
 9. Use appropriate language
 10. Use appropriate emoticons (emotional icons) to help convey meaning
 11. Use appropriate intensifiers to help convey meaning [do not use ALL CAPS or multiple exclamation marks].

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty in the advancement of knowledge requires that all students and instructors respect the integrity of one another's work and recognize the important of acknowledging and safeguarding intellectual property.

There are many different forms of academic dishonesty. The following kinds of honesty violations and their definitions are not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, they are intended to serve as examples of unacceptable academic conduct.

- Plagiarism is taking and presenting as one's own the writings or ideas of others, without citing the source. You should understand the concept of plagiarism and keep it in mind when taking exams and preparing written materials. If you do not understand how to "cite a source" correctly, you must ask for help.
- Cheating is defined as fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in an academic assignment, or using or attempting to use materials, or assisting others in using materials that are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment in question.

Anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a zero (0) on the exam or assignment, and the instructor may report the incident to the Campus Disciplinary Officer, who may place related documentation in a file. Repeated acts of cheating may result in an F in the course and/or disciplinary action. Please refer to the [General Catalog](#) for more information on academic dishonesty or other misconduct. Acts of cheating include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) plagiarism; (b) copying or attempting to copy from others during an examination or on an assignment; (c) communicating test information with another person during an examination; (d) allowing others to do an assignment or portion of an assignment; (e) using a commercial term paper service.

Other Course Information

Imperial Valley College offers various services in support of student success. The following are some of the services available for students. Please speak to your instructor about additional services which may be available.

- CANVAS LMS. Canvas is Imperial Valley College's main Learning Management System. The Canvas Student Guides Site provides a variety of support available to students 24 hours per day. Additionally, a 24/7 Canvas Support Hotline is available for students to use 877-893-9853.
- Learning Services. There are several learning labs on campus to assist students through the use of computers and tutors. Please consult your [Campus Map](#) for the [Math Lab](#); [Reading, Writing & Language Labs](#); and the [Study Skills Center](#).
- Library Services. There is more to our library than just books. You have access to tutors in the [Study Skills Center](#), study rooms for small groups, and online access to a wealth of resources.

Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS)

Any student with a documented disability who may need educational accommodations should notify the instructor or the [Disabled Student Programs and Services](#) (DSP&S) office as soon as possible. The DSP&S office is located in Building 2100, telephone 760-355-6313. Please contact them if you feel you need to be evaluated for educational accommodations.

Student Counseling and Health Services

Students have counseling and health services available, provided by the pre-paid Student Health Fee.



- **[Student Health Center](#)**. A Student Health Nurse is available on campus. In addition, Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District and El Centro Regional Center provide basic health services for students, such as first aid and care for minor illnesses. Contact the IVC **[Student Health Center](#)** at 760-355-6128 in Room 1536 for more information.
- **[Mental Health Counseling Services](#)**. Short-term individual, couples, family, and group therapy are provided to currently enrolled students. Contact the IVC **[Mental Health Counseling Services](#)** at 760-355-6310 in Room 1536 for more information.

Veteran' Center

The mission of IVC Military and Veteran Success Center is to provide a holistic approach to serving military/veteran students on three key areas: 1) Academics, 2) Health and Wellness, and 3) Camaraderie; to serve as a central hub that connects military/ veteran students, as well as their families, to campus and community resources. Their goal is to ensure a seamless transition from military to civilian life. The Center is located in Building 600 (Office 624), telephone 760-355-6141.

Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS)

The Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS) offers services such as priority registration, personal/academic counseling, tutoring, book vouchers, and community referrals to qualifying low-income students. EOPS is composed of a group of professionals ready to assist you with the resolution of both academic and personal issues. Our staff is set up to understand the problems of our culturally diverse population and strives to meet student needs that are as diverse as our student population.

Also, under the umbrella of EOPS our CARE (Cooperative Agency Resources for Education) Program for single parents is specifically designed to provide support services and assist with the resolution of issues that are particular to this population. Students that are single parents receiving TANF/Cash Aid assistance may qualify for our CARE program, for additional information on CARE please contact Lourdes Mercado, 760-355- 6448, lourdes.mercado@imperial.edu.

EOPS provides additional support and services that may identify with one of the following experiences:

- Current and former foster youth students that were in the foster care system at any point in their lives
- Students experiencing homelessness
- Formerly incarcerated students

To apply for EOPS and for additional information on EOPS services, please contact Alexis Ayala, 760-355-5713, alexis.ayala@imperial.edu.

Student Equity Program

•The Student Equity Program strives to improve Imperial Valley College's success outcomes, particularly for students who have been historically underrepresented and underserved. The college identifies strategies to monitor and address equity issues, making efforts to mitigate any disproportionate impact on student success and achievement. Our institutional data provides insight surrounding student populations who historically, are

not fully represented. Student Equity addresses disparities and/or disproportionate impact in student success across disaggregated student equity groups including gender, ethnicity, disability status, financial need, Veterans, foster youth, homelessness, and formerly incarcerated students. The Student Equity Program provides direct supportive services to empower students experiencing insecurities related to food, housing, transportation, textbooks, and shower access. We recognize that students who struggle meeting their basic needs are also at an academic and economic disadvantage, creating barriers to academic success and wellness. We strive to remove barriers that affect IVC students' access to education, degree and certificate completion, successful completion of developmental math and English courses, and the ability to transfer to a university. Contact: 760.355.5736 or 760.355.5733 Building 100.

- The Student Equity Program also houses IVC's Homeless Liaison, who provides direct services, campus, and community referrals to students experiencing homelessness as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act. Contact: 760.355.5736 Building 100.

Students Rights and Responsibility

Students have the right to experience a positive learning environment and to due process of law. For more information regarding student rights and responsibilities, please refer to the IVC [General Catalog](#).

Information Literacy

Imperial Valley College is dedicated to helping students skillfully discover, evaluate, and use information from all sources. The IVC [Library Department](#) provides numerous [Information Literacy Tutorials](#) to assist students in this endeavor.

IVC Student Resources

IVC wants you to be successful in all aspects of your education. For help, resources, services, and an explanation of policies, visit <http://www.imperial.edu/studentresources> or click the heart icon in Canvas.

Anticipated Class Schedule/Calendar

Date or Week	Activity and or Topic	Pages/Due Dates/Tests
Week 1: 1/5 – 1/11	<p>Introduction to the class</p> <p>Chapter 1: Nerve Cells and Nerve Impulses</p> <p>Chapter 2: Synapses</p>	<p>Welcome Email and Welcome discussion due by 1/7/26</p> <p>Journal #1 Due By 1/11/26</p> <p><i>Post study Guide on 1/7/25</i></p> <p>Discussions for Chapter 1 and 2 due by 1/11/26</p>
Week 2: 1/12 – 1/18	<p>Chapter 3: Anatomy and Research Methods</p> <p>Chapter 4: Genetics, Evolution, Development, and Plasticity</p> <p>Chapter 5: Vision</p> <p>Exam 1 on Chapters 1-5</p>	<p>Journal #2 Due By 1/18</p> <p>Discussion for Chapter 3 due 1/14</p> <p>Discussion for Chapter 4 due 1/16</p> <p>Discussion for Chapter 5 due 1/18</p> <p><i>Post study guide for Exam 2 on 1/12</i></p> <p><u>Exam 1 open 1/15 – 1/20</u></p>
Week 3: 1/20 – 1/25	<p>Chapter 6: Other Sensory Systems</p> <p>Chapter 7: Movement</p> <p>Chapter 8: Wakefulness and Sleep</p> <p><i>No Class 1/19 MLK Jr. Day</i></p>	<p>Discussion for Chapter 6 due by 1/21</p> <p>Discussion for Chapter 7 due 1/23</p> <p>Discussion for Chapter 8 due 1/25</p> <p>Journal # 3 due by 1/25</p>
Week 4: 1/26 – 2/1	<p>Chapter 9: Internal Regulation</p> <p>Chapter 10: Reproductive Behaviors</p> <p>Exam 2 on Chapters 6-10</p> <p>Chapter 11: Emotional Behaviors</p>	<p>Discussion for Chapter 9 due 1/28</p> <p>Discussion for Chapter 10 due 1/30</p> <p><u>Exam 2 open 1/25 – 1/31</u></p> <p>Discussion for Chapter 11 due by 2/1</p> <p>Journal #4 due by 2/1</p>

		<i>Post final study guide on 1/26</i>
Week 5: 2/2 – 2/4	<p>Chapter 12: Learning, Memory, and Intelligence</p> <p>Chapter 13: Cognitive Functions</p> <p>Chapter 14: Psychological Disorders</p> <p>Final Exam on Chapters 11-14</p>	<p>Final Paper due 2/4/26</p> <p><u>Final Exam (Exam 3) open 2/1 – 2/4/25</u></p> <p>Discussions for Chapters 12, 13 & 14 due by 2/4</p>

This may change in case of emergency.

*****Subject to change without prior notice*****