The human brain has evolved to be part of human society. See how your brain is “wired for society”!

Enroll in MCB 170: Society and the Brain

The goal of this course, taught by Associate Professor Thomas J. Anastasio, is to introduce students to a broad range of neurobiological facts and place them in the exciting context of brain-society interactions. Along the way, students will see that they are, literally, by the biology of their own brains, part of something larger than themselves.
MCB 170: Society and the Brain
Fulfills GedEd requirement. Offered every fall semester.

Topics by week
1. Wired for Society
   *The human brain has evolved to participate in social interactions.*
2. Its Nice to be Nice
   *Evolution may have changed our brain chemistry to make us more social.*
3. In Praise of Aggression
   *Aggressiveness on the part of some individuals may benefit the whole group.*
4. Depression is Depressing
   *Social interactions are the primary determinant of mood in normal humans.*
5. Ties that Bind
   *Certain neurohormones partly mediate bonding between humans.*
6. Social Control of Sexuality
   *Sexual orientation may be partly determined by brain-society interactions.*
7. The Developing Brain
   *Social environment affects brain development as much as physical environment.*
8. In-groups and Out-groups
   *Social influence on frontal cortex activity can reduce inter-group prejudice.*
9. Fairness and Cooperation
   *Many brain regions are active during economic decisions and exchanges.*
10. The Power of Prayer
    *Prayer can increase social capital, which in turn can actually improve our health.*
11. God and the Brain
    *Many brain regions are associated with religious behavior and thoughts of God.*
12. The Aging Brain
    *Social interaction can benefit the aging brain both physiologically and psychologically.*
13. Collective Recollection
    *Memory may be similar in collectives as in individuals, but collectives can endure.*
14. Happiness and the Brain
    *Investing in social capital can pay you back a dividend of happiness.*

Course materials
All class notes will be available online. All quizzes will be administered online. An article from the literature that relates to the lecture topic will be available each week via download.

Contact hours
Two lecture hours will be offered each week. The third hour is reserved for the weekly quiz and an online student blog session. The instructor will also be available for a regular, weekly office hour.

Expected Work, Examinations, and Grading
Students are expected to attend lectures, study their class notes, and read the assigned readings. Students take a 30 minute exam each week plus a blog session (points are given for blog entries). The last exam is the final, but it is just the 30 minute exam plus blog for the last week. Each exam/blog including the final is worth 10% of the course grade. Grades are based on the best 10 of 14 exam/blog scores. Students can skip up to four exam/blogs with no penalty, but make-ups will not be offered.
Course Policy and Procedure

- Class meets each Monday and Wednesday from 2pm to 2:50pm
- Class is held in room 151 Everitt Lab (just northwest of the Illini Union)
- CLASS ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED (YOU HAVE TO COME TO CLASS!)
- Class does NOT meet on Friday (but you do have a quiz/blog on Friday)

- An online QUIZ and an interactive BLOG are offered each Friday (quiz/blog)
- Each quiz has 14 multiple-choice questions
- Each correct answer is worth 1 point on the quiz
- Each blog has 2 parts: an opinion (post) and a response
- The blog post is the student’s opinion on a discussion item provided by the instructor
- The blog response is the student’s opinion on another student’s post
- A blog post must be at least 50 words long and a blog response must be at least 50 words long
- A blog post is worth 3 points, and a blog response is worth another 3 points
- A BLOG POST OR BLOG RESPONSE LESS THAN 50 WORDS IS WORTH ZERO
- The total possible score on a quiz/blog is 20 (14 quiz + 3 blog post + 3 blog response)
- Quiz and blog each week are scored together, that means …
- You cannot combine scores from a quiz on one week with a blog on another week
- Access to the online quiz/blog is provided each Friday from 9am until 5pm
- You have 30 minutes to complete the quiz, timed from the moment you start the quiz
- You have as much time as you want for your blog post and response between 9am and 5pm
- The online quiz/blog can be taken from any computer with UIUC Active Directory (AD) access
- Students are responsible for their connection to UIUC Active Directory
- You take your quiz/blogs on a website called LON-CAPA (see next section)

- Course materials include: PowerPoints, assigned readings, quiz questions, and blog items
- There is no required textbook
- All course materials are available online at: lon-capa.uiuc.edu
- YOU ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE ACCESS TO LON-CAPA
- You can logon to lon-capa using your UIUC Net ID and AD password
- YOU TAKE YOUR QUIZ/BLOGS ON LON-CAPA
- MAKE SURE YOU CAN LOGON TO LON-CAPA ON THE FIRST CLASS DAY
- Contact Alejandra Stenger (astenger@illinois.edu, 217-244-7241) for ALL lon-capa problems
- CONTACT ALEJANDRA STENGER FOR ALL LON-CAPA PROBLEMS (see above)
- Start your quiz/blog EARLY on Friday; contact Alejandra RIGHT AWAY with any problems

- The course is organized around 14 modules, one for each week of the semester
- A quiz/blog is offered every week (on Friday)
- Your combined quiz/blog score should be available on the Tuesday following the quiz/blog
- YOUR GRADE IS BASED ON YOUR BEST 10 OF 14 QUIZ/BLOG SCORES
- You can decide if, for whatever reason, you want to skip a quiz/blog, however …
- THERE ARE NO MAKE UPS!
- You can skip 4 of 14 quiz/blogs with no penalty; skipping more than 4 will reduce your grade
- SKIPPING MORE THAN 4 QUIZ/BLOGS WILL REDUCE YOUR GRADE
Grading

- Your grade will be based entirely on your best 10 of 14 quiz/blog scores
- Grades are computed from the total of your scores on your best 10 of 14 quiz/blogs
- Highest possible total score is 200 (20 points per quiz/blog times 10 best quiz/blogs)
- Grades are set on a scale of 0 to 1000
- Your total score is multiplied by 5 to place it within the scale of 0 to 1000
- (note that the perfect total score of 200 equals 1000 when multiplied by 5)
- Your total score, whatever it is, will be multiplied by 5 to get your score out of 1000
- Then your letter grade will be read off from the MCB Freshman Scale as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total score out of 1000</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>966-1000</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>933-965</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>900-932</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>866-899</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>833-865</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>766-799</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>566-599</td>
<td>F+</td>
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