NEUROSCIENCE (NSCI)

NSCI 160a / PSYC 160a, The Human Brain    Robb Rutledge
Introduction to the neural bases of human psychological function, including social, cognitive, and affective processing. Preparation for more advanced courses in cognitive and social neuroscience. Topics include memory, reward processing, neuroeconomics, individual differences, emotion, social inferences, and clinical disorders. Neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, and neuropharmacology are also introduced.  sc

* NSCI 240a / PSYC 230a, Research Methods in Human Neuroscience    Gregory McCarthy
Primary focus on structural, functional, and diffusion magnetic resonance imaging, with a secondary emphasis upon brain stimulation, electroencephalography, and evoked potentials. Students learn the fundamentals of each method and the experimental designs for which they are most applicable. Prerequisites: PSYC 160/NSCI 160 and a course in statistics, or permission of instructor.  sc

* NSCI 260a / PSYC 260a, Research Methods in Psychopathology: Psychotic Disorders    Tyrone Cannon
Methods of research in psychopathology. Focus on longitudinal designs, high-risk sampling approaches, prediction of outcomes, and modeling change over time. Students design and perform analyses of clinical, cognitive, genetic, neuroimaging and other kinds of measures as predictors of psychosis and related outcomes, using existing datasets supplied by the instructor.  so

* NSCI 280a / S&DS 280a, Neural Data Analysis    Ethan Meyers
We discuss data analysis methods that are used in the neuroscience community. Methods include classical descriptive and inferential statistics, point process models, mutual information measures, machine learning (neural decoding) analyses, dimensionality reduction methods, and representational similarity analyses. Each week we read a research paper that uses one of these methods, and we replicate these analyses using the R or Python programming language. Emphasis is on analyzing neural spiking data, although we also discuss other imaging modalities such as magneto/electro-encephalography (EEG/MEG), two-photon imaging, and possibility functional magnetic resonance imaging data (fMRI). Data we analyze includes smaller datasets, such as single neuron recordings from songbird vocal motor system, as well as larger data sets, such as the Allen Brain observatory’s simultaneous recordings from the mouse visual system. Prerequisite: S&DS 230. Background in neuroscience is recommended but not required (e.g., it would be useful to have taken at the level of NSCI 160).

NSCI 320a / MCDB 320a, Neurobiology    Haig Keshishian and Paul Forscher
The excitability of the nerve cell membrane as a starting point for the study of molecular, cellular, and systems-level mechanisms underlying the generation and control of behavior. At least 1 semester of college chemistry is strongly recommended.  sc 0 Course cr

NSCI 321La / MCDB 321La, Laboratory for Neurobiology    Haig Keshishian
Introduction to the neurosciences. Projects include the study of neuronal excitability, sensory transduction, CNS function, synaptic physiology, and neuroanatomy. Concurrently with or after MCDB 320.  sc ½ Course cr
Neuroscience (NSCI)

NSCI 324a / BENG 230a / MB&B 330a / MCDB 330a, Modeling Biological Systems I
Thierry Emonet

Biological systems make sophisticated decisions at many levels. This course explores the molecular and computational underpinnings of how these decisions are made, with a focus on modeling static and dynamic processes in example biological systems. This course is aimed at biology students and teaches the analytic and computational methods needed to model genetic networks and protein signaling pathways. Students present and discuss original papers in class. They learn to model using MatLab in a series of in-class hackathons that illustrate the biological examples discussed in the lectures. Biological systems and processes that are modeled include: (i) gene expression, including the kinetics of RNA and protein synthesis and degradation; (ii) activators and repressors; (iii) the lysogeny/lysis switch of lambda phage; (iv) network motifs and how they shape response dynamics; (v) cell signaling, MAP kinase networks and cell fate decisions; and (vi) noise in gene expression. Prerequisites: MATH 115 or 116. BIOL 101-104, or with permission of instructors. This course also benefits students who have taken more advanced biology courses (e.g. MCDB 200, MCDB 310, MB&B 300/301). QR, SC

NSCI 325b / BENG 465b / MB&B 361b / MCDB 361b, Modeling Biological Systems II
Joe Howard

Advanced topics related to dynamical processes in biological systems. Processes by which cells compute, count, tell time, oscillate, and generate spatial patterns. Time-dependent dynamics in regulatory, signal-transduction, and neuronal networks; fluctuations, growth, and form. Comparisons between models and experimental data. Dynamical models applied to neurons, neural systems, and cellular biophysical processes. Use of MATLAB to create models. Prerequisite: MCDB 330 or equivalent, or a 200-level biology course, or with permission of instructor. QR

NSCI 329a / MCDB 329a, Sensory Neuroscience Through Illusions
Damon Clark and Michael O’Donnell

Animals use sensory systems to obtain and process information about the environment around them. Sensory illusions occur when our sensory systems provide us with surprising or unexpected percepts of the world. The goal of this course is to introduce students to sensory neuroscience at the levels of sensor physiology and of the neural circuits that process information from sensors. The course is centered around sensory illusions, which are special cases of sensory processing that can be especially illustrative, as well as delightful. These special cases are used to learn about the general principles that organize sensation across modalities and species. Prerequisites: BIOL 101-104; NSCI 160 or NSCI 320 or permission of instructor. SC

NSCI 355a / PSYC 303a, Social Neuroscience
Stephanie Lazzaro

Exploration of the psychological and neural mechanisms that enable the formation, maintenance, and dissolution of social relationships. Topics include the neuroscience of how we form impressions and decide whether to instigate relationships with others; how we build relationships through trust, cooperation, attachment, conflict, and reconciliation; and group-level processes including intergroup bias, moral judgment, and decision making. Prerequisite: PSYC 110 or permission of instructor. SC

NSCI 361a / CGSC 274a / PSYC 261a, Algorithms of the Mind
Ilker Yildirim

This course introduces computational theories of psychological processes, with a pedagogical focus on perception and high-level cognition. Each week students learn
about new computational methods grounded in neurocognitive phenomena. Lectures introduce these topics conceptually; lab sections provide hands-on instruction with programming assignments and review of mathematical concepts. Lectures cover a range of computational methods sampling across the fields of computational statistics, artificial intelligence and machine learning, including probabilistic programming, neural networks, and differentiable programming. Students must have a programming background, ideally in a high-level programming language such as Python, Julia or Matlab. Students must also have college-level calculus. The course will substantially use Julia and Python.

* NSCI 449a / PSYC 449a, Neuroscience of Social Interaction  
Steve Chang
This seminar covers influential studies that inform how the brain enables complex social interactions from the perspectives of neural mechanisms. Students thoroughly read selected original research papers in the field of social neuroscience across several animal species and multiple modern neuroscience methodologies. In class, the instructor and students work together to discuss these studies in depth. Focused topics include neural mechanisms behind brain-to-brain coupling, empathy, prosocial decision-making, oxytocin effects, and social dysfunction. Prerequisite: PSYC 160 or permission from the instructor.

* NSCI 470a and NSCI 471b, Independent Research  
Damon Clark and Steve Chang
Research project under faculty supervision taken Pass/Fail; does not count toward the major, but does count toward graduation requirements. Students are expected to spend approximately ten hours per week in the laboratory. A final research report and/or presentation is required by end of term. Students who take this course more than once must reapply each term. To register, students must submit a form and written plan of study with bibliography, approved by the faculty research adviser and DUS, by the end of the first week of class. More detailed guidelines and forms can be obtained from http://neuroscience.yale.edu.

* NSCI 480a and NSCI 481b, Senior Non-empirical Research  
Damon Clark and Steve Chang
Research survey under faculty supervision fulfills the senior requirement for the B.A. degree and awards a letter grade. For NSCI seniors only (and second term juniors with DUS permission). Students are expected to conduct a literature review, to complete written assignments, and to present their research once in either the fall or spring term. Students are encouraged to pursue the same research project for two terms. The final research paper is due in the hands of the sponsoring faculty member, with a copy submitted to the department, by the stated deadline near the end of the term. To register, students submit a form and written plan of study with bibliography, approved by the faculty research adviser and DUS, by the end of the first week of classes. More detailed guidelines and forms can be obtained from http://neuroscience.yale.edu.

* NSCI 490a and NSCI 491b, Senior Empirical Research  
Damon Clark and Steve Chang
Laboratory or independent empirical research project under faculty supervision to fulfill the senior requirement for the B.S. degree. For NSCI seniors only (and second term juniors with DUS permission); this course awards a letter grade. Students are expected to spend at least ten hours per week in the laboratory, to complete written assignments, and to present their research once in either the fall or the spring term. Written assignments include a short research proposal summary due at the
beginning of the term and a full research report due at the end of the term. Students are encouraged to pursue the same research project for two terms, in which case, the first term research report and the second term proposal summary may be combined into a full research proposal due at the end of the first term. Final papers are due by the stated deadline. Students should reserve a research laboratory during the term preceding the research. To register, students must submit a form and written plan of study with bibliography, approved by the faculty research adviser and DUS, by the end of the first week of classes. More detailed guidelines and forms can be obtained from http://neuroscience.yale.edu.