

# Neuroscience Laboratory (NEU 311L) Syllabus

Spring 2023 – IN-PERSON ONLY – Sections 3 and 4

268 Giltner Hall

## Contact Information

### Primary Course Instructor

**Dr. Byron Gipson**      [gipsonby@msu.edu](mailto:gipsonby@msu.edu)

Dr. Gipson instructs sections 3 and 4 of the courses this fall.

Office hours will take place on Zoom: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/97459185670>

Meeting ID: 940 9059 9656      Passcode: NEU311L

**Office Hours: Monday 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM**  
**Wednesday 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM**

You may also schedule an appointment with me at a different time. **Please schedule appointments outside of standing Zoom hours at least 24 hours in advance.**

### Assistant Instructor

Assistant instructors are full time employees of MSU. They are graduates of the Neuroscience Program and have extensive knowledge of the course. They assess knowledge and provide guidance and feedback on assignments. **They are your primary contact for questions about assignments and grades.** Students find the one-on-one interactions with their assistant instructors valuable, and so you are encouraged to take advantage of their office hours.

You may also schedule an appointment with them at a different time. **Please schedule appointments outside of standing Zoom hours at least 24 hours in advance.**

Offered on Zoom only: <https://msu.zoom.us/s/95025701512>

Meeting ID: 950 2570 1512      Passcode: NEU311L

**Rachel Jansen (Sections 3, 4, 5, 6)**      (they/she)      [jansenr1@msu.edu](mailto:jansenr1@msu.edu)

**Office hours: Tuesday 8:45 AM – 9:45 AM**  
**Wednesday 8:45 AM – 9:45 AM**

**Abby Schuch (Sections 1 & 2)**      (she/her)      [schuchab@msu.edu](mailto:schuchab@msu.edu)

**Office hours: Monday 8:45 AM – 9:45 AM**

### Lab Technician

The lab technician is a graduate of the Neuroscience Program. They assist students by providing technical support, setting up laboratory exercises, creating some content, training members of the teaching team, and checking worksheets and skills assessments.

**Sydney Miller**      (they/she)      [mill3163@msu.edu](mailto:mill3163@msu.edu)

### Learning Assistants (LAs)

The learning assistants successfully completed NEU311L. They assist students during virtual worksheet help hours, verify completeness of submitted worksheets, occasionally provide feedback on worksheets, monitor discussion boards, screen TurnItIn reports, and verify that peer reviews are of acceptable quality. They are great resources for advice about strategies for success in NEU311L. You can contact any LA for help room hours.

Help room hours:

**Libby Hill (sections 3 and 4)**      (she/her)

[hilleli6@msu.edu](mailto:hilleli6@msu.edu)

**Tuesdays 4:30 PM -6:30 PM**

**Elena Billard (sections 1, 2, 5 and 6)**      (she/her)

[billardk@msu.edu](mailto:billardk@msu.edu)

**Wednesdays 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM**

**Jaclyn Melasi (sections 3 and 4)**      (she/her)

[melasija@msu.edu](mailto:melasija@msu.edu)

**Mondays 5:00 PM -7:00 PM**

## Communication

### Email

Please reserve email communication for personal matters and urgent technical issues only. These include discussions about grades, VISAs, circumstances that hinder your performance in class, and missing or broken links in D2L and Eli Review.

## Course Description

Overview of neuroscience research methodology, including experimental design, data analysis, and presentation of results. Topics include neurophysiological, anatomical, and behavioral investigations in crayfish, fruit flies, and humans. This is a writing-intensive course. Two credits.

## Learning Goals

### Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience Core Competencies

Members of the professional organization "Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience" identified a set of competencies that are important for individuals pursuing an undergraduate neuroscience degree to attain. Of these competencies, NEU311L focuses on the following:

- **Critical/integrative thinking**
  - Read & analyze primary research papers
  - Critique & develop experimental designs and methodology
  - Integrate findings from diverse fields to address a research question or develop a testable hypothesis
- **Basic neuroscience knowledge**
  - Cellular & molecular function of neurons (including how neurons communicate)
  - Basic neuroanatomy
  - Sensory & motor systems
- **Scientific inquiry/research skills**
  - Develop a hypothesis & design experiments to test this hypothesis
  - Collect, analyze, and interpret data
- **Independent, self-motivated thinking**
  - Find answers to questions that may not be specifically addressed in a course
  - Overcome barriers/impediments to learning/research
- **Communication skills**
  - Present information orally in an organized and understandable manner
  - Communicate scientific information in written format for scientific publication
  - Communicate scientific information to the lay public
- **Quantitative skills**
  - Analyze & interpret quantitative information, including graphs and statistics
  - Quantitatively manipulate data & information
  - Represent information in a quantitative format

From: Kerchner M, Hardwick JC, and Thornton JE. (2012) Identifying and Using 'Core Competencies' to Help Design and Assess Undergraduate Neuroscience Curricula. JUNE, 11:A27-A37.

## Prerequisites

((NEU 301 or concurrently) and completion of Tier I writing requirement) and (STT 201 or STT 231 or STT 421) and (BS 171 or BS 191H or LB 145). If a student was able to enroll without meeting these requirements, they will be dropped from the course. If you find that you are not proficient in skills and concepts that are needed for you to succeed in this course, please express your concerns to an instructor. They will be happy to refer you to outside resources (from the writing center, tutors, peers, reputable internet resources, readings, etc) in order to become fully prepared.

## Recommended Background

PSY 101

## Administrative Drop for Non-Attendance

Students who do not submit the first worksheet assignment within one week of the deadline will be dropped from the course.

## Class Structure

**IMPORTANT!!! STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO FOLLOW THE STANDARD PRACTICES THAT ARE DESCRIBED IN THE SLIDES, VIDEOS, AND DOCUMENTS ON D2L, AS WELL AS WITHIN ASSIGNMENTS. MANY OF THESE GUIDELINES ARE HIGHLIGHTED BELOW, BUT THESE OTHER DOCUMENTS AND VIDEOS GO INTO GREATER DETAIL AND PROVIDE SOME EXAMPLES FOR CERTAIN POINTS. THUS, YOU SHOULD FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THOSE DOCUMENTS AND REFER TO THEM REGULARLY THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER.**

## Desire2Learn (D2L) & Eli Review

Course content, quizzes, some worksheet components, some homework submissions, grading, and course announcements are handled by the [D2L course site](#). Please set up your D2L profile and your notifications (email, mobile) so that you receive announcements in a timely manner. You are responsible for checking to make sure that your grades for assignments have been entered correctly and that your quiz responses have been logged. You are required to participate in classroom discussions and peer review of homework assignments using the Eli Review website. All students are required to set up an Eli Review account. Instructions to do so will be provided later in the semester.

All assignments must be uploaded to the proper folder on D2L or Eli Review, otherwise you may be subject to the penalties described later in the syllabus. You are responsible for confirming that everything that you submit to D2L and Eli Review is successfully posted to the site AND that all files are the correct versions and are not corrupted BY THE SPECIFIED DUE DATE AND TIME ON THE SCHEDULE. Otherwise, you will not receive credit for the assignment.

**Students are not to send files to one another to review.** If you upload a file that is identical or nearly identical to that of another student (even if it is by accident), both students will receive an unsatisfactory grade for that assignment and will be issued an academic dishonesty report.

**You are advised to take quizzes and upload documents at least one hour prior to the time they are due** to allow time for D2L/Eli Review to process the submissions. You are also advised to read your peer and instructor feedback on each assignment soon after it is posted so that you may improve on future assignments. Assignments must be submitted in the format specified. No credit will be given for files submitted in other formats, corrupted files, or incorrect versions of a file (such as an earlier version or the incorrect assignment).

## Email Correspondence

Emails may be sent directly to your MSU account or via D2L. You are required to utilize email communication for correspondence to and from the course instructors outside of class. Make it a habit to check for emails from this class at least once every weekday. You should set up D2L emails and MSU emails to forward to the email address that you use most often. Check your junk mail as well to make sure you don't miss anything. You should enable mobile notifications if you find it difficult to remember to check your email. Please do not allow your MSU email inbox to become full and reject incoming mail.

Please allow 24 hours for a response from the course instructors to an email sent Monday-Thursday and 48 hours for a response to an email sent Friday-Sunday. You are advised to complete your assignments soon after they are assigned so that you have time to contact your course instructors with any questions you may have, receive their response, and make any necessary adjustments. Avoid waiting until the night before the assignment is due to contact them with questions, since they may not see your email in time.

Many students have claimed that they wrote an email and believed it was sent, only to see later that it was still in their outbox. Thus, make it a habit to confirm that any email that you intend to send is actually sent (ie, is transferred from your outbox to your sent mail folder) and use read receipts. Excuses related to unsent emails or emails sent to the wrong address are unacceptable.

Email communication must follow professional etiquette standards. They should not be pleading, demanding, or aggressive in tone. Those that do not meet these standards will receive a response requesting modification prior to receiving a response. Email responses from students are expected to be received within 48 hours.

## Course Materials

All lab protocols, assignments, readings, and background information will be provided on D2L, and Eli Review. You will be expected to look up and review certain topics for NEU311L, so your textbooks and notes from NEU301/302 and your statistics class will be very helpful for NEU311L. Here are some recommended websites and readings:

[Foundations of Neuroscience, Open Edition](#)

[Designing Neuroscience Experiments](#)

[FREE Brain Facts](#)

[MSU link to PubMed](#)

[FREE Data Science Textbook](#)

[FREE Online Stat Book](#)

## Computer/Internet/Software Requirements

You are required to have access to a laptop computer (not a tablet like an iPad and not a notebook-style computer like a Chromebook) with an up-to-date operating system, download capabilities, and reliable internet access. Instructions are provided for the Windows operating system. Students must use the FREE Office 365 Suite through MSU and to download the desktop versions to their computers, since the web versions do not have all of the features needed for this course. Using alternatives (like Google Docs and open source programs) and then converting to these file types is not advised. You may need to download LabChart Reader (free) to your computer. If you experience an issue regarding your access to either a working computer or the internet, you need to email Dr. Gipson within 24 hours of the issue. These issues will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

## Technical Assistance

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem you may:

- Visit the [MSU Tech Support Help Site](#)
- Visit the [Desire2Learn Help Site](#)
- Visit the [Eli Review Help Site](#)
- Call the MSU IT Service Desk at (517) 432-6200, (844) 678-6200, or e-mail at [ithelp@msu.edu](mailto:ithelp@msu.edu)

## Tier II Writing Requirement

An important part of one's professional development is to practice writing in their discipline and thus is required by MSU. NEU311L is the only neuroscience course to fulfill this requirement and does so by providing opportunities to engage in both formal and informal writing.

You will have some opportunities to read samples of writing from other students and offer suggestions for improvement. Writers will identify the peer suggestions that are most valuable (another important skill) and compose a revision plan that incorporates those suggestions. Instructors will provide coaching based on questions that writers submit within those revision plans, and then writers have the option to revise their assignments accordingly.

Please note that some graduate and professional skills have specific criteria to meet their upper-level writing criteria, and you are advised to contact them before applying to see if NEU311L meets their criteria or not. I am happy to provide further information for those schools if needed, but they may require applicants to take a different course in order to be considered for their program.

## Course Schedule

A tentative course schedule for your section is provided on D2L. An accessible version of the schedule in the forms of checklists are also provided on D2L.

Students are responsible for carefully consulting the schedule regularly, watching the videos and completing the assigned readings and the assignments by their specified dates and times.

If the schedule needs to be modified due to unforeseen circumstances, students will be alerted of changes via email to their MSU account or as a D2L announcement in a timely manner.

## Grading

We have found that hyper-focusing on points can have a detrimental impact on some students. We wish to promote a focus on meeting set learning standards rather than playing a game of winning and negotiating points. Thus, final grades will be determined by submitting satisfactory, on-time submissions of homework assignments and weekly skills

assessments. Submissions will be tracked in D2L. You should check the D2L gradebook at least once per week and/or whenever a new entry has been posted. The grading scheme is described thoroughly below.

Instructors are not able to predict the grade that each student will earn in this class prior to the completion of all assignments. Those individuals who follow instructions carefully, fully engage with the material, and turn in complete assignments on time tend to do well in this course. Those individuals who have trouble with following directions, miss deadlines, and submit sloppy work do not tend to do well. If you start to struggle due to circumstances outside of your control, the best advice we can give is to communicate them to the instructors early and often.

In order to earn a particular final grade level, a student must meet the minimum number of satisfactory, on-time submissions requirements in both categories listed in the final grading table below. See the sections that follow the table for definitions of “satisfactory” for each category.

Final Grade	Quizzes (7 total)	Homework (9 total)	Skills Assessments (12 total)
4	4	8	11
3.5	4	7	11
3	4	7	10
2.5	4	6	10
2	4	6	9
1.5	4	5	9
1	4	5	8

**Each missed class/worksheet that is not made up will result in a 0.5 point grade deduction to your final grade in the course. You may only make up a worksheet from an excused absence. You must make up the worksheet within one week to receive credit. (See list of excused absences and required documentation in syllabus)**

For example, a student who has 6 satisfactory homework submissions, 12 satisfactory skills assessments, and 6 satisfactory quizzes will earn a final grade of 2.5 (assuming that everything was submitted on time). They did not complete enough satisfactory homework assignments to earn a higher grade. Even though they submitted more than the minimum required for the other category, that does not entitle them to a higher grade.

- **In order to earn a final grade of 4.0**, a student must submit 4 satisfactory quizzes, 8 satisfactory homework submissions and 11 satisfactory skills assessments on time.
- **In order to earn a final grade of 3.5**, a student must submit at least 4 satisfactory quizzes, 7 satisfactory homework submissions and 11 satisfactory skills assessments on time.
- **In order to earn a final grade of 3.0**, a student must submit at least 4 satisfactory quizzes, 7 satisfactory homework submissions and 10 satisfactory skills assessments on time.
- **In order to earn a final grade of 2.5**, a student must submit at least 4 satisfactory quizzes, 6 satisfactory homework submissions and 10 satisfactory skills assessments on time.
- **In order to earn a final grade of 2.0**, a student must submit at least 4 satisfactory quizzes, 6 satisfactory homework submissions and 9 satisfactory skills assessments on time.
- **In order to earn a final grade of 1.5**, a student must submit at least 4 satisfactory quizzes, 5 satisfactory homework submissions and 9 satisfactory skills assessments on time.
- **In order to earn a final grade of 1.0**, a student must submit at least 4 satisfactory quizzes, 5 satisfactory homework submissions and 8 satisfactory skills assessments on time.

#### **Quizzes (Total number = 7)**

Videos of the background information, as well as occasional manuscripts, are posted to D2L for students to study prior to the actual experiment/exercise videos + worksheet for each weekly module. Allow at least one hour per week to review this background material, take notes, and take the associated quiz on D2L. Devoting attention to these videos and testing yourself with the quizzes is crucial for success in this class. You must earn at least 80% (that is, get four out of five questions correct all eight quizzes (by their deadlines) to earn a ‘satisfactory grade’.

See the grading table for the number of satisfactory quizzes required to pass the course. The weekly deadline for quizzes is **11:59 PM the day prior to your scheduled class**.

You will get three attempts to take each multiple-choice quiz, and only the highest score of those attempts will be counted. It is recommended that you watch the videos and take the quiz in the 1-2 day period prior to attending class, otherwise you may find that you forget the background material. If you choose to watch the videos and take the quiz earlier than that, be sure to take thorough notes and review them just prior to that week's exercise. However, don't wait until the last minute to take the quiz due to the possibility of unanticipated events preventing you from completing the quiz on time. Closed captions are available for every video, and many students choose to turn them on while they watch the videos. You may choose to watch the videos at a slower or faster speed.

In addition to the background videos, there may be one or more pre-lab videos (not related to the quiz) to watch prior to class. Because we have very limited time in class, it may be necessary for us to provide you with some additional information prior to class so that we may use our time together most efficiently.

### **Worksheets (Total number = 12)**

Completion of the worksheet associated with the in-class experiment/exercise every week is necessary to succeed in this class. Worksheets must be completed in person and shown to an instructor by the end of the associated class. If you are unable to attend class due to an excusable reason, then you should contact your Course coordinator to arrange to make up the missed class. **Each missed class/worksheet that is not made up will result in a 0.5 point grade deduction to your final grade in the course. You may only make up a worksheet from an excused absence. You must make up the worksheet within one week to receive credit.**

Each individual is to fill out all portions of their own worksheet prior to checking their responses with an instructor and correcting their responses.

The protocol for each exercise indicates when to enter data into this worksheet. DO NOT ignore the protocol or worksheet instructions and simply guess how to obtain the data for the worksheet. Checkpoints in the worksheet indicate when you should check your work with an instructor before moving on. Each student is responsible for self-correcting their responses as needed and seeking out additional help from an instructor if they do not understand why their initial response was incorrect. Since the majority of acceptable responses are likely to be covered during the posted checkpoints, each student is required to have a final worksheet that is complete and accurate in every way. While the instructional team will be checking each submission for completeness and may comment on some items, they are not expected to check for accuracy of all items in the worksheet. You are expected to use the information that you compiled in the worksheet to set you up for success on your skills assessments, homework, and the student-designed project.

You may be required to upload a file to a D2L dropbox as part of your worksheet.

### **Homework Assignments (Total number = 9)**

Most labs have an associated homework assignment that is due prior to the next class. A homework assignment may have several components. It is important to carefully read the instructions for each assignment posted on D2L. Typically, there will be a writing component that is due to an assignment dropbox on D2L, but there may be another task to complete as well. You should plan to spend **an hour or more each week** working on the homework. It is expected that students will reference the worksheet that they completed (and corrected) from the in-class exercise in order to complete this homework. If you did not complete this information, then you will not be able to complete the portion of the homework that depends on that information. If a student misses a worksheet due to an unexcused absence or does not fully complete that week's worksheet, they may still complete the portion of that week's homework that does not depend on the data collected or analyzed that week. Formatting of graphs, legends, references, etc must follow the guidelines provided on D2L, so be sure to refer to the relevant resources provided to you, which are also posted on D2L. See the other sections of this syllabus and first day videos for more details.

Please see the grading table regarding requirements for each final grade in this course. Your assistant instructor will complete the detailed grading rubric on D2L for any homework submission that is considered unsatisfactory, and students are expected to review those completed rubrics in a timely fashion. Homework submissions are due to D2L by 11:59 PM one week after the class related to that homework was due.

For the Weeks 2-5 homework, you will ALSO upload your submission to Eli Review before class on the day it is due. The purpose of this is to provide the class with anonymous samples to discuss at the end of class. These discussions are intended to help students identify weak areas of their homework and give them a chance to fix those prior to submitting to D2L for grading.

### Late Passes

Assignments must be turned in on time to receive credit for the assignment. Make it a habit to double-check that you submitted the correct document to D2L prior to the deadline. Typically, assignments are graded several days after a due date, so if you wait to receive an alert of zero points for a grade entered one week after the deadline, it will be too late to receive any credit for it.

The exception to this policy is that each student is granted **three** assignment extensions:

- Two 24-hour extensions
- One 1-week extension
- These extensions may be used only for quizzes, worksheets, or homework assignments. They may not be used for peer reviews or skills assessments.
- When you upload/submit the assignment to D2L, you must add a note that states “Using one of my (24-hour or 1-week) free extensions”.
- You are required to send your assistant instructor an email telling them when you have completed a late assignment so that they are aware that it is ready to grade.
- You are advised to save free extensions for an unanticipated event that prevents you from submitting on time.
- You may not take back a previously used free extension to use on a new assignment.
- Submitting a late assignment means that you also lose the opportunity to participate in peer review and resubmit.

**\*\*\* You may not show an instructor the time it was last modified on your computer to receive credit for any assignment. \*\*\***

### Peer review and revision

Peer review and revision will be used for the project manuscript homework assignments. You are required to participate in the peer review process and to upload your written homework assignment to the correct D2L dropbox by the first date listed for that assignment in your schedule. You will then have one week to review your peer's writing. The final, revised version of the file submitted to D2L for this required deadline is the one that will be graded.

Many students find that the effort they put into peer review is well worth the impact it has on the quality of a particular writing assignment. There is no regular credit and no extra credit offered for peer review. It is simply a way for students to try to improve their own writing by reviewing the writing of others.

Following peer review, you will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit the assignment. You must ALSO upload the document to the correct assignment dropbox on Eli Review (codes and instruction will be given separately on D2L) by the time when the original submission is due. You will be placed in a review group the following morning.

Depending on the number of students in your section, you will usually have two or three documents to peer review. Reviews must be completed in Eli Review by 11:59 PM the following week.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Each student is REQUIRED to complete ALL reviews by the due date. If a student fails to complete all of the reviews for two assignments, their grade will be dropped to the next lowest grade level. For example, if a student misses one of three assigned reviews during Week 12 and one of three assigned reviews during Week 13. If their final calculated grade started at a 4.0, it will be dropped to 3.5 for missing those reviews. Individuals who do not submit effortful peer reviews (e.g. by failing to catch obvious errors or simply commenting “great job” rather than providing specific advice) or miss peer reviews for more than two assignments will suffer a grade penalty. **EVERYONE MUST COMMIT TO THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS AND HAVE THE TIME AND FOCUS TO COMPLETE THEIR PEER REVIEWS ON TIME. IT IS UNFAIR TO OTHERS TO SPEND TIME REVIEWING YOUR DOCUMENT AND NOT RECEIVE AN EFFORTFUL REVIEW IN RETURN!**

Next, you are expected to read the peer reviews and assess whether they are valuable. Many students find it useful to create a “Revision Plan” in Eli Review. This is an optional step that will allow you to get feedback from

the Assistant Instructor. You may mark the feedback you plan to use and write ideas for yourself. This is also the appropriate place to pose **specific questions** about your writing to your Assistant Instructor. Responding to revision plans is their highest priority. If you want to complete a revision plan, it must be submitted by Thursday evening following the completion of peer reviews (see the schedule for details). Your assistant instructor will respond to questions in your revision plan Friday morning.

Finally, you may revise your writing. The revised version must be submitted to the same D2L folder as the original document and is due two weeks after the original document due date. Add a note to indicate that this is the revised version to be graded. If you do not submit a revised version, then your original submission will be graded. You will still have the opportunity to resubmit the assignment if you accidentally forgot to complete your peer reviews. This is in an effort to encourage all students to improve their writing. You may not revise and have your new submission graded in place of your original submission if you: 1) Don't upload the original submission to D2L by the deadline; 2) Don't upload to Eli Review by the deadline; or 3) Don't upload the revised version to D2L by the deadline.

### **Skills Assessment (Total number = 12)**

In lieu of formal exams, students will complete weekly sets of skills assessments in class. The skills assessments focus on the core competencies listed on the second page of this syllabus. Skills may be assessed as part of the experiment/exercise performed in class, as written-response questions, as oral questions, or as lab practical-style challenges. The quizzes, worksheets, and homework are meant to prepare you for these assessments. You must complete 11 of the 12 weekly assessments satisfactorily (which means at least 80% of questions/skills correct/complete within a weekly set) in order to earn a 4.0 in the class. Submitting two or more incomplete or unsatisfactory skills assessments, submitting them past their deadlines, or missing them entirely will drop your final grade. On occasion, the instructors may opt to offer limited opportunities to re-attempt certain questions/skills.

### **Research Projects**

Students will attempt to replicate a published peer-reviewed experiment related to a previous lab exercise. Since this project builds on the classes and homework leading up to the project, it is of utmost importance that each student has had exposure and practice in the topic areas. Thus, if a student does not complete two or more worksheets or fails to complete two or more homework assignments during the instructor-led portion of the course in the first portion of the semester, they may not be permitted to work within a group and will be assigned an individual topic by Dr. Gipson.

### **Incorrect location upload policy for individual assignments**

If you repeatedly upload an assignment to the incorrect D2L dropbox or the incorrect Eli Review task your final grade in the course will be reduced by one level (for example, it will drop you from a 4.0 to a 3.5). Thus, always double check that it was placed in the dropbox for the correct topic (pay close attention to the assignment week # specified in your schedule). If you discover that you accidentally uploaded it to the incorrect dropbox before the deadline, you may simply upload it to the correct one. If you discover it after the deadline, you must upload it to the correct dropbox and send your assistant instructor an email telling them where you accidentally uploaded it the first time.

### **Contesting grades**

Students are expected to review their feedback for quizzes, worksheets, and homework assignments on D2L before bringing their concerns to the instructional team. Honestly self-assess whether you perhaps misunderstood or overlooked something, and if that mistake led to the deduction. You are encouraged to contact members of the teaching team to help clarify misunderstandings of the material. If a genuine grading error has been made (such as a missed score for part of the rubric), it would be appropriate to email or attend Zoom office hours with your Assistant Instructor to discuss your concern. However, we will not re-grade individual elements of the assignment.

If you believe that the grade you received did not reflect the overall quality of the assignment, you are required to communicate with your assistant instructor (Rachel) in order to allow them to clarify why any area was determined to be unsatisfactory. After that, you may formally request a re-grade of the entire assignment by Dr. Gipson within 7 days that the grade was posted to D2L. Please email Dr. Gipson (CC your Assistant Instructor) stating as such, and that you understand the new grade will stand. It may be better, worse, or the same as your initial grade. Please do not attempt to bargain or negotiate for a higher grade. If you have a genuine concern that you are consistently receiving unfair grades on writing assignments, please send an email that describes your evidence in detail to Dr. Gipson, and he will attempt to rectify the situation.



## **Inclusivity**

This course will be conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect and affirms people of all gender expressions and identities. The instructors were provided with a class roster with your name as you provided it to MSU. However, if you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the roster, please let Dr. Gipson know. You are also invited to share your pronouns.

## **Professional conduct and appropriate netiquette**

Be professional in your communications. Interact with your fellow classmates and instructor as you would in your professional life. Use appropriate language and grammar. Be clear and concise. Have opinions but be respectful of disagreement. Be cautious with humor or sarcasm. It's not that we want to create a dull environment devoid of fun, but it is very easy for these tones to be lost in text. If you want to make jokes or be sarcastic, indicate your intent with emoticons or a sarcasm tag "/s". Please be kind and respectful.

If necessary, the instructors will complete a professional conduct assessment form for students who do not follow these guidelines and provide feedback about conduct in these areas. If a student receives a professional conduct assessment, they will be assessed again at the end of the semester. **If they are not rated as satisfactory in all categories in the final assessment, then their final grade in the class will be reduced by one grade level.**

## **Participation**

Students are required to complete all worksheets in their entirety. Excused extensions (beyond the three free extensions described above) on laboratory worksheets or homework may potentially be arranged for the following excuses, and then only if the student follows the procedures outlined for communicating and documenting that particular excuse as outlined below. For excused extensions, an instructor will email you the revised due dates for any associated assignments.

If a student does not meet the requirements for an excused extension, then a student will need to use a "free pass". If the student has already used all of their "free passes", then the late assignments will not be permitted. Students with unexcused extensions (or who do not use a free pass) will receive an unsatisfactory for the associated worksheet. Modules are open for at least 6 days prior to due dates in order for students to be given more than enough time to work on the components at times convenient for them. Students are highly encouraged to complete assignments well ahead of their due dates so that there is sufficient time to post questions to instructors and to allow for unanticipated events.

This policy is in effect from the first day of the semester. The instructors reserve the right to provide exceptions to the policies on an individual basis.

In most circumstances, make-up labs will not be offered for excused absences, but instead an online version of the experiment/exercise will be substituted for the in-class experience. Once you have contacted Dr. Gipson and sent the appropriate documentation, an instructor will respond to you via email to schedule revised due dates. You must respond to this email within 24 hours to verify that you received the email and have noted your revised due dates. Depending on the assignment and submission date, the students may need to forfeit their participation in the related peer review tasks.

## **Illness or injury**

1. DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU HAVE COVID-LIKE SYMPTOMS OR HAVE HAD CLOSE CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS COVID-LIKE SYMPTOMS. If you are ill or must care for someone who is ill, you must email Dr. Gipson prior to class to tell him that you will be unable to make it to class. Check your sent mail box to verify that the email was actually sent and indicate that you would like a delivery receipt.

## **Bereavement due to death in the family or similar tragedy**

1. You must email Dr. Gipson prior to class to tell him that you will be unable to attend class. Check your sent mail box to verify that the email was actually sent and indicate that you would like a delivery receipt.
2. Within 14 days of the requested excuse, Dr. Gipson ALSO needs to receive an email notice from the Dean's office indicating that you have been approved for a grief absence. In order to request a grief absence, you must fill the [Grief Absence Request Form](#) within 7 days of the event and provide the requested documentation. The following information regarding the Grief Absence Policy was taken directly from the [University](#).

“The faculty and staff should be sensitive to and accommodate the bereavement process of a student who has lost a family member or who is experiencing emotional distress from a similar tragedy so that the student is not academically disadvantaged in their classes or other academic work (e.g. research). For undergraduate and master’s (Plan B) students without research responsibilities, it is the responsibility of the student to: a) notify the Associate Dean or designee of their college of the need for a grief absence in a timely manner, but no later than one week from the student’s initial knowledge of the situation, b) provide appropriate verification of the grief absence as specified by the Associate Dean, and c) complete all missed work as determined in consultation with the instructor. It is the responsibility of the Associate Dean or designee to: a) determine with the student the expected period of absence – it is expected that some bereavement processes may be more extensive than others depending on individual circumstances, b) notify the faculty that the student will be absent, and c) receive verification of the authenticity of a grief absence request upon the student’s return. It is the responsibility of the instructor to work with the student to make reasonable accommodations and to include appropriate language describing such accommodations in their course syllabus, so that the student is not penalized due to a verified grief absence.”

#### **Interview for post-baccalaureate education (including medical school, graduate school, etc.) or job**

1. You must email Dr. Gipson to tell him that you will be unable to attend class 7 days prior to the missed class. Check your sent mail box to verify that the email was actually sent and indicate that you would like a delivery receipt.
2. At the same time, you must also forward Dr. Gipson the invitation letter for the interview that states your name, the name and location of the program or job, the contact person, and the date and time of the interview. Open houses or interviews for jobs that will be held while pursuing your undergraduate degree will not be excused.

#### **Presenting at a professional scientific conference**

1. You must email Dr. Gipson to tell him that you will be unable to attend class at least 7 days prior to the missed class. Check your sent mail box to verify that the email was actually sent and indicate that you would like a delivery receipt.
2. You must also forward Dr. Gipson the verification for that you received from the society running the conference for submitting your abstract for presentation, the abstract itself with your name listed as the first author, the name and location of the conference, and the date and time of the conference.

#### **Court date or jury duty**

1. You must email Dr. Gipson to tell him that you will be unable to attend class at least 7 days prior to the missed class. Check your sent mail box to verify that the email was actually sent and indicate that you would like a delivery receipt.
2. You must ALSO email Dr. Gipson a copy of the notice from the court that states the date and time that you are expected to be present in court.

#### **Observation of religious holidays**

1. You must email Dr. Gipson to tell him that you will be unable to attend class at least 2 weeks prior to the conflict. Check your sent mail box to verify that the email was actually sent and indicate that you would like a delivery receipt. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements in advance with their instructors and to catch up on any material discussed and assignments given during that class period. Accommodations must never fundamentally alter an essential requirement of the course or academic program. Absences due to observance of religious holidays do not require the use of Late Passes.

#### **Chronic health issues, physical disabilities, and learning disabilities**

If you experience severe and chronic health issues, physical disabilities, or learning challenges that prevent you from completing assignments by the deadlines, we can attempt to devise a plan to help support you.

1. Within 7 days of the first day of class (if you were diagnosed prior to the start of the semester) or within 7 days of diagnosis (if you were diagnosed during the semester), you must provide Dr. Gipson with a [VISA](#) issued by the RCPD. The instructors are TREMENDOUSLY willing and able to provide accommodations for students with such conditions, BUT, a VISA is required in order to do so. Information regarding a VISA is kept confidential to the instructors and the teaching assistant, and you will not be asked to provide personal health information related to the diagnosis. **Students eligible for a VISA are HIGHLY encouraged to obtain one and provide it to Dr. Gipson as soon as possible.** If you have applied for a VISA but it has not yet been issued, please inform Dr. Gipson and provide him with the name of your RCPD advisor.

A new VISA must be provided every semester. Even if you have provided **Dr. Gipson** a VISA for NEU301 or NEU302, you must provide a copy to **Dr. Gipson** for NEU311L.

## Appointments

If a Zoom or face-to-face meeting is scheduled with a member of the teaching team (which includes an instructor, an assistant instructor, a technician, or a LA), you are expected to attend that appointment at the agreed-upon time. Otherwise, your final grade will be dropped one grade level for each appointment missed.

## Living organisms

Living crayfish and drosophila (fruit flies) are used our class so that you may observe nervous system activity. Sheep brains and plastinated human brains will also be shown during our study of neuroanatomy. If you have personal objections to handling these, please let Dr. Gipson know during the first week of class.

## Academic Integrity

The “Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University” document (found at <http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu> ) is a legal document that you, as a member of the MSU community, should be familiar with. The welcome letter at the beginning reads, in part:

“As an academic community, it is necessary to set standards that will promote an environment conducive to learning. The first part of Spartan Life presents the policies, regulations and guidelines developed to provide an atmosphere that furthers opportunities for intellectual and personal development while protecting individual freedoms. As a student you are encouraged to exercise your rights and you are expected to meet your responsibility to adhere to the standards set. The second part of this guide serves to inform you of the rules, regulations, rights and responsibilities that have been established in the interest of all members of the University community.”

Academic misconduct, including but not limited to, plagiarizing, cheating, and submitting falsified data will not be tolerated in this course. Individual student assignments that contain portions that are deemed by Dr. Gipson to be highly similar to an assignment submitted by another student in current or previous semesters or to an internet or published source may be considered a violation of academic integrity. See [Section 1.00 PROTECTION OF SCHOLARSHIP AND GRADES](#) and [Student Academic Integrity FAQs](#) for detailed informed about definitions of academic integrity, examples of misconduct, and advice about how to avoid it.

For this class, you are not to work with another person on your assignments unless explicitly instructed to do so by Dr. Gipson. You are not allowed to obtain assignments from another student enrolled in the current or a previous semester. All data, ideas, and answers must be original to you. When required to use information from published papers or other sources, it must be re-stated in your own words and cited as specified in class. Do not work on quizzes or writing assignments side-by-side with others, provide or obtain quiz answers from others, give your documents to others, or receive documents from others. You are not allowed to work together on shared documents, to pay another individual to complete your work in part or as a while, or to obtain assessment-related information from sites such as Chegg or Course Hero.

Suspected violations of the MSU policies will result in a meeting with Dr. Gipson, and your Assistant Instructor. Depending on the severity of the violation, penalties for academic dishonesty may range from 0 points for an item on the assignment, to an unsatisfactory grade for the entire assignment, to a failing grade for the class. If a penalty grade is administered, Dr. Gipson is required to submit an [academic dishonesty report](#) to the university, which will be added to the student’s record. The student will be required to complete a course on academic integrity, and the Dean may choose to impose other sanctions.

Providing your completed assignments, answers to quiz questions, answers to exam questions, etc to other students currently enrolled in NEU311L or those who may take NEU311L in the future is considered a violation of academic integrity and may subject you to sanctions by the university even if you are no longer enrolled in the class.

As future professional scientists, students are expected to abide by the [Society for Neuroscience Ethics Policy](#) as well.

## TurnItIn

TurnItIn dropboxes are used for all assignments in this course. “Consistent with MSU’s efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, instructors may use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student’s work with multiple sources. The tool compares each student’s work with an

extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a 'similarity score'. The tool does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred or not. Instead, the instructor must make a complete assessment and judge the originality of the student's work. All submissions to this course may be checked using this tool. Students should submit papers to Turnitin Dropboxes without identifying information included in the paper (e.g. name or student number), the system will automatically show this info to faculty in your course when viewing the submission, but the information will not be retained by Turnitin. Student submissions will be retained only in the MSU repository hosted by Turnitin."

Students may also consult the similarity report generated by Turnitin and may resubmit assignments prior to their due date. The Turnitin report may be confusing for students to interpret since a high similarity score may simply reflect that other students are submitting documents that contain the same instructions. Thus, you are welcome to attend office hours if you wish to have assistance in interpreting any Turnitin report.

### **Mandatory reporting**

"Michigan State University is committed to fostering a culture of caring and respect that is free of relationship violence and sexual misconduct, and to ensuring that all affected individuals have access to services. For information on reporting options, confidential advocacy and support resources, university policies and procedures, or how to make a difference on campus, visit the Title IX website at [www.titleix.msu.edu](http://www.titleix.msu.edu)."

### **Limits to Confidentiality**

"Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues based on external legal obligations or that relate to the health and safety of MSU community members and others. As the instructor,

I must report the following information to other University offices if you share it with me:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center."

### **Letters of Recommendation**

The course instructor will consider providing letters of recommendation for professional and graduate schools, internships, and jobs to those students who receive a 4.0 in the class, exhibit respect for instructors, demonstrate enthusiasm and integrity, regularly exceed expectations on assignments, and have a 3.0 or greater overall GPA. An email request for a letter of recommendation should be made at least 2-3 weeks in advance of the deadline. Your resume, your transcript, your personal statement, an explanation about how your performance in NEU311L demonstrated leadership and potential to succeed in the career path of your choosing, and a list of schools, their due dates, methods of submission along with the emails from schools detailing any online submission procedures, must be provided at least two weeks prior to the due date of the first submission. Please also state the semester you took the class and the section you were enrolled in.