BSc NEUROSCIENCE PROGRAM

NEUR 506 – Special Topics in Neuroscience

PROJECT INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

6-credit special topics course, typically done over two consecutive terms. On occasion it can be done in one term - only if the project lends itself to it, and the Supervisor(s) and student can commit to the additional time-commitment required to complete it within one term.

NEUR 506 is an optional course that students in Neurosciences may choose to take as part of their requirements towards fulfilling a honours degree in Neuroscience. NEUR506 provides Neuroscience majors with a mechanism to carry out advanced work in areas not covered in regular courses or to pursue topics which are covered in more detail. Proposals can cover a broad of topics but need to have a substantive and clearly recognizable neuroscience scope and demonstrably align with the BSc Neuroscience Program’s mission and policies (as determined by the Program Director upon submission of the webform project proposal).

Structure
Very flexible, and may consist of lectures, seminars, reading assignments, term papers and training in theoretical, field and laboratory methods.

Time commitment
Approximately 8 to 10 hours per week.

Getting a Supervisor
It is the responsibility of the student to decide on a project topic idea for this course and to approach a suitable faculty member regarding supervision. This must be done in advance of completing the webform to initiate enrolment into the course. Information about potential supervisors’ expertise and scientific interests can be found through various sources, including by talking to other BSc Neuroscience students but also through consulting various websites such as (but not limited to): https://hbi.ucalgary.ca/our-members-and-trainees, https://research.ucalgary.ca, https://arts.ucalgary.ca/psychology, or https://science.ucalgary.ca/current-students/undergraduate/undergraduate-opportunities/research-opportunities.

Most potential University of Calgary Supervisors will be familiar with the concept of special topics courses such as NEUR 506. However, it is worthwhile preparing yourself by learning more about your prospective supervisors’ interest and expertise, by looking into their research, ongoing projects, publications and such, and find out whether your plans and interests match theirs. Contact prospective supervisors by email or otherwise, letting them know who you are, what you want to do, why you think that matches their interests and expertise making clear that you informed yourself about their work. If your project involves research, you may also want to briefly summarize your experience what kind of skills you would bring to their lab. Be prepared to listen once you have connected with prospective supervisor! Some of your ideas may not be practical, your prospective Supervisor will be able to help you fine-tune your project proposal. Don’t get discouraged if you are not immediately successful! You may have to contact several researchers and go in for a few interviews before you find the best match.

Other tips and talking points for a successful meeting with prospective Supervisor and preparing your application:

- Bring a current unofficial copy of your transcript to your meeting (or attach to your initial email).
- Explore/discuss potential project ideas, content and goals, keeping an open mind.
- Discuss student’s actual role in the project.
- Discuss supervisor’s and student’s time schedules, expected time investment.
- Discuss/ask about expected learning outcomes.
- Discuss evaluation criteria: NEUR 506 requires a minimum of 3 and maximum of 6 evaluation components, generally including a written proposal, a written final report, an oral presentation, lab notebook assessment, or other measures of research performance, but other project specific performance metrics may be selected. Students and Supervisor must agree on course content, evaluation criteria, their weighting and due date commensurate with applicable time frames laid out in the University Calendar (Note: The proposed evaluation scheme is subject to final approval by the Program Director and Associate Dean Undergraduate of the Faculty of Science.
- Discuss/ask about additional training requirements such as biosafety, animal handling and such (if they apply).
- Ensure intellectual property right and authorship policies are understood and that the Retention of Data and Authorship Agreement is reviewed and signed.

Have a project idea but unsure who to approach as possible Supervisor?
Students who have a project in mind but are unsure which faculty members would be potential supervisors should approach the Program Director for advice.

CONDUCT OF NEUR 506

Format of the course
A detailed format for the course will be worked out in consultation with the supervisor, in advance of the commencement of classes.

Course evaluation
Once the faculty member has agreed to supervise you in this course, they will clearly outline the procedures whereby your performance will be evaluated.

Final written report
Final written report in the format of a research paper must be submitted by the student to the supervisor by the deadline indicated by the Supervisor.

REGISTRATION INTO NEUR 506

Once the prospective Supervisor has indicated their willingness to supervise you on your project
Complete the webform (https://science.ucalgary.ca/usc-independent-research-course-application) - NO LATER than 10 working days before the add/swap deadline in the term (https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html).

- If approval is denied at this point, you will be notified by e-mail.
- If approval is granted, you will be enrolled into the course by staff in the USC and you will be notified by email.