Syllabus for Seminar in Social Neuroendocrinology (PSY 607)
Spring 2012, University of Oregon
Mondays: 1:30 – 3:20 PM, 143 Straub

Instructor:
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Office: 305 Straub
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Goals

This course will expose students to contemporary research in the rapidly growing field of social neuroendocrinology – research at the interface of neuroendocrinology and social-personality psychology. We will read and discuss research on the reciprocal relationship between hormones and social behavior: how hormones modulate social behavior, and how behavior and the social environment cause changes in hormone systems. The specific goals of the course are to:

1. Gain a basic understanding of the main hormone systems of relevance to social neuroendocrinology (e.g., testosterone, cortisol, oxytocin) as well as the methods for measuring and manipulating these systems

2. Apply this understanding of neuroendocrinology to examine research questions in social and personality psychology

3. Critically evaluate social neuroendocrinology research in the form of discussion questions and oral presentations

4. Stimulate new thinking on social neuroendocrinology topics, and facilitate students making their own unique contributions to this field (theoretical contribution or a plan toward an empirical contribution)

COURSE STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS

Each week we will read and discuss peer-reviewed articles on a specific topic within social neuroendocrinology. I will lecture every now and then, but not much. Here are course requirements:

1. **Required Readings:** Every week there will be 2 or 3 required readings. You should have read all of these articles, and you should come to class prepared to discuss them.
2. **Discussion Questions**: Think critically about the readings, and write down at least **two discussion questions that you are ready to ask in class**. The goal of your questions should be to stimulate lively and thought-provoking discussion on the topic for that week. If you don’t prepare thoughtful discussion questions, this class won’t be fun or useful for anyone.

3. **Individual Readings and Oral Presentations**: In addition to the required readings, you will sign up for individual readings in some weeks. In those weeks you are required to read another paper in addition to the required readings and **prepare an oral presentation (5-10 minutes long) that you will give in class**. The goal of the presentation is to summarize the research you read about, critically evaluate it, and stimulate discussion. You are the instructor during the time you are presenting. This presentation will give you important practice for teaching and for presenting work at scientific conferences. Although you can use any format that you think is most appropriate, one of the following will be fine: (1) a PowerPoint presentation, or (2) a one-page Word document that you hand out to everyone and talk through. There will be a question and answer period after each presentation, and you should be prepared to address any questions from your peers on the reading you did.

4. **Final Paper and Oral Presentation**: I would like to encourage all of you to make novel scientific contributions to social neuroendocrinology research that can benefit you in your careers. With that goal in mind, you are required to turn in a final paper, **8 pages in length (it can be longer if you choose)**, in the service of one of the following goals:

   **A. Grant Proposal**: You will be writing grants for the rest of your career, so why not use this class to practice and work toward an actual submission? If you choose this option, you should write a research proposal that incorporates social neuroendocrinology methods/ideas, ideally targeted toward a specific funding source (e.g., a pre-doctoral or post-doctoral NRSA fellowship). Feel free to come to talk to me about specific funding opportunities in your area of interest. Examples of specific grant proposals can be provided to you (e.g., I have an NRSA postdoc example, unfunded unfortunately 😞). You are also welcome to write a research proposal even if you do not plan on submitting it.

   **B. Theoretical Paper**: Another option is to write a theoretical paper (approximately 8 pages long minimum, it can be longer if you choose) that incorporates social neuroendocrinology methods/ideas. Ideally your paper would be targeted toward a specific journal, and you could actually submit it at some point.

I encourage you to come talk to me about your paper ideas as soon as possible. Your paper will be due via email by **Friday, June 8th at 5 PM**. You will also be required to prepare an oral PowerPoint presentation of your paper in the last few weeks of class.
## Overview of Topics by Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Apr 2)</td>
<td>Introduction, Assignment of Papers, Methodological Foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (Apr 9)</td>
<td>Status Hierarchies, Dominance, and Aggression</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 (Apr 16)</td>
<td>Attachment and Prosocial Behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 (Apr 23)</td>
<td>Stress and Social Threat</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 (Apr 30)</td>
<td>Decision-Making</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 (May 7)</td>
<td>Social Cognition</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 (May 14)</td>
<td>Mating Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (May 21)</td>
<td>Prejudice/Intergroup Behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 (May 28)</td>
<td>MEMORIAL DAY - NO CLASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 (June 4)</td>
<td>Final Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, June 8</td>
<td>FINAL PAPER DUE</td>
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</tbody>
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Week 2 (April 9): Status Hierarchies, Dominance, and Aggression

Required Readings for Everyone

   (Reading the commentaries is highly encouraged but is optional)


Additional Individual Readings


   Plus our commentary (1 page) plus author response (1 page):


Week 3 (April 16) Attachment and Prosocial Behavior

Required Readings for Everyone


Additional Individual Readings


Week 4 (April 23) – Stress and Social Threat

Required Readings for Everyone


Additional Individual Readings


Week 5 (April 30) - Decision-Making

**Required Readings for Everyone**


**Additional Individual Readings**


**Week 6 (May 7) - Social Cognition**

*Required Readings for Everyone*


*Additional Individual Readings*


Week 7 (May 14) – Mating Behavior

Required Readings for Everyone


Additional Individual Readings


**Week 8 - Prejudice/Intergroup Behavior**

*Required Readings for Everyone*


*Additional Individual Readings*


