

PSYC 245
Psychopharmacology

[Drugs and Behaviour, Basic Principles]

John Conklin
Camosun College
Fall 2004

Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to the various types of psychoactive drugs and their impact on behaviour and the central nervous system through a review of the scientific literature. It will examine drugs from a broad array of categories - covering drugs that are used for therapeutic and/or recreational purposes. Special attention will be paid to medications used to treat psychiatric disorders, and psychoactive substances that are frequently abused. Coverage will span a range of topics including drug actions on the nervous system, elementary principles of pharmacology, therapeutic use of behaviourally active drugs, signs and symptoms of psychopathology and treatments for abuse and dependence. Topics include an introduction to the principles of behavioural pharmacology, the experimental analysis of behaviour applied to drug issues, the relationship between law and science with regard to drugs, and the specific actions, uses and abuse patterns of several drugs.

Prerequisites:

Psychology 110 and one of 120, 130, 150 or 164. (First year introductory psychology

course) plus Psyc 215 or a second year biopsychology course. Math 10, First year university transfer English and a first year university transfer science course recommended.

Presumed Knowledge:

At the start of this course we presume that the student will:

Have a basic grasp of the scientific method and its application to research in psychology and one other science.

Be able to find primary sources both by visiting a library and using various on-line search facilities such as EbscoHost, PsycInfo and Science Indexes.

Have basic knowledge of the the human nervous system and related topics such as the structure and function of the neuron, the role of neurotransmitters in the human CNS, the various ways that psychoactive chemicals can affect the functioning of neurons, the causes of several neurological disorders, examples of the use of psychoactive drugs to attempt to treat brain disorders and the type of overview of biopsychology provided by a second year course in biopsychology.

Have a basic understanding of relevant concepts from chemistry and organic chemistry such as osmosis, ions, DNA, etc [Jamie?]

The ability to research and write a scientific paper that summarizes current primary source research using APA or [Jamie] styles.

An understanding of the rules of citation of sources in a scientific paper.

The ability to structure, design, run and write-up a scientific experiment based on APA or [Jamie] style.

Text:

McKim, W. (2003). Drugs and Behavior: An Introduction to Behavioral Pharmacology, 5th Edition, Prentice Hall.

Course Objectives:

Through actively and conscientiously participating in this course you should:

Be able to research, analyze, interpret and present data collected during a research project in the field

of behavioural pharmacology.

Be able to find, analyze, interpret and present information about a given problem area or research topic that is currently under investigation in the field of behavioural pharmacology.

Think and write critically and creatively about contemporary topics in the field of behavioural pharmacology.

Actively consider solutions to contemporary problems in the field of behavioural pharmacology.

Research, analyze and interpret contemporary trends in the effects of psychoactive substances on the CNS, their effects on the neuron and neuronal transmission, the cause and treatment of tolerance, withdrawal, liking, craving, dependence and addiction.

Research, analyze and interpret contemporary trends in the use of psychoactive substances to treat various disorders of the CNS, plus their abuse, side effects and contra-

indications.

Marking

Assignments	
Weekly Labs and Practice Tests	20%
Article Review	10%
Mid-term Exam	20%
Final Exam	30%
Research paper	20%

Marking System			
A+	95%-100%	B-	70%-74%
A	90%-94%	C+	65%-69%
A-	85%-89%	C	60%-64%
B+	80%-84%	D	50%-59%
B	75%-79%	F	0-49%

Copyright by John Conklin, Camosun College; Victoria, B.C. Canada:

Last Updated:

