GMS 6029 Chemosensory reception and Sensation
Spring 2012, Wednesday 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Course Director:
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Course Description:
This course is designed to help participants learn how to read articles critically. It is designed for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in the biological Sciences and the Department of Neuroscience. The emphasis will be in the research areas of the chemical senses (e.g., neural mechanisms and function of the chemical senses, the functional organization of the gustatory system in the periphery, interaction with physiological state, motivational aspects).

Focus:
A. To train participants to read, critique, and evaluate scientific research reports.

B. To provide a forum for the discussion of new techniques, cutting edge developments in discovery, and current research publications.

C. To foster a rich environment for the exchange of laboratory protocols, first hand experience, and constructive critique of ongoing individual research, manuscripts, presentations, or grant submissions.

Course format:
A. The Presenter will be the single person assigned for that week who is responsible for:
   1. Preparing a 5-10 min introduction for the paper in powerpoint. Background research should be obtained from sources beyond the Introduction of the assigned paper and set the historical context for the paper, i.e. what was known prior to the assigned paper, as well as other relevant information. Be prepared to discuss why you chose the paper.
   2. Preparing enlarged, readable powerpoint slides of figures and tables in the paper, including Supplementary figures and tables.
   3. Presenting the entire paper. Be prepared to discuss the methods used, limitations of the methods used, controls used, alternative experimental approaches and if the data support the conclusions.
4. Facilitating a closing synopsis of the paper, being certain that we tie the new results to the bigger picture and are clear how the paper moved the field forward.

B. Readers (2 assigned per week) are responsible for reading the paper and facilitating discussion of the paper by asking questions (however, ALL students are expected to have read the paper before class).

Papers:

A. Papers should be recent (published within the last 12 months) and relevant to our topic.
B. Your paper must be approved by the instructor at least 1 week prior to you being discussion leader for that paper.
C. If your paper has a supplemental material section, the PDFs for both the paper and the supplemental material must be provided to Dr. Dotson by the Thursday before you are discussion leader.
D. Do not select a paper that you have presented or discussed in another class.

Grading: S/U

A. Class Attendance: Attendance is required. A roll sheet must be signed each week. 2 unexcused absences will result in a grade of U. Please contact Dr. Dotson with university-excused absences (illness, attending conference, etc.) or a scheduling conflict as soon as possible.
B. Presenters: (see Course Format, section A). Missing your presentation for an unexcused absence will result in a grade of U.
C. Readers: Readers are required to read their assigned paper and ask questions to promote discussion. Attending class without reading the assigned paper will count as one unexcused absence.