

# The Human Mind

## HON 232G, Summer 2017, CRN#23298



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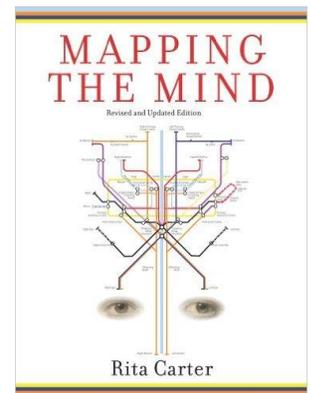
Office hours: By appointment (in office or via Skype)

Classroom: Online

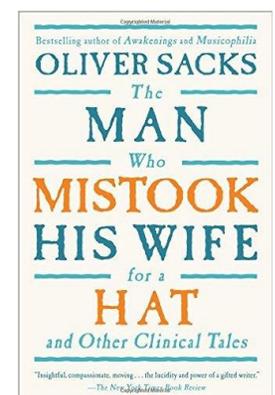
**Please review this syllabus and Canvas before you send an email!** Most of your questions can be answered using this document.

### COURSE MATERIALS:

**1) “Mapping the Mind” (Revised and Updated Edition) by Rita Carter:** This book will be your primary textual source throughout this course. It will teach you about neuroanatomy, neuroscience, how we study the brain, what we currently know and don’t know, and so on. It’s important that you get the updated version, not the original, as some of the science has progressed since this book was first published, and it’s best to have the most current information. You will read the book in its entirety, but as it is a popular science book, it will not be tedious and dry and long and boring. This is a fantastic book I hope you’ll all enjoy. You can find it on Amazon for around \$15. ISBN-13: 978-0520266285. ISBN-10: 0520266285.



**2) “The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat” by Oliver Sacks:** This will be your secondary text source throughout this course. It’s a collection of case studies by the late, great Dr. Sacks. Oliver Sacks was a master at describing the strange phenomena that occur when the brain is not working as it should, and spent his life helping patients, studying, and documenting various brain-related anomalies. You will only read a handful of short chapters from this book, but I strongly encourage you to read more than you are assigned. You can find this on Amazon for around \$11.



**3) Canvas:** Everything you need to know about this course can be found on Canvas at <https://learn.nmsu.edu>. This includes the syllabus, grades, readings/videos/podcasts, discussion boards, and all other course material. I will also post announcements quite regularly. Content on the Canvas site will be updated constantly as we progress through the course. It is your responsibility to check Canvas on a regular basis! That means once per day (preferably in the morning). This syllabus lays out the details of the assignments, the course schedule, and more, but all of this is subject to change, depending on course

demands and circumstances. It is your responsibility to keep up with the announcements so you are aware of all demands, changes to the course schedule, changes to the assignment, and so on.

### **COURSE GOALS AND FORMAT:**

Because this is an honors course, and because the content is so incredibly frickin' cool, I have no intention of teaching this in the typical format whereby I lecture, you cram, then you regurgitate material on an exam and forget you ever learned it to begin with. Nope. This class is going to be fun, interactive, and highly varied. But be advised: This class has a lot of material (all crammed into a month-long summer course), and you will do a lot of reading, listening, and writing. I intend to teach this course like a graduate-level seminar (albeit adapted to an online environment) whereby you reflect on what you're learning, and where you create new, interesting material of your own.

It's a tired saying, but not all learning comes from books. As a university professor, it will not surprise you to hear that I think a great deal of good learning does in fact come from books. But I don't want a textbook to be your sole source of information in this course. There is a TON of good science communication out in the world. There's a ton of *bad* science reporting too, but I've spent the last several months pulling together some of the best and brightest to supplement the material you will learn from reading the two books for this course. These include articles in popular science and news outlets, podcasts, TED Talks, and other videos. It's fun to learn science in this way, and get a less sterile presentation of the material than is often the case in academic settings.

So what will *not* be in this course? ...video lectures, quizzes, exams. None of that; that's pointless for a class like this. What *will* be in this course? ...lots of interesting readings, podcasts, videos. Lots of discussions with me and your classmates. And lots of work put toward your final project, which is a blog where you teach a lay audience something they likely don't already know about the human brain/mind.

Beyond learning to understand the human mind – which as the clever title of this course unambiguously suggests is the primary function therein – I want you to gain a better understanding of the scientific process, the manner in which scientists come to their conclusions, issues surrounding conduct and publication of science, the pitfalls of media coverage of science, and so on. You'll learn a little of this in the "Mapping the Mind" book, but most of it will come from the various supplemental materials I'll assign and provide. In this course, I want you to learn about science, technology, and the weird happenings of the brain. And I also want you to learn to create and communicate science to others using creative digital content.

As such, the first few weeks of this course will have two parallel tracks. On one track, you'll be reading the books. On the other, you'll be reading, listening, and watching other digital content, all having to do with science and the study of the human mind. While you're doing this, it is extremely important to me to hear what you guys think about this material. What blew your mind, as it were? What new tidbit did you learn, what misconception was corrected, what challenged you, what did you agree/disagree with? Did the content make you think of something cool you want to share with the class, or inspire you to hunt down more material on Topic X? If so, share! These are all things I want to hear from you, so for each day's assignment, we'll have a pair of discussion boards on which to interact with me, and more

importantly, with your fellow students. In order for this course to work, I need you to be as excited about the content as I am, and to really think critically about the material, so you can have fruitful conversations/debates with your peers.

As you're doing this, the overarching goal of this class will be to take what you're learning, and apply it by teaching a lay audience about the brain through the creation of a blog post. I have created a scaffold of various assignments throughout the course designed to help you work up to the final blog post, rather than try to create it all in one sitting. This will include things like creating thesis statements, putting together key sentences, and working one-on-one with me, by turning in drafts of components of your blog on which I will provide feedback. Importantly, these should not be dull, dry recitations of what you've learned in the book. I want to hear what you think, what you've learned, what questions are left unanswered. Feel free to express your opinions, take a stand, be controversial if necessary. You'll also be required to go find external material of your own (videos, podcasts, etc.). In short, I don't want you to create something that simply fulfills a course requirement. I want you to create a blog post that you yourself would enjoy reading, if in fact you were not yourself but were someone else... which would be weird... okay, you get the picture.

The first few weeks of this course are very content heavy. You'll work your way through the "Mapping the Mind" book, one chapter per day (usually around 25 pages long). You'll also be absorbing the digital material each day. Sometimes these are short articles, sometimes they are longer videos (but don't worry, they're cool!). You'll need to make sure to budget time to keep up with the content. Once you get through the MTM book, you'll read just a handful of short chapters from the Oliver Sacks book (again, while absorbing digital content as well). The goal is to expose you to all the important and cool material early, so you can be thinking about your blog post, getting ideas, and be well-equipped to create the components of the blog later. As you'll see in the course schedule, there are due dates for components of the blog dotted throughout the course. And the last week and a half or so is dedicated to allowing you time to really clean up your blogs, and get them ready for prime time (i.e., posting on the internet). Finally, in the last few days of the course, you'll be reading the blogs of other students, commenting on them, and replying to comments on your own.

Because this is an online course, we don't have normal meeting times or anything like that. Instead, the course calendar lays out what is expected of you on each day. That being said, all the material will be made available to you, well... right now! (The content is all available, but the discussion boards will appear later). So it's probably in your best interest to get a jump start, and if at all possible, to get a little ahead by reading forward in the book, absorbing the online media, and so on. I've even dedicated the first day of the course to just this aim; use day 1 to read the syllabus, and to get started on the readings and such.

### **ASSIGNMENT DETAILS:**

#### **1) "Mapping the Mind" (MTM) and Oliver Sacks books and discussions:**

On the course calendar, you'll see the dates on which each chapter is assigned. "MTM" refers to the "Mapping the Mind" book. From May 24<sup>th</sup> – June 6<sup>th</sup>, you'll cover one chapter of MTM per day. After

that, you'll read 7 chapters from the Oliver Sacks book, all of which are quite short. So the reading is heavier in the first week or so than it is later on (plus, day 1 is a day to get started reading, and you have the Memorial Day holiday as well to give you more time).

On each day (and sometimes a day or two in advance), I will post a Discussion board thread on Canvas, clearly marked with the assignment day and content. You will have 72 hours to read the content, and make a comment on the board on the order of 150 words or more. You are only required to post once, but I STRONGLY encourage you to return to the board and post again, reply to your fellow students, etc. You may create a post from scratch, or you may respond to other students who have commented prior to you (or to me when I pop in with a comment here or there). To help get the discussions started, I will usually pose some questions or discussion topics on the material that I hope will be stimulating.

These discussion posts will be graded using a very simple rubric. Additionally, I will take into consideration grammar, punctuation, and spelling. My intent is not to pay close attention to those things, however on the discussion boards. I want these posts to be fun and informal. But I reserve the right to reduce your points for sloppily written contributions. Prior to deducting points, I will send you a warning if I think you need to spend more time writing the post carefully.

Discussion Board Rubric		
Contributions	Description	Points
Provocative	Response goes beyond simply answering the prompt (or replying to others); attempts to stimulate further thought and discussion	4
Substantial	Response is adequate, but does not require further analysis of the subject	3
Superficial	Response provides obvious information without further analysis of the concept; lacks depth of knowledge or reasoning	2
Incorrect	Response is inadequate; rambling and/or without consistency	1
None	No response provided to the prompt within the associated timeframe	0

In total, these discussions will be worth 15% of your overall grade in this course (so 1% per discussion board post).

## 2) Online media (articles, podcasts, videos) and discussions:

This portion of the course is identical in concept to the requirement to read and comment on chapters from the book. You can see from the calendar that one piece of content will be assigned each day. This includes news articles, podcasts, or videos. All of this content will be made freely available to you. Links to all the material can be found below:

- 1) John Oliver skit on science reporting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Rnq1NpHdmw>)
- 2) Nancy Kanwisher TED talk on the brain ([https://www.ted.com/talks/nancy\\_kanwisher\\_the\\_brain\\_is\\_a\\_swiss\\_army\\_knife](https://www.ted.com/talks/nancy_kanwisher_the_brain_is_a_swiss_army_knife))
- 3) NPR article on Phineas Gage (<http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/05/21/528966102/why-brain-scientists-are-still-obsessed-with-the-curious-case-of-phineas->

[http://www.facebook.com/?utm\\_source=facebook.com&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=npr&utm\\_term=nprnews&utm\\_content=20170521](http://www.facebook.com/?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=npr&utm_term=nprnews&utm_content=20170521))

- 4) Sawbones episode on phrenology (<http://www.maximumfun.org/sawbones/sawbones-phrenology>)
- 5) Atlantic article on brain scientists (<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/02/how-brain-scientists-forgot-that-brains-have-owners/517599/>)
- 6) Scientific American article on the dead salmon study (<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/scicurious-brain/ignobel-prize-in-neuroscience-the-dead-salmon-study/>)
- 7) Daniel Tammet documentary (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPySn3slfXI>)
- 8) “Boy who can’t forget” documentary (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Bnu0UrgxBg>)
- 9) NY Times article on Brenda Milner (<https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/05/15/science/brenda-milner-brain-cognitive-neuroscience.html?referer=http%3A%2F%2Fm.facebook.com%2F>)
- 10) NY Times article on patient H.M. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/05/us/05hm.html>)
- 11) Radiolab episode “Bringing Gamma Back” (<http://www.radiolab.org/story/bringing-gamma-back/>)
- 12) All in the Mind episode “The Brain Makers” (<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/allinthemind/the-brain-makers/8417922>)
- 13) Slate article on Daryl Bem (<https://redux.slate.com/cover-stories/2017/05/daryl-bem-proved-esp-is-real-showed-science-is-broken.html>)
- 14) PBS profile on Irene Pepperberg and Alex the parrot (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/nature/profile-irene-pepperberg-alex.html>)
- 15) Curious Cases of Rutherford and Fry episode “The Counting Horse” (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07cyvjt>)

The requirements for discussion board posts for the online media are the same as for the chapters from the books, and they will be graded using the same rubric. In total, these discussions will be worth 15% of your overall grade in this course (so 1% per discussion board post).

### **3) Blog topic approval:**

The topic you choose for your blog is going to be almost entirely open. You can choose to discuss a particular area of the brain, a particular type of neuroimaging, an open or unanswered question in neuroscience, more general issues in understanding brain science, and so on. I want this to be fun, so I will leave this open to you to pick a fun and interesting topic, something you can get excited and passionate about.

That being said, I do need to make sure that these topics are relevant to the course. You can see from the calendar that you must have approval for your topic by June 8<sup>th</sup>. Hopefully, the heavy amount of content you’ll absorb in the first two weeks of the course will be enough to stimulate you and get some ideas flowing. I want you to feel free to bounce ideas off of me at any time! This component of the course is not worth a great many points. I just want to make sure that you have a topic well in mind by June 8<sup>th</sup>. You will receive 5% of your overall grade (all or none) by discussing your topic with me via email by June 8<sup>th</sup>. Keep in mind, I may ask you to revise your topic, or to change it altogether. So it is in your best interest to send me ideas well before the due date to allow adequate time for adjustments.

To help you get ideas for the sort of approach I'm hoping for, you can find several resources below. You should NOT necessarily try to emulate these. They are intended to give you a sense of the style of writing I'm hoping for: non-academic, fun, interesting, and engaging. The first two are a pair of *Scientific American Mind* magazine articles that I wrote with my former graduate advisor, Dr. Stephen Goldinger, and my current graduate student, Ms. Arryn Robbins. The third is a blog for *Scientific American* by a friend of mine, Dr. Megan Papesh.

Example materials:

- [http://michaelhout.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/RobbinsHout\\_SciAmMIND2015.pdf](http://michaelhout.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/RobbinsHout_SciAmMIND2015.pdf)
- [http://michaelhout.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/HoutGoldinger\\_SciAmMind2013.pdf](http://michaelhout.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/HoutGoldinger_SciAmMind2013.pdf)
- <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/mind-guest-blog/how-hard-is-it-to-catch-a-fake-passport/>

#### **4) External materials approval:**

In addition to actually writing the content of the blog, you will be required to hunt down external sources to make your blog more interesting. These should be fun resources, but they should also be reputable (i.e., come from credible sources, not just random people off the internet). The online media you will be absorbing is exactly the kind of thing I'm looking for here.

More specifically, you will be required to find three pieces of material to incorporate into your blog. 1) A news, popular science, or peer-reviewed journal article. I would prefer a news or popular science article, but if you want, you can also rely on proper scientific journal articles as well. 2) One podcast episode. And 3) one video, or documentary. There are no formal length requirements for these things, but try not to send articles that are only a couple paragraphs long, or podcasts or videos that only last five minutes. If you do, I will likely reject your selection and ask you to replace it.

You will receive 5% of your overall grade for these (worth 1.67% each; each is graded all or none) by sending them to me via email by June 9<sup>th</sup>. Keep in mind, if you send me your topic on June 8<sup>th</sup> and I reject it, you may have to hunt down completely new resources by the next day. So again, get started on this stuff earlier rather than later.

#### **5) Draft of thesis and intro paragraph:**

The most important part of writing your blog is getting a solid introduction written. Many people find that the opening of any piece of writing is the most challenging, so I'm going to help you hone this portion of the blog. If you can get a good intro written, the rest should flow smoothly.

First, start by writing a good title. A good title engages and informs your reader of the thesis; that is, the title motivates the reader to want to read your writing and it informs the reader as to what your essay/blog is about. You can start by trying out a title that is just a summary of your topic, but as you work on the blog, it should develop into something more interesting. You may want to consider a two-part title with a colon in the middle. To do this, put the question or problem to the left of the colon and

then the key concepts of your thesis to the right. For example, “To see or not to see: Spotting what we are looking for seems simple, but it isn’t.” (Hout & Goldinger, *Scientific American Mind*, 2013)

The next step is to begin your introduction. The traditional introduction to a two-page essay is one paragraph long. The introduction helps you contribute to an already existing conversation in the literature. This means you must read widely about your topic *before* beginning so that you can locate your work in the existing literature. Do not choose a thesis such as “people don’t really only use 10% of their brains” because that’s a boring old trope, and one that no one really believes anymore. Find a thesis you can sink your teeth into; something that captures your own attention and passion, something people don’t already know, or something they may misunderstand. If you’re passionate about the topic, it will come out in your writing.

Then, join the existing conversation, usually by correcting a misconception. Begin by sharing the widespread or commonplace view, but take care not to paint belief in that idea as something naïve or idiotic. Readers want to learn and be surprised, not be made to feel stupid or inferior to the author. Then describe what is wrong with this line of thinking (in whole or in part). Finally, communicate to the reader the proper state of the art, the correct way of thinking about this topic. This final bit is the thesis, and is traditionally the last (or near to last) sentence of your introduction.

Here’s how an introductory paragraph might look (adapted from Graff & Birkenstein, 2010, pp. 26-27):

When it comes to the topic of \_\_\_\_\_, most of us believe that \_\_\_\_\_. The correct view is actually that \_\_\_\_\_. This is an important misconception to correct because \_\_\_\_\_. The evidence in favor of this idea is X, Y, and Z.

Please use this template or adapt it for your own purposes. Your introduction absolutely does NOT have to follow that format, but you may find it useful in guiding your thinking. The key thing is that there is some thesis statement in the intro. Some sentence that succinctly sums up the point you are going to try and make in your blog (in the example above, the second sentence is the thesis). When you have identified and honed that sentence, underline it for me. Don’t forget, you also have to add key ideas; statements that support the thesis you are trying to make (in this example, the last sentence with XYZ).

After drafting the introduction and thesis, ask yourself:

- Does the introduction grab the attention of the reader, and treat their misconception as a reasonable (if ill-informed) view to hold?
- Is this a common misconception? Alternatively, is this a topic that is poorly understood by a large swathe of people? Is this topic something a wide audience would benefit from learning about?

The draft of your title, thesis and intro paragraph are due on June 12<sup>th</sup>. In total, it should be 5-10 sentences in length. Please note, by “draft,” I don’t mean “shoddy, ill-conceived, half-arsed document.” This should be in good shape when you send it to me. It’s a draft in the sense that I will provide feedback for you to help you hone it and make it even better. Keep in mind, the more work you put into your drafts, the more points you will get, AND the less work you have to do later when you revise your work.

So it's in your best interest to do a good job from the very start. This will be graded using the following rubric (below).

This component of the course is worth 5% of your overall grade.

<b>Introduction/Thesis Rubric</b>				
Points	1	2	3	4
Hook	There is no attention getter.	There is a beginning, but it doesn't really grab the interest of the reader.	The beginning somewhat grabs the reader, and gives some clue as to what is coming.	The beginning grabs the reader, and gives clues as to what is coming.
Thesis Sentence	The sentence does not state the main idea.	The sentence somewhat states the main idea.	The sentence states the main idea, but it may be slightly unclear or disconnected to the rest of the paragraph.	The sentence clearly states the main idea and sets up the rest of the paragraph.
Key Ideas	There are no key ideas that support the main idea.	There is only one key idea, leaving the paragraph incomplete.	The key ideas are present, but not completely clear.	The key ideas are clear.

## 6) Draft of key sentences:

The entire blog should be in the range of 1000-2000 words long. Assuming each paragraph is roughly 100-200 words long, that means your blog should be around 10 paragraphs long. The easiest way to organize your blog (and your thoughts!) is to create a set of key sentences (sometimes called “topic sentences”). Your blog should be organized around arguments and evidence. In a short(ish) blog like this, each paragraph should make one (and only one) argument.

Begin by putting closely-related ideas together. Once they are placed side by side, you can discard weak arguments and sharpen strong ones. This process of sorting and sharpening your ideas makes your prose more understandable to others. Then, check to see if every paragraph has a key or topic sentence, or a sentence that summarizes the argument of the paragraph. This sentence should appear early in the paragraph before the evidence. Readers expect nonfiction to have one topic per paragraph, with the argument announced in a key or topic sentence.

Key sentences should have several characteristics: The key sentence should be short: It should announce the topic simply with little detail without trying to prove the point—the rest of the paragraph serves that function. A key sentence should be broad enough to “cover” everything in the paragraph but not be so broad that it raises other issues. For example, if you are talking about apples and oranges, you must

mention both apples and oranges in the key sentence—and you cannot bring up bananas. The key sentence should include key words in its subject; that is, if the topic of the paragraph is “Napoleon,” then “Napoleon”—and not “he”—should appear as the subject of the key sentence. Finally, the key sentence should answer this question affirmatively, “Does everything after the key sentence address the topic of the key sentence?” (Gray, 2015, p. 45).

What you’re turning in for this section (on June 14<sup>th</sup>) is not the whole paragraphs, but just the key sentences. Create an after-the-fact outline by making a list of your key sentences (Gray, 2015, pp. 53-56). Place each key sentence under your thesis in a list. If the key sentences are enough to make your argument effectively, and to move the conversation along, then writing the supporting sentences (that fill in the rest of the paragraphs) should follow quite naturally.

This component of the course is worth 10% of your overall grade.

<b>Key/Topic Sentences and Outline Rubric</b>				
Points	1	2	3	4
Key/Topic Sentences	Missing, invalid, or inappropriate topic sentences; main ideas are missing.	Acceptable topic sentences present one idea each.	Clearly stated topic sentences present one main idea each.	Interesting, original topic sentences, reflecting thought and insight; focused on one interesting main idea each.
Organization and Transitions	No discernible pattern of organization; Unrelated details; no transitions.	Acceptable arrangement of examples; transitions may be weak.	Details are arranged in a logical progression; appropriate transitions.	Thoughtful, logical progression of supporting examples; Mature transitions between ideas.

## 7) Draft of blog:

The next thing to do (and eventually turn in, on June 16<sup>th</sup>) is self-assess what you’ve put together, and create a thorough draft of the entire blog, making sure to include your supplemental materials. It is worth noting that a subsection of the rubric used to evaluate the blog draft (below) is identical to that used to evaluate your key sentences. I will grade more lenient on the draft of the key sentences, and more critically here, once you’ve had my feedback and been given the opportunity to hone key/topic sentences and organization/transition. If you follow my feedback and work to revise your work, getting all the points on those sections here should be very very easy.

In effect, this is where you “put it all together.” By this point in the course, you will have read a lot, thought about your topic, discussed material with your classmates, written a solid introduction and thesis

statement, found supporting materials, and created an outline of key sentences. All that's left to do is fill in the paragraphs around your key sentences with supporting text and evidence. Creating an entire blog that is this extensive is a great deal of work, but you will have built up all the components bit by bit, so completing the final steps should not be too taxing. Below, you'll find the rubric used to grade the draft of your blog. This component of the course is worth 20% of your overall grade, so please take the draft seriously!

<b>Blog Rubric</b>				
Points	1	2	3	4
Key/Topic Sentences	Missing, invalid, or inappropriate topic sentences; main ideas are missing.	Acceptable topic sentences present one idea each.	Clearly stated topic sentences present one main idea each.	Interesting, original topic sentences, reflecting thought and insight; focused on one interesting main idea each.
Supporting Details	Insufficient, vague, or undeveloped examples.	Sufficient number of examples and details that relate to the topic.	Examples and details relate to the topic and some explanation is included.	Interesting, concrete and descriptive examples and details with explanations that relate to the topic.
Organization and Transitions	No discernible pattern of organization; Unrelated details; no transitions.	Acceptable arrangement of examples; transitions may be weak.	Details are arranged in a logical progression; appropriate transitions.	Thoughtful, logical progression of supporting examples; Mature transitions between ideas.
Style	Inconsistent or Inappropriate tone; Awkward, unclear, or incomplete sentences; Bland diction, poor word choice.	Acceptable tone; some variety in sentence structures; Adequate diction and word choices.	Appropriate tone; Clear sentences with varied structures; Effective diction.	Appropriate tone, distinctive voice; pleasing variety in sentence structure; Vivid diction, precise word choices.
Mechanics	Distracting errors in usage, spelling, or punctuation.	A few errors in usage, spelling, or punctuation. (3-4)	Some errors, but none major, in usage, spelling, or punctuation. (1-2)	Consistent standard English usage, spelling, and punctuation. No errors.

## **8) Final blog:**

Once you turn in a draft of your blog, I will provide you with feedback. The earlier you get the draft to me, the more chance I will be able to provide you with thorough feedback. You will then have a few days to work on the blog, incorporate my feedback, and really get it cleaned up and ready for prime time. You'll note that I have given you the entire week of June 19-23 to do this. I will do my best to get the feedback to you by the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> (students will be provided with feedback in the order in which I receive them) so you can have several days to complete the revisions. I will use the same exact rubric to evaluate your final blog that I used to evaluate the draft. So if you take my feedback seriously, and perform the revisions thoroughly, there is no reason you should not get all the points possible on the final blog.

This component of the course is worth 15% of your overall grade. It's worth a little less than the draft, as you will have received feedback telling you how to acquire the full points for this component. But it's still worth a lot, so take your revisions seriously, please!

## **9) Comments on other students' blog:**

The second-to-last component of the course is simply to read the other students' blogs (which will be made available to you, but with the names of the authors redacted), and comment on them. There are a lot of students in this course; 18 currently, to be precise. You will need to read and comment on five of them (or more, if you wish; you will simply need to indicate which nine you wish to be graded on). You may choose which five you wish to comment upon.

I will use the same rubric as the discussion boards to evaluate your comments on the student blogs, and they should be of the same length. Keep in mind, you need to write more than "I really liked this content," or "you're a really great writer." Those sorts of comments are wonderful, and should be encouraged. But your commentary needs to be more substantive than that, just as it does on the discussion boards. And please do NOT criticize your classmates' writing, choice of supplemental material, and so on. It's okay to engage in a healthy debate, or to disagree with your classmates. But simply using this as a forum to "troll" or cut down your fellow students is not appropriate, and will result in you losing all the points for this section of the course. Please be constructive, courteous, and kind.

All comments should be posted to student blogs by June 27<sup>th</sup>, and this will be worth 5% of your grade in total (1% per comment).

## **10) Responses to others on your own blog:**

Finally, at long last, you are at the last requirement of the course. By the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup>, all student comments should appear on your blog. You will then have the last day of the course to respond to those comments. You must respond to three students (or more, if you wish; simply let me know which three responses you wish to be graded).

Once more, please be constructive, courteous, and kind in your responses. I will again use the same rubric to evaluate your responses, which are due on June 28<sup>th</sup>. This final section will be worth 5% of your overall grade (1.67% per response).

### 11) Extra credit for the top three blogs (students vote):

But wait, there's more! Don't fret, this is just extra credit. On the last day of the course, you should have already read all the other students' blogs. You will then email me with a rank-ordered list of your top three favorite blogs. When considering which is the "best," please consider: How professionally they were put together; how thought-provoking they were; how fun and entertaining they were; and how much you learned from them.

I will tally up the votes and announce to the class which three were voted the best. The best one will receive three points of extra credit toward their final blog grade. The next best will receive two rubric points, and the next best after that will receive one. Receiving more than 100% on your final blog grade is therefore possible, so please use this as an incentive to put together really great material, and try to boost your grade a bit.

### OTHER POLICIES AND INFORMATION:

**Late policy:** You will lose 10% of your grade for every day that an item (e.g., discussion board post, various approvals and drafts) is late. For instance, if you are late to turn in the draft of your blog, it will be worth 10% less than it would have been otherwise. If you are more than three days late, you will lose all points for that assignment. Stay on top of deadlines, please! I don't like removing points unnecessarily, and I will not negotiate this policy with you.

**Grade calculation:** Book chapter discussions are worth 15% of your grade (in total), media discussions are worth 15% of your grade (in total), topic approval is worth 5%, external materials are worth 5% (in total), the key sentences draft is worth 10%, the blog draft is worth 20%, the final blog is worth 15%, the blog comments are worth 5% (in total), and the responses on your own blog are worth 5% (in total).

Final letter grades are assigned as follows:

Percentage	Letter Grade
98% +	A+
93-97%	A
90-92%	A-
88-89%	B+
83-87%	B
80-82%	B-
78-79%	C+
70-77%	C
60-69%	D
59% or less	F

**Incomplete Grade:** The current catalog statement is “Instructors may assign *I* grades only if the student is unable to complete the course due to circumstances beyond the student’s control that develop after the last day to withdraw from the course. Examples of appropriate circumstances include documented illness, documented death or crisis in the student’s immediate family, and similar circumstances. Job related circumstances are generally not appropriate grounds for assigning an *I* grade. In no case is an *I* grade to be used to avoid the assigning of *D*, *F*, *U*, or *RR* grades for marginal or failing work.”

Complete information regarding the use of an “I” Incomplete grade can be found in the courses catalog (the link below is to the 2014-15 catalog as the 2015-16 catalog is not yet online):

<http://nmsu.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2014-2015/Undergraduate-Catalog/General-Information/Regulations/Incomplete-Grade>

**Academic Misconduct:** The Student Code of Conduct defines academic misconduct, non-academic misconduct and the consequences or penalties for each. The Student Code of Conduct is available in the NMSU Student Handbook online:

<http://studenthandbook.nmsu.edu/>

Academic misconduct is explained here:

<http://studenthandbook.nmsu.edu/student-code-of-conduct/academic-misconduct/>

### **Discrimination and Disability Accommodation:**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) covers issues relating to disability and accommodations. If a student has questions or needs an accommodation in the classroom (all medical information is treated confidentially), contact:

Trudy Luken, Director

Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

Corbett Center Student Union, Rm. 208

Phone: (575) 646-6840

E-mail: [sas@nmsu.edu](mailto:sas@nmsu.edu)

Website: <http://sas.nmsu.edu/>

NMSU policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation and protected veterans status.

Furthermore, Title IX prohibits sex discrimination to include sexual misconduct: sexual violence (sexual assault, rape), sexual harassment and retaliation.

For more information on discrimination issues, Title IX, Campus SaVE Act, NMSU Policy Chapter 3.25, NMSU’s complaint process, or to file a complaint contact:

Lauri Millot

Title IX Coordinator

Agustin Diaz  
Title IX Deputy Coordinator  
Office of Institutional Equity (OIE)  
O'Loughlin House, 1130 University Avenue  
Phone: (575) 646-3635  
E-mail: [equity@nmsu.edu](mailto:equity@nmsu.edu)  
Website: <http://eeo.nmsu.edu/>

**Other NMSU Resources:**

NMSU Police Department:	(575) 646-3311	<a href="http://www.nmsupolice.com">www.nmsupolice.com</a>
NMSU Police Victim Services:	(575) 646-3424	
NMSU Counseling Center:	(575) 646-2731	
NMSU Dean of Students:	(575) 646-1722	
For Any On-campus Emergencies:	911	

**CHEATING/PLAGIARISM POLICY:**

Plagiarism is using another person's work without acknowledgment, making it appear to be one's own. Intentional and unintentional instances of plagiarism are considered instances of academic misconduct and are subject to disciplinary action such as failure on the assignment, failure of the course or dismissal from the university. The NMSU Library has more information and help on how to avoid plagiarism at <http://lib.nmsu.edu/plagiarism/>

**EMAIL / CONTACT POLICY:**

My typical response time to emails is between 24 and 72 hours. If you don't get a reply, please double check that you have the correct address ([mhout@nmsu.edu](mailto:mhout@nmsu.edu)) and try emailing me again. I prefer that you send emails to my personal email rather than message me through Canvas. It's easier for me to respond through direct email, and therefore you are more likely to get a speedy response from me there.

If you are having any trouble with the content, or need to have any kind of meeting/consultation with me, I am happy to do so. If you are local to Las Cruces, I will try to make myself available in person. Alternatively, I am perfectly happy to have Skype meetings with students to hash things out. Just please try to give me some advanced notice so I can fit the meeting into my schedule, as my schedule fills up rather quickly.

**DISCLAIMER:**

This syllabus is subject to change without notice!

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

\*\*\* Please note: This schedule is subject to change, according to class demands! \*\*\*

2017		May / June		
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
22	23	24 First day of class: Familiarize yourself with the syllabus, get a jump start on readings	25 MTM Ch1; John Oliver Science Reporting	26 MTM Ch2; Nancy Kanwisher TED Talk
29 No class; Memorial day holiday	30 MTM Ch3; NPR article on Phineas Gage	31 MTM Ch4; Sawbones episode on Phrenology	01 MTM Ch5; Atlantic article on brain scientists	02 MTM Ch6 Scientific American article on the dead salmon study
05 MTM Ch7; Daniel Tammet documentary	06 MTM Ch8; Boy Who Couldn't Forget documentary	07 Sacks Intro to Part 1; Article on Brenda Milner	08 Sacks Ch1; Article on patient H.M.; Topic approval due	09 Sacks Ch6; Radiolab episode on Alzheimer's; External materials approval due
12 Sacks Intro to Part 2; All in the Mind episode on making brains; Draft of thesis and	13 Sacks Ch10; Slate article on Darryl Bem	14 Sacks Intro to Part 3; PBS profile of Alex the parrot; Draft of key sentences due	15 Sacks Ch15; Curious Cases of Rutherford/Fry on animal intelligence	16 Draft of blog due
19	20	21	22	23 Final blog due
26	27 Comments on student blogs due	28 Last day of class; responses on your blog due; votes for best blog due	29	30