



Department of Psychology

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
238 Townshend Hall  
1885 Neil Avenue Mall  
Columbus, OH 43210-1222

March 21, 2006

Curriculum Committee  
College of Arts and Sciences  
The Ohio State University

Dear Curriculum Committee members:

This is a course change request for Psychology 313. This is a dual request to both change the *name* of Psych 313 from Introduction to Psychobiology to Behavioral Neuroscience, and to increase the *number of credits* from four to five. In this letter I will give some background information, then provide an argument for the name change and for the change in credit hours.

The course was first developed by Dr. Martin Sarter, who conceived it, in his words, as “an inch wide and a mile deep”. His European-style approach to the course was to make the students “think like neuroscientists” by exposing them to a few basic concepts in great depth. Since Dr. Sarter’s departure from the university, I have taught the course and have broadened its scope, but have been hampered in this effort by the course’s limited number of contact and credit hours. The course currently is divided into three sections, with the first section covering basic neuroscience principles, the second covering the visual system in depth, and the third section, surveying several applied areas including sleep, learning and memory, and psychopathology. A copy of the current syllabus is enclosed.

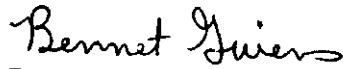
The proposed name change for the course is based on the national emergence of the name *Behavioral Neuroscience* to describe the field that was previously called variously psychobiology, biopsychology, physiological psychology, and biological psychology. Within the department, we have recently re-named our sub-area as Behavioral Neuroscience, and the area of specialization for our undergraduate curriculum as Behavioral Neuroscience, and our graduate program as Behavioral Neuroscience. We are requesting that Psychology 313 be renamed to reflect the current name used for this field both within our department and throughout the nation.

The increase in credit hours is being proposed to allow for a more thorough coverage of the field of Behavioral Neuroscience. Many of the students taking this course have a minimal background in biological sciences, and consequently course time is taken to cover basic biological concepts, like cell biology and genetics, in order to put in context more specific descriptions of brain structure and function. In the proposal, this background in basic biology will be able to be bolstered so that the students are able to better understand the biology of the nervous system.

There are two reasons to increase the topical areas covered in the course. First, the field is much broader than what is covered currently. Fully half of the textbook chapters are not being taught in the course. While it is not possible to survey the entire field within a single course, the proposal is to add significant missing pieces, so that the student will come away with a good grounding in the field, and the course will fit better with the expectations that graduate and professional schools as well as employers would have for someone who has completed this course. A second reason to enhance the topical coverage relates to the gateway nature of this course. Psych 313 serves as a prerequisite for all of our upper-level Behavioral Neuroscience courses, and the proposal is to more closely align the information presented in Psych 313 with the courses for which it serves as a prerequisite. For example, the proposal is to expand Psych 313 to cover basic neuroendocrine system physiology which will better prepare students for Psychology 644, Hormones and Behavior, as well as Psychology 650, Psychobiology of Stress. I have included a revised and expanded syllabus that details the changes in the course content.

Please let me know if you want or need additional information concerning this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bennet Givens".

Bennet Givens, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor