FALL 2015

PSYC2230 - *Introduction to Biopsychology*

**Writing-in-the-Majors Section**

Essay 2: Science and Policy

*Description*

Throughout the semester, our beloved WIM section has been looking at the way that research in biopsychology influences, and is influenced by, society. For your second essay, you will be digging deeper into this connection. You will be writing a policy recommendation that advocates for a specific policy change, based on current research in biopsychology. This assignment will be a chance for you to showcase your knowledge and develop skills for persuasive argumentation.

Here’s an example of how scientists might come to write policy recommendations: you and your colleagues study the effect of carbohydrate consumption on memory. You divide your mice into 3 groups, each getting a low-, medium-, or high-carbohydrate diet for 5 days. At the end of those 5 days, you discover that the more carbohydrate in the diet, the better the mice were at finding the hidden platform in a water maze. Your group realizes that this finding has strong implications for nutrition and performance in schools. You discover that the carbohydrate levels currently in school lunches is far lower than optimum. You decide to write a policy recommendation to your state government to increase the amount of carbohydrate-containing foods in school lunches.

*Content*

A policy recommendation is simply written advice prepared for some group that has the authority to make decisions. For your assignment, you will pretend to be a researcher and you will be writing to a relevant federal Cabinet. Your essay should inform these senior decision-makers about an issue, provide an in-depth review of what is known about an issue, and, finally, recommends a policy based on scientific research.

You choose the issue and the solution! It could be any of the research we’ve discussed in lecture or in section, it could be something outside of the course completely, but it needs to related to biopsychology. Your policy recommendation should do, at least, the following:

1. Identifies and explains a policy issue
2. Discusses the relevant background and research behind the issue
3. Identifies the consequences of the current policy, given the research
4. Provides an alternative to the current policy
5. Includes at least 2 research-based reasons for the recommended policy

Your audience is politicians on a federal Cabinet, so your essay must be accessible to a wide readership. Avoid jargon, but do not oversimplify; be accurate and precise throughout.

*Format Guidelines*

The format of this essay is flexible. As long as you are able to cover the 5 content items above, be creative with the structure and format.

Make sure you adhere to the following:

*Title Page*

* Include Title, name, email, college, institutional affiliation

*Length*

* 5-10 pages, 12pt Times New Romans, Double-spaced
* Reference list does not count as page

*References*

* Your paper should include at least 5 references to primary research articles, no more than 20 references.
* Your in-text citations and reference list should follow the APA style (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

*Writing Timeline*

1. (Optional) Draft Feedback (Thursday, 12/03/15, 22:00)
   1. If you’re interested in getting some feedback from me on your essay, send it to me before 12/03/15, 22:00.
   2. I’ll give some quick feedback to you about the structure of your argument and the quality of writing.
2. Final Essay due (Friday, 12/11/15, 22:00)
   1. It’s time! See details under *Submission*.

*Grading*

The rubric for this paper is designed to assess quality of writing and content. You will get the rubric in section. Remember, the important part of this assignment is that you effectively communicate a research-based policy recommendation.

*Submission*

The final paper is due during final exam week on 12/11/15 at 22:00. No extensions can be requested for this paper. Late papers will be accepted and graded up to 12/15/15 at 8:00. However, the highest grade a late paper can receive is a B regardless of how late it is.

Papers should be emailed as a pdf file to Michelle Tong (tt389@cornell.edu).