**Neuroscience Journal Club**

**Faculty:** Joel Mainland, Ph.D. ([jmainland@monell.org](mailto:jmainland@monell.org)) and Heath D. Schmidt, Ph.D. ([hschmidt@mail.med.upenn.edu](mailto:hschmidt@mail.med.upenn.edu)) will co-direct this course

**Time / Location:** Monday, 3:30 – 5:00 pm, Barchi Library (Journal Club)

Wednesday, 12 – 1 pm, Barchi Library (Lunch with MINS speaker)

Wednesday, 4 – 5 pm, Barchi Library (MINS seminar)

MINS Seminar speakers, faculty mentors and Journal Club papers available at <http://www.med.upenn.edu/ngg/JournalClubPapers.shtml>

**First session:** Two 2nd year NGG graduate students will present the first Journal Club.

**Course Description and Details**

The goals of this weekly course are to learn how to read and critique research papers; to learn how to present a polished, professional summary of a recent paper, and to acquire some background information and context to more fully appreciate research seminars in the Wednesday MINS seminar series.

Each Monday session will consist of two 25-minute presentations of a research paper related to that week’s Wednesday seminar. Each presentation will be followed by a student-led discussion (~15 minutes). Each Wednesday session consists of attending the one-hour formal MINS seminar by faculty invited from other institutions to speak about their work, published and unpublished. Attendance at both the Monday and Wednesday sessions is required.

Papers are posted on the web at the Neuroscience Journal Club site (see website listed above). Each student who is not presenting is required to read and be prepared to discuss each of the two papers assigned weekly.

Following the first class, subsequent presentations will be by first year students. You will sign up for presentations and lunch with the seminar speakers at the first Journal Club session. A faculty mentor will help presenters read and understand the assigned papers and prepare a power point presentation. Presenters should meet with their mentors at least twice to discuss the papers and polish the presentations. The schedule of Journal Club presenters is posted on the Neuroscience Journal Club website.

See additional guidelines for non-presenters and presenters below.

**Guidelines for Monday Journal Club meetings**

**Non-presenters:**

(1) We ask that you spend a minimum of 1 hour reading each of the assigned papers prior to class. If there is a third paper listed, it is optional.

(2) We ask that you bring to each Journal Club meeting 4 very brief paragraphs (each with a maximum of 4 non-run-on sentences) answering the following questions about each paper you read:

(a) What was the main take-home message of the paper?

(b) What part did you like best?

(c) What part did you find the least convincing or the most confusing? and

(d) After reading the paper, what one question would you ask the author?

Please no handwritten documents! Each document should not exceed one page. These assignments will be collected at the start of the Journal Club, and, when appropriate, will be used as a basis for discussion. If the student-lead discussion wanes at any point, the course directors will randomly select a few answers and have the authors explain them to the class.

**Presenters:**

(1) Please meet with your faculty mentor no later than one week prior to your Journal Club presentation to discuss which papers to present and determine who will present which papers. Faculty are very busy, especially in the fall – so schedule your meetings with the faculty mentor AT LEAST 2 WEEKS IN ADVANCE. You should meet with your mentor at least once to discuss your respective paper assignment and at least once to prepare your power point presentation.

(2) If you change the papers that will be presented and read by the class, you should notify all students and faculty no later than the preceding Monday, and send the course directors a PDF of the paper.

(3) Feel free to consult your mentor as necessary about the papers and your presentation. Coordinate your presentations with each other to make sure the appropriate background is presented without redundancy.

(4) Your mentor should listen to a formal run-through of your presentation when both presenters are ready. Remember – schedule sessions with your faculty mentor in advance!!

(5) Each presenter should plan a 25 minute presentation. The first presenter should add ~ 5 minutes of general background information. Presentations should also include a discussion of potential future directions in which the work could be directed.

(6) Each presenter will receive comments within a day or two of their presentations from the faculty mentor and either course director.

**Wednesday sessions**

Everyone is encouraged to ask questions of the seminar speaker. These can be issues that were raised at the Journal Club, at lunch with the speaker, or in the seminar itself. After the seminar, you should discuss the content and format with each other, and we will generally discuss the seminar in the first few minutes of the following Journal Club.

In addition, there is the opportunity to have lunch with seminar speakers, from 12 -1 pm on Wednesday. These meetings are a chance to get to know the speaker, learn about their background, and get some insight into the way they approach their science. Each student must sign up for at least FOUR lunch meetings with the seminar speaker per semester. A minimum of 4 students should be in attendance at each lunch.

**Evaluations**

Students will receive oral and/or written feedback on their journal club presentation from the faculty mentor and/or journal club faculty. In addition, the students will receive a grade at the end of the class, which is evaluated based on a student’s presentations (50%), participation in the student-led discussions (30%), and weekly written assignments (20%). A satisfactory evaluation for a total of two semesters is needed to complete this NGG requirement.