



Introductory Course in Neuroscience

Some tips for students and teachers

The Course is mandatory for students of the ZNZ PhD Program in Neuroscience. It consists of two blocks of 14 weekly 2-hour lectures to give a broad overview in major topics and concepts of Neuroscience, and to some extent on research areas that are well represented at the ZNZ.

I. Advice for teachers

- ✓ Students have highly diverse backgrounds. Many of them have not studied in Switzerland and have not followed the typical curricula offered by Swiss universities.
- ✓ Most students in the audience have completed their studies in the field of life sciences, psychology or engineering. However, only a minority have a good knowledge of neurobiology.
- ✓ Your lecture should convey the basic concepts, explain key findings that led to the emergence of this field, introduce the methods, and give a flair why this area of research is important and exciting.
- ✓ Do not pack your lecture with more information than what a good student can ingest within 90 minutes of attentive listening.
- ✓ Guide the students by providing further reading tips (specific book chapters, key reviews accessible on PubMed, etc.).
- ✓ A hand-out is greatly appreciated by the students.
- ✓ Please give students some info (bullet points) on what is relevant for the exam.

II. Advice for students

- ✓ The course may confront you with many areas of Neuroscience that are new to you; attending the lectures is the best way to understand the basic concepts, but should be supplemented by reading on these topics. Make sure to receive a list of further reading.
- ✓ The autumn term focuses on brain structure and development, cellular neuroscience, and synaptic transmission; the spring term is devoted to systems and clinical neuroscience. The course can be started both in spring or in autumn, but you will understand many concepts only once you have completed the whole course.
- ✓ Teachers try hard to make their presentation understandable to a heterogeneous audience. Be open-minded when confronted to a foreign topic; you may learn something useful for your thesis.
- ✓ This course is your course. Ask questions, or the lecturer will not realize that an explanation was unclear.
- ✓ Two mandatory exams are part of the Introductory Course – one for the fall and one for the spring term. Should you fail in one exam (grade < 4, which happens rarely), you can repeat it.
- ✓ Seek advice from PhD students of previous years. They can give you good learning tips and help you preparing the exam.
- ✓ All teachers of the course are members of the ZNZ. Feel free to contact them if you are interested in the topic of their lecture or if you need special advice in this area of Neuroscience.
- ✓ Any criticism and suggestions for improvement are welcome. Contact us anytime, or fill in the evaluation form that we will send at the end of each course.