9.12: Neurobiology Lab

Term Evaluated: Fall 2010
Response Rate: 7 responses out of 24 students

Recommended Pre-requisites: Most responded that none were necessary, but some suggested that 7.01x and 9.01 were helpful

Motivation for taking the course: Some looking to fulfill pre-med lab requirements, others the course 9 lab requirement. One student said that they were interested in learning more general molecular biology techniques as opposed to course 9 specific skills and that’s why they took this course.

Overall Subject Rating

Subject Difficulty Rating

Best things about the course:
- Wet labs were fun and provided a good overview of molecular biology techniques
- Good feedback on lab reports

Worst things about the course:
- Writing and science TA’s being inconsistent in grading
- Dry lab sessions were disorganized and didn’t ask enough of students
- Sometimes the labs didn’t end up working

About half of respondents said that the class was fun or useful, but a lot of work. People said it was particularly useful in helping with their scientific writing skills and lab techniques. Some students said that the course was not well organized and that the dry lab (paper review) session didn’t help them learn as much as they expected. One student also mentioned that the first lab session was not as well organized as the second, and generally took more time than was allotted.

Students seemed to agree that the course was fairly easy if you had wet lab experience and a strong background in biology, but that it still took a lot of time. Many said that the lab reports were quite time consuming, but that grading got easier throughout the semester.
The Readings: Students unanimously agreed that the textbook was not necessary, but the readings for dry lab sessions were.

Grading: Most agreed that grading was fair, but some complained about unclear or contradictory expectations on the written lab reports. One person mentioned, however, that because lab reports were returned late, it didn’t give students a chance to learn and improve from each one.

What future students should know about this course:
- Make sure to leave enough time for the course – treat it like an 18 unit class
- It’s easier than 7.02, so if you’re looking for an alternative to that requirement, this is a good course to consider
- Make sure to ask for feedback on reports to clearly understand expectations

Students said that she was very knowledgeable and really wanted students to learn. She was also extremely available outside of class. However, others said that she didn’t organize dry lab sessions well and was not always good at getting people to participate.

Students said that she was open to feedback, and taught the concepts clearly. She was open to helping out in wet lab sections and was passionate about biology.