COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:
The independent study course provides an advanced look at research for students interested in pursuing graduate school and/or a career in research. By working on various projects, students will have the opportunity to learn about the planning and design of research projects, data collection, data entry and preparation, data analyses, and the presentation of research findings. Upon completion of the course, students should possess an advanced understanding of the fundamental principles and procedures of psychological research. Students do NOT need to have experience doing research to be a research assistant in Behavioral Neuroscience.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
In order to be involved in research in the Behavioral Neuroscience, you should be aware of the following requirements:

1) You will need to complete three hours of work per week for each one course credit for which you enroll (e.g., to earn three credits, you’ll need to work nine hours per week).

2) We will have lab meetings most weeks. Please set this hour aside and plan to attend meetings unless otherwise instructed. This lab meeting is required over and above your weekly lab commitments (discussed above). One lab meeting per semester can be missed, as long as a reasonable excuse is provided. Missing more than two lab meeting will negatively affect your grade (e.g., a grade of “A” will be dropped to “B”).

3) In order to be involved in research in the Behavioral Neuroscience, you will need to be trained to do various tasks. All students are expected to participate in a variety of tasks; be sure to talk with Dr. Sparkman, if you need to be trained on additional tasks. Before participating in data collection, you need to complete the CITI (research ethics) training.

4) You will be required to turn in a brief paper (approximately two pages) at the end of the semester. Most likely this will entail a reflection on your experiences in the lab, but assignments will be tailored to the interests of each student. Additionally, student will prepare relevant reports on methodology and data. And complete an abstract suitable for submission to a regional research conference (SWPA). This will count towards your weekly time commitment.

GRADING:
Grading in this course is based primarily on your completion of the required hours of work (dependent on the number of units you are enrolled in). Your hours will be tracked, and we will regularly discuss how you are doing in completing your required hours throughout the semester. Completion of your required hours and performance that is at least satisfactory will earn you a grade of approximately a “C.”
In order to earn an “A” in this course, you need to be extremely reliable and helpful in completion of the central activities (mentioned above) that the lab will be involved in this semester. Any unexcused absences from lab meetings will result in a lowered grade. Any failure to complete responsibilities associated with participants in our research this semester (e.g., not showing up to collect data) will dramatically lower your grade. If you are irresponsible in dealing with participants on more than one occasion you will be asked to drop this course. Grades will be computed as follows:

- Completion of required hours 50%
- Attendance at lab meetings 15%
- Regular participation in data collection 15%
- Quality of work, conscientiousness, etc. 20%

**LAB TASKS:**
- Attend weekly meetings
- Complete CITI (ethics) training
- Conduct literature searches; write article summaries
- Learn behavioral analysis procedures
- Collect data
- Data entry/cleaning
- Data analysis/interpretation

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES:**
- Work on short- and long-term academic and career goals
- Work on graduate school/job applications (e.g., personal statement, CV/resume)
- Consider membership in professional associations (e.g., APA, APS, SfN)
- Poster presentations at local/regional conferences*
- Apply for grants to support lab and personal research projects*

*Not all students will have the opportunity to present research findings or apply for grants. Participation in these activities will depend on length of time in the lab and level of student ability/commitment. High-performing students may be eligible for a letter of recommendation from Dr. Sparkman.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (A-9.1):**
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism. All forms of academic dishonesty will be dealt with seriously and immediately. Please respect SFASU, yourself, and me enough not to participate in academic dishonesty.

**DEFINITION OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assignment; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to: (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the
work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy and the appeals process at:

http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp
http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_appeals_students.asp

**Disputes About Course Grades:**
Please contact us if you have any questions about your grade or the conduct of this course. If you wish to formally dispute a grade, please refer to the University policy:

http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_appeals_students.asp.

**WITHHELD GRADES SEMESTER GRADES POLICY (A-54):**
At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students With Disabilities:**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

**F-1 Visa Holders:**
There are important federal regulations pertaining to distance education activity for F-1 Visa holders. All students with an F-1 Visa should follow the instructions at the following link to make sure they are in compliance: http://sfaonline.sfasu.edu/f1visaholders.html.

**Syllabus Change Policy:**
This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. We reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus and course tasks as necessary. We will announce any changes both in class and on D2L.