



College of Natural Science
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Physiology

PSL 450 Physiology in Health and Disease (3 Cr)

Fall 2025

Course Website: <https://d2l.msu.edu/d2l/home/2487100>

Delivery Mode: Hybrid (online asynchronous lectures, plus weekly in-person active learning)

In-person Meeting Time:

Section 001 - Tuesdays 2:40-4:00 PM

Section 002 - Thursdays 2:40-4:00 PM

In-person meeting location: Natural Resources Building, Room 152

Prerequisites: PSL 431 and PSL 432 and Completion of Tier I Writing Requirement. Enrollment is restricted to physiology majors in NatSci or Lyman Briggs College.

1. COURSE OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION:

In PSL 431 and 432 you learned the fundamental principles of physiology. In this course, you will apply your knowledge of physiology to contemporary research topics. We will focus on four clinically significant disease topics: inflammatory diseases, metabolic diseases, heart failure, and epilepsy. Our goal is to cover those disease topics in depth, contrast differences between the healthy- and disease-states, and introduce common experimental methods and design.

Each week, you will watch an asynchronous lecture video and then read a related research article. During class, you will work in teams of four to complete an assignment that is related to the research article. When teammates help each other understand the experiments prior to class, the in-class assignments go more smoothly, and grades tend to be higher. Thus, we recommend that teams meet outside of class time (either virtually or in-person) to discuss the research article.

Your grade will be based on the weekly in-class assignments (“Research Boxes”), two exams, and two reflective essays on teamwork.

1A. Research Box assignments

Each week, the instructor will post a recorded lecture on the pathophysiology of their disease-related topic. After watching the lecture, you should read the research article and discuss it with your team. Prior to class, your goal is to help each member of your team understand the experiments so that your entire team is ready to tackle the Research Box together in class. Sharing knowledge builds trust within a team, so ask questions when you do not understand something, and venture an answer when a team member asks. We want you to learn from each other!

After reading the research article and prepping with your team, you will then meet in-person during class time and work with your team to complete one or two Research Box assignments. Each Research Box relates to one figure from the research article. Each Research Box consists of four types of questions:

1. Visual model of the **experimental design** (typically 25%)
2. Visual representation of the **results** (typically 25%)
3. Changing experimental **parameters** (typically 25%)
4. **Data interpretation** True/False questions with rationale (typically 25%)

1B. Exams

Through the Research Box assignments, you will get weekly practice discussing and interpreting data. Then, your data interpretation skills will be assessed on two exams. The exams will consist of two types of questions:

1. **Content** questions that are largely based on the lecture videos. Background knowledge from PSL 431 and 432 might be necessary.
2. **Data interpretation** (True/False). You will be given a figure that is new to you, plus a list of statements. You will decide whether each statement is true or false based on the data in the figure.

1C. Reflective Essays

For the weekly Research Box assignments, you will learn from your teammates, which can be very rewarding. You will also rely on your teammates for part of your grade, which can be stressful. There are things that each student can do to improve the way their team functions, to lower stress, and to increase the reward. Research has shown that people are better at teamwork if they are specifically taught about teamwork.¹ Thus, we will use the teamwork heuristic of Salas *et al.*² to help you understand six elements of teamwork: cooperation, coordination, cognition, conflict, coaching, and communication. At two points in the semester, you will write a reflective essay on an element of teamwork and describe your plan for incorporating tips from Salas *et al* to improve the functioning of your team. Your reflective essays will be graded according to the Reflection on Action Rubric³, which we introduced to you in PSL 101 Frontiers in Physiology.

1. Earnest, M.S., Williams J., Aagaard E. M., Toward an Optimal Pedagogy for Teamwork. *Academic Medicine*. 2017;92:1378–1381.
2. Salas E., Shuffler M.L., Thayer A.L., Bedwell W.L., Lazzara E.H. Understanding and improving teamwork in organizations: A scientifically based practical guide. *Human Resource Management*. 2015;54:599-622.
3. Hoffman LA, Shew RL, Vu TR, Brokaw JJ, Frankel RM. Is reflective ability associated with professionalism lapses during medical school? *Acad Med*. 2016 Jun;91(6):853-7.

2. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By studying the recorded lectures, participating in Research Box assignments, and reflecting on teamwork, students will be able to do the following:

1. Recall and apply content knowledge in different disease areas.
2. Apply quantitative thinking and critical reasoning to answer questions in different disease areas.
3. Explain experimental design and data interpretation.
4. Interpret data presented in graphical, tabular, and micrograph form.
5. Compare, contrast, and make inferences from published research studies.
6. Create pictorial models that illustrate experimental design.
7. Apply external evidence to evaluate their teamwork skills.

3. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND OTHER COURSE MATERIALS:

There will be no required textbook for this class. However, the Desire2Learn (D2L) course website will be a crucial resource. Online lectures, corresponding lecture slides, and research papers will be posted to the D2L website. Students should be prepared to access lecture material from each of the following file formats: MS Word (.doc or .docx), MS PowerPoint (.ppt or .pptx), and Adobe Reader (.pdf). Navigate to the D2L Course Website and click on: FS25-PSL-450-ALL SECTIONS - Physiology in Health and Disease.

4. MSU HOLIDAYS AND IMPORTANT COURSE DATES:

Fall Classes Begin:	Monday August 25
University Closed:	Monday Sept 1 (Labor Day Holiday)
No classes:	Monday Oct 20 – Tuesday Oct 21 (Fall break)
University Closed:	Thursday Nov 27 – Friday Nov 28 (Thanksgiving Holiday)
Fall Classes End:	Friday Dec 5
Final exam:	Wednesday December 10, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM (both sections)

5. INSTRUCTORS AND CONTACT INFORMATION:

5A. Course Director – Lori Seischab, Ph.D. (she/her)

For general course related issues contact Dr. Seischab by email at psl450@msu.edu. General course-related issues include absences, grades, deadlines, exams, course policies, teamwork, and reflective essays. Dr. Seischab's office hours are Mondays, 10:00-11:00 AM, in 2240 Biomedical Physical Sciences building or by Zoom <https://msu.zoom.us/j/3489538947>. Office hours will not take place on the first day of the semester (August 25), Labor Day (September 1), Fall Break (October 20), and the day after Thanksgiving break (Dec 1). You may also go to <http://student.msu.edu> to book an advising appointment to discuss PSL 450. When booking the appointment, please put "PSL 450" when prompted for Additional Information.

5B. Co-instructors

For individual section-related issues, e-mail the respective instructors directly. Section-related issues include office hours, lecture content, and research article content. At the start of an instructor's module, they will post their office hour information in the Announcements section

of D2L or in an email to the class.

- **Nara Parameswaran, Ph.D. (he/him):** Inflammatory diseases. Email: narap@msu.edu
- **Karl Olson, Ph.D. (he/him):** Metabolic Diseases. Email: olsonla@msu.edu
- **Jason Bazil, Ph.D. (he/him):** Heart Failure. Email: jnbazil@msu.edu
- **Shane Crandall, Ph.D. (he/him):** Epilepsy. Email: cranda86@msu.edu

6. CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

6A. Attendance and your grade

In-person attendance is required, and attendance will be taken. Because the in-person class sessions primarily consist of teamwork and discussion, they will not be recorded. Students with an **unexcused** absence for the day will receive a 0 for that week's Research Boxes. Students with an **excused** absence will not receive a grade for that week; Consequently, the Research Box portion of their course grade will be calculated using fewer than 12 Research Boxes. To be considered for an excused absence, email Dr. Seischab at psl450@msu.edu prior to the class with an explanation and any relevant documentation for the absence.

6B. A courtesy to Dr. Seischab

Even if you are not seeking an excused absence, Dr. Seischab would appreciate knowing when you will not be in class. Although not required, an email to PSL450@msu.edu would be welcomed. A simple message like "I will not be in class tomorrow" will suffice.

6C. A courtesy to your team

Each team will decide what a team member should do if they will be absent from class. You will put that information in your team contracts during Week 2.

7. REQUIRED TECHNOLOGIES:

The course requires access to high-speed internet so that you can watch the lecture videos. Lecture materials (online lecture videos and papers for Research Box discussions) will be posted to D2L. Please check to make sure you are using a D2L compatible browser here: https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

8. COURSE PLATFORM:

This course will be delivered in a hybrid format. You will need your MSU NetID to login to the course from the *D2L homepage* (<http://d2l.msu.edu>). In D2L, you will access lecture videos, lecture slides, and papers for discussion. Each section will meet in-person once per week (section 001 on Tuesdays and section 002 on Thursdays) to work on the Research Boxes in class.

9. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem, you can:

- Visit the MSU Help site at <http://help.msu.edu>
- Visit the Desire2Learn Help Site at <http://help.d2l.msu.edu>

- Call the MSU IT Service Desk at (517)432-6200, (844)678-6200, or e-mail at ithelp@msu.edu

10. COURSE POLICIES

10A. Learning continuity statement:

If you become unable to attend class for an extended time, you are expected to e-mail Dr. Seischab (psl450@msu.edu) as soon as you are able. In most cases, the regular course policies related to grading will apply. In extraordinary cases, we will work with the student to devise a reasonable pathway for successfully completing the course.

10B. Course continuity statement:

If any specific instructor becomes unable to run the course for an extended time, students will receive an e-mail from Dr. Seischab or Dr. Olson regarding any changes to the course.

10C. Intellectual property policy:

As members of a learning community, students are expected to respect the intellectual property of the instructor. All course materials presented to students are the copyrighted property of the course instructor and are subject to the following conditions of use:

1. Students may not post the recordings or other course materials online or distribute them to anyone not enrolled in the class without the advance written permission of the course instructor and, if applicable, any students whose voice or image is included in the recordings.
2. Any student violating the conditions described above may face academic disciplinary sanctions.

10D. Course accommodations:

Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services, and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities. For an appointment with a disability specialist, call 884-7273 (voice), 355-1293 (TTY), or visit [the MSU RCPD Website](#) by clicking on this link. Such students should provide their accommodation letter to Dr. Seischab (psl450@msu.edu) early in the semester because accommodations cannot be applied retroactively.

10E. Inclusion:

MSU is committed to providing access and promoting freedom of speech in an inclusive learning environment. Discrimination and harassment based on a protected identity are prohibited. You can review MSU's notice of non-discrimination [here](#).

During all course activities, let us all strive to **remain open**. Ask yourself, am I being judgmental? Have I stopped listening? Be mindful of **intent and impact**. Ask yourself, did they intend to hurt me? Was the impact of my words hurtful? All skills can be practiced, and with practice we improve. Let us dedicate this semester to intentionally practicing inclusion skills, particularly during teamwork.

10F. Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence

PSL 450 is based on a high-impact educational practice called writing-to-learn (WTL). WTL helps students think through and make sense of complex concepts.⁴ It leads to deeper learning. As such, it is not appropriate nor is it allowed for students to use artificial intelligence (AI) in any way for the Research Box assignments. Similarly, since the purpose of the reflective essay is to learn about yourself and your own professional skills, the use of Artificial Intelligence is not appropriate nor allowed.

4. Kuh, G. D. High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter. American Association of Colleges & Universities. 2008

11. GRADING POLICY

11A. Grade Dissemination:

The grades for Research Boxes, teamwork essays, and exams will be posted in the D2L Gradebook. Final course grades will be reported through the Office of the Registrar. Email Dr. Seischab (psl450@msu.edu) if you wish to discuss your performance in the course or your grade in general.

11B. Assessments and the Calculated Course Grade:

This course will be calculated as detailed below.

Assessment	Percentage of course grade	Description
Research Boxes	45%	12 Research Boxes (RB). Each RB is worth 3.75% of your course grade.
Exams	45%	2 Exams. Each exam is worth 22.5% of your course grade.
Teamwork Essays	10%	2 Teamwork Essays. Each essay is worth 5% of your course grade.

11C. Policies for Graded Course Activities

Exams

Exams will be given in-person. Students with an emergency might be permitted to take a make-up exam. You should contact Dr. Seischab (psl450@msu.edu) as soon as you are able, preferably within 24 hours of the missed exam with an explanation and any appropriate documentation.

NO QUESTIONS ON CONTENT WILL BE ANSWERED DURING THE EXAMS, as any communication that occurs during an exam may unfairly advantage some students over others. Answering questions during an exam also disrupts the concentration of other students. Proctors will be available to address concerns such as a missing exam page, a broken pencil, or smudged font. Exams will be reported to the D2L course grade book. Scoring errors and/or student appeals to re-evaluate individual questions must be submitted to Dr. Seischab (psl450@msu.edu) within 48 hours of the time exam results are distributed. To receive consideration, such appeals must

be submitted in writing (e.g., by e-mail to psl450@msu.edu) and should include justification for why an alternate answer deserves to receive credit. If you would like to see your exam, make an appointment with Dr. Seischab (<http://student.msu.edu>).

Teamwork essays

Individual assignment, not a team assignment: You will be writing about your individual contributions to your team's work. Thus, each student should write and submit their own essay. (In other words, the team does not submit an essay; Each student submits an essay.)

Grading: Essays will be graded using the six-point Reflection on Action Rubric³. For example, essays that score 6 out of 6 will receive a grade of 100%. Essays that score 5 out of 6 will receive a grade of 83.3%. Essays that score 4 out of 6 will receive a grade of 66.7%. Etc. Essays that are submitted late will receive a 0% grade, so help your teammates by reminding them of the deadline.

Revisions: Since reflective writing takes practice, the first teamwork essay can be revised and resubmitted. The second teamwork essay cannot be resubmitted.

Generative AI: The purpose of the reflective essay is to learn about yourself and your own professional skills. Thus, the use of Artificial Intelligence is not appropriate nor allowed.

11D. Final grade – provisional grading scale:

This Calculated Course Grade will be determined based on the scheme described in 11B. The course instructors may decide to award extra credit for course surveys. Course surveys will be announced by e-mail and administered through Qualtrics.

Students with Calculated Course Grades of 90.0%, 80.0%, 70.0%, and 60.0% are assured of receiving minimum final grades of at least 4.0, 3.0, 2.0, and 1.0, respectively. Course faculty reserve decision on the minimum score for each grade. Petitions to re-evaluate a course grade must be submitted to Dr. Seischab (psl450@msu.edu) within one week after the beginning of the semester following completion of the course, according to university guidelines. In addition, you may make an appointment with Dr. Seischab to discuss your grade. Please keep in mind that grades are calculated, not negotiated.

The table below describes the relationships between Final Grades and Calculated Course Grades.

Final Grade	Calculated Course Grade
4.0	90.0% to 100%
3.5	85.0% to 89.9%
3.0	80.0% to 84.9%
2.5	75.0% to 79.9%

Final Grade	Calculated Course Grade
2.0	70.0% to 74.9%
1.5	65.0% to 69.9%
1.0	60.0% to 64.9%
0.0	Below 60%

12. ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the Department of Physiology adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; the MSU Student Honor Code; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. Therefore, you are expected to complete all exams as an individual effort, without assistance from any other individual whether they are enrolled in the course or not. Students who violate this policy or other MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including - but not limited to - a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact Dr. Seischab (psl450@msu.edu) if you have any questions about this policy. (Click here for a link to the [Ombudsperson's resources](#) on academic integrity and/or [Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide](#)).

Violations of academic integrity include:

- Plagiarism of any kind
- Submitting the work of another and falsely misrepresenting it as your own
- Collaboration or communication with another individual during an exam
- Witnessing and failing to report a violation of academic integrity
- Commercialization of lecture notes or other university-provided course materials

SPARTAN CODE OF HONOR:

On March 22, 2016, The Associated Students of Michigan State University (ASMSU) adopted the following Spartan Code of Honor:

"As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do."

13. COURSE AND INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS:

The Department of Physiology participates in the Student Perceptions of Learning Surveys (SPLS) system for all its undergraduate courses, including PSL 450. Students are encouraged to submit their opinions of the course and individual instructors at the end of each semester through SPLS.

Student anonymity is carefully protected, and students have the option of opting out of the course evaluation survey.

14. GRIEF ABSENCE:

In the event of loss of a family member or similar tragedy, students are directed to the university policy on Grief Absence that can be found at the [Spartan Life Online website](#).

15. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES:

Students are expected to notify Dr. Seischab (PSL450@msu.edu) in advance if they intend to miss class to observe a holy day of their religious faith. Refer to the registrar's page on [religious observance policy](#). For a current schedule of major religious holidays, see the [office of inclusion and intercultural initiatives](#).

16. POLICIES FOR STUDENT ATHLETES:

MSU policies pertaining to student athletes may be found by clicking on this link: [Student Athletes](#)

17. MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY:

As professors, one of our responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for our students and for the campus as a whole. As members of the university community, we have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information confidentially about sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination to an employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of those individuals here <https://caps.msu.edu/>

19. CALENDARS FOR IN-PERSON MEETINGS, TEAMWORK ESSAYS, AND EXAMS:

Calendar for Section 001 (Tuesday)

Date	Topic	Class activities	Instructor
Aug 26	Course structure and Teamwork		Seischab
Sept 2	Teamwork and Research Box practice		Seischab
Sept 9	Research Box practice	Practice RB	Seischab
Sept 16	Inflammatory diseases 1	RB 1 and discussion	Parameswaran
Sept 23	Inflammatory diseases 2	RB 2A and RB 2B	Parameswaran
Sept 30	Metabolic disease 1	RB 3 and discussion	Olson
Oct 7	Metabolic disease 2	RB 4A and RB 4B	Olson
Monday Oct 13	Teamwork essay 1 due at 11:59 PM		
Oct 14	Review	Team meeting and review	Seischab
No class because of Fall Break			
Oct 28	Exam 1 – Inflammatory diseases and metabolic diseases		
Nov 4	Heart Failure 1	RB 5 and discussion	Bazil
Nov 11	Heart Failure 2	RB 6A and RB 6B	Bazil
Nov 18	Epilepsy 1	RB 7 and discussion	Crandall
Monday Nov 24	Teamwork essay 2 due at 11:59 PM		
No class because of Thanksgiving Break			
Dec 2	Epilepsy 2	RB 8A and RB 8B	Crandall
Wednesday Dec 10	Exam 2 (Final) – Metabolic disease and Epilepsy; 10:00 am – Noon; 152 Natural Resources		

Calendar for Section 002 (Thursday)

Date	Topic	Class activities	Instructor
Aug 28	Course structure and Teamwork		Seischab
Sept 4	Teamwork and Research Box practice		Seischab
Sept 11	Research Box	Practice RBs	Seischab
Sept 18	Inflammatory diseases 1	RB 1 and discussion	Parameswaran
Sept 25	Inflammatory diseases 2	RB 2A and RB 2B	Parameswaran
Oct 2	Metabolic disease 1	RB 3 and discussion	Olson
Oct 9	Metabolic disease 2	RB 4A and RB 4B	Olson
Monday Oct 13	Teamwork essay 1 due at 11:59 PM		
Oct 16	Review	Team meeting and review	Seischab
No class because of Fall Break			
Oct 30	Exam 1 – Inflammatory diseases and metabolic diseases		
Nov 6	Heart Failure 1	RB 5 and discussion	Bazil
Nov 13	Heart Failure 2	RB 6A and RB 6B	Bazil
Nov 20	Epilepsy 1	RB 7 and discussion	Crandall
Monday Nov 24	Teamwork essay 2 due at 11:59 PM		
No class because of Thanksgiving Break			
Dec 4	Epilepsy 2	RB 8A and RB 8B	Crandall
Wednesday Dec 10	Exam 2 (Final) – Metabolic disease and Epilepsy; 10:00 am – Noon; 152 Natural Resources		