

There is a burgeoning literature on “environmental” toxicants; i.e., pollutants that are released by humans into the environment (air, water, soils, etc.), and their impacts on the health and well-being of humans and other animals. Many of these substances act as *direct neurotoxins* or as *endocrine disruptors*.

Each student should:

- Find a recent research/empirical article that describes a particular substance or class of substances (pesticides, plastics, flame retardants, heavy metals, and the mix of chemicals comprising air pollution would be some examples) that is *relevant to biopsychology*.
- The selected article should contain some description of both the mechanism of action (known or suspected), as well as its psychological impact (i.e., on emotion, cognition, or other behavior(s)).

I have students turn in a topic statement and reference early in the term; then at the end of the term, they write a formal paper, and prepare a presentation and exam question.

Final Paper:

- Write a description *in your own words* of the study’s *methodology, findings, and implications*, using appropriate APA citation style;
- Include a discussion of how the study *directly* relates to our course material, including the biological mechanism of the substance’s action and its psychological impacts;
- Discuss whether it was possible for the researchers to conduct a *true experiment*, or did they rely on *quasi-experimental* or *correlational* designs.
- Include an APA style References section, referencing the Carlson text if you use material from it in your paper.

Final papers should be ~4-6 pages, double spaced.

Presentation & Exam Question:

I. Based on the main points in your final paper, prepare a short (5-7 min) **presentation** to give orally during the last week of class.

II. Write a **question** I *could* include on the final exam. Your peers should be able to answer the question based only on your presentation (rather than needing to read your article or final paper). The question should be in the form of multiple choice, short answer, or fill-in the blank(s).