Overview
The primary objective of this course is to introduce graduate students to the field of psychopharmacology by reviewing biological and practical elements related to psychotropic medications. The course will be divided into three sections, the first of which will be general pharmacology. Students will learn basic physiologic processes related to drug-body interaction. There will be detailed emphasis on the areas of pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics. The second section will focus on psychopharmacology, in which specific classes of currently used psychotropic medications and their mechanisms of action will be presented. The third section will consist of psychopharmacotherapy; essentially, the practical application of psychotropic medications to psychiatric disorders. In this section, current practice guidelines and issues related to pharmacologic treatment with various agents will be reviewed.

By the end of the course, students should be familiar with currently used psychotropic medications, be able to determine which drugs are most effective (or indicated) for various disorders, and understand underlying biological issues used to establish dose ranges, dosing schedules and potential adverse events. As appropriate, professional and legal issues related to psychopharmacotherapy will be discussed.

Required Texts

Assignments
Readings will be assigned weekly according to the topic on the syllabus, and are expected to be completed before the following class.

Grading
Class participation: 30%
Mid-term examination 30%
Final examination: 40%
Schedule

January 19, 2012  Introduction
                 Overview of Neurotransmission

January 26, 2012  Pharmacodynamics
                 Receptors

February 2, 2012  Pharmacokinetics

February 9, 2012  Pharmacokinetics
                 Drug Interactions

February 16, 2012 Midterm Examination

February 23, 2012 Overview of the psychopharmacopoeia
                 Antipsychotics

March 1, 2012     Antidepressants
                 Benzodiazepines
                 Sedative hypnotics

March 8, 2012     Mood stabilizers
                 Stimulants
                 Cognitive enhancers

March 15, 2012    Spring Break

March 22, 2012    Overview of Drug Approval Process
                 Basic Principles of Pharmacotherapy

March 29, 2012    Pharmacotherapy of Depression
                 Pharmacotherapy of Bipolar Disorder

April 5, 2012     Pharmacotherapy of Psychotic Disorders

April 12, 2012    Pharmacotherapy of Anxiety Disorders
                 Psychotropic drug use during pregnancy

April 19, 2012    Geriatric Pharmacotherapy
                 Pediatric Pharmacotherapy

April 26, 2012    Discussion and Review for Final Examination

May 3, 2012       Final Examination