



ÉTIENNE MAES, Class of 2027

Education: BSc Honours (Behavioural Neuroscience), Concordia University

Supervisor(s): Mark P Brandon

Dpt: Psychiatry

Work location: Douglas Research Centre

Project: Investigating the role of dopamine signalling in the retrieval and update of memory

Selected Award(s): Fond de Recherche du Québec – Santé (FRQS)

Research Description:

I am conducting my research with Dr. Mark P Brandon at the Douglas Institute as part of the Integrated Program in Neuroscience. My research aims to establish how dopaminergic signalling updates memories during learning, and how dysfunction of this circuit underlies psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia

Why did you decide to pursue both MDCM and PhD degrees? What are your career aspirations?

My ultimate goal is to address unsolved issues in neurology and psychiatry through translation of fundamental behavioural neuroscience, whose potential to impact our understanding of disease pathophysiology and development of associated treatments remains largely untapped. Only through an MDCM & PhD can I approach unanswered questions about diseases of behaviour and memory through a lens of the foundations of neural function.

Why did you choose to study at McGill University?

McGill University ranks among the best in the world for cutting edge neuroscience institutes and research, all based in a city that I love.

What aspect of the MD-PhD program do you enjoy the most or are looking forward to?

What I enjoy the most is taking this journey alongside brilliant people that combine medicine and research in unique ways that I can both learn and take inspiration from.

What advice do you have for incoming MDCM-PhD students?

The only way to find where you belong is to actively seek out experiences in different domains, and you'll find the one that feels most like home. If you cannot find a niche that fits just right, bring people together and make one!

What do you like to do in your spare time?

When not pursuing my ultimate passion (sleeping), you can find me tending to my ever-expanding jungle of houseplants, or agonizing over where to place a comma in an unexceptional piece of poetry.