

Fall 2022 490 Course Descriptions

Section 001 - M/W/F 4:40pm - 5:30pm

Joyce Furfaro - **Healthy Brain / Happy Brain**

This capstone seminar will explore current research on maintaining a healthy brain, including avoiding neurotoxins and toxic relationships, as well as strengthening your neuronal connections through meditation and continued learning. Students will be encouraged to practice healthy brain activities and report their experience to their classmates. Your critical thinking skills will be tested as we also find and discuss current research and related news items from popular press sources - what do they get right, and what do they get wrong? Some core topics will include cognitive reserve, mindfulness, dementia, and the effects of stress on the brain. This course is best suited for psychology majors who have taken courses relating to the neurobiological aspects of psychology. Objectives include Honing our critical thinking skills; Becoming more comfortable with reading, digesting, and discussing current research literature; and Learning ways to incorporate healthy-brain behaviors into our everyday life.

Section 003 - M/W/F 12:20pm - 1:10pm

Elisabeth Karuza - **Networks in Cognitive Science**

In this course we will explore the rich history of networks in cognitive science and discuss the recent surge in applying tools from network science to understand the inner workings of the mind. We will focus on two distinct, but related content areas: (1) *the human brain as a network* of regions constantly communicating with one another to support learning, memory, attention, and sensory processing; and (2) *the world around us as a network* of inter-connected elements, and how complex patterns in our environment influence our behavior.

Section 004 - T/R 3:05pm - 4:20pm

Terri Vescio - **Embodiments of gender, race, and violence**

Given the persistent and striking gender inequalities worldwide, the goal of this senior undergraduate seminar is to elaborate relations of gendered embodiments and power to the maintenance of the status quo. To fully understand this relation, analysis must occur at varied levels of analysis – intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, and cultural – and considering contributions across discipline. Across psychological theories, masculinity theories, and feminist theories scholars have examined how people respond to, internalize, and consensually engage in gendered roles and relations defined by culturally valued and idealized notions of gender. In this seminar we will examine quests embody culturally valued forms as facilitated by threats of subtle and open acts of violence. Discussions will focus on what we learn about the importance of gender roles by examining how bad women and bad men are perceived and (mis)treated. To do so we will read popular press materials, social critiques, watch movies, and read empirical articles.

Section 005 - T/R 10:35am - 11:50am

Dawn Witherspoon - **Youth Development in Context: How Place & Race Jointly affect Youth**

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the theoretical and empirical literature about how characteristics of place (i.e., community, neighborhood, activity space) are associated with development during childhood and adolescence. Further, this course interrogates the intersection of place and race and their joint effects on youth development. Topics to be discussed in this class include attention to cultural variables (i.e., race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, acculturation), exposure to violence, parenting strategies in neighborhoods, and a variety of youth academic, behavioral, and psycho-social outcomes (e.g., academic self-concept, deviance, friendships, substance use, and identity). An important aspect of this course is the attention to multiple forms of data, various methodologies (i.e., quantitative and qualitative), and dissemination of empirical findings (e.g., scholarly reports, newsletters, briefs, etc.) to elucidate a greater understanding of how place and its social characteristics are related to family functioning and youth outcomes. This course is designed for students who have had exposure to developmental psychology and want to learn more about how contexts outside of the family may shape development. The course will be discussion based with some lectures to introduce concepts and themes.

Section 006 - T/R 9:05am - 10:20am

Reg Adams - **The Laughing Animal: The Psychology of Humor and Laughter**

Humor and laughter are vital to human functioning, promoting physical and emotional well-being, social harmony, learning, and creativity. Humor and laughter can also be used as weapons against others and can transmit and perpetuate stereotypes and prejudice. This course is designed to explore these phenomena and to apply insights gained to broader research themes such as creativity, social cognition, attribution theory, and emotion theory.

Mel Mark - **Psychology and Program Evaluation**

Social programs are commonplace. Many college students participated in a substance abuse prevention program in junior high school, for example. Companies use a range of diversity programs. A list of social and educational programs could go on and on. But how do we know if a program is effective? How might we identify ways to improve a program? Program evaluators apply social science theory and research methods, with aims such as seeing whether a social program works, or identifying improvements to an ongoing program, or designing a new and hopefully better program. Psychology, especially social psychology, has much to offer the field of program evaluation. Most programs are intended to change human behavior (e.g., to prevent substance abuse); correspondingly, psychological theories are relevant both for contributing to program (re)design and for guiding efforts to figure out why a program is (or isn't) working. Program evaluators also encounter challenges in carrying out their work, such as how to collect and weight interested parties' views (e.g., about which potential outcomes of the program are most important to examine), especially when the groups differ in power; psychology can help point to better ways of dealing with these challenges. Psychologists also have methodological skills that are relevant for the research involved in program evaluation. In addition to reviewing key linkages between psychology and evaluation, we will discuss training and career options in evaluation, as well as how to apply course content to endeavors other than program evaluation.