

## **HDFS 597 Biological Systems in Developmental Context**

**Instructor: Lisa Kopp**

**Time: Wednesday/ Friday 1:00pm – 2:30pm**

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**Location: HHD East 101**

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### **Overview:**

This course is designed in compliment with the core HDFS courses meant to provide a broad foundation, applicable across all areas of specialization within HDFS. In this course, students will acquire a foundational vocabulary of biological systems implicated in human behavior, as well as theoretical frameworks that will guide future inquiry. This course is meant to serve as an opportunity for students to extend the levels of analysis at which they conceptualize individual and social processes, as well as mechanisms of change.

### **Objectives:**

1. Gain a basic understanding of developmental biological theories and how these theories can be applied to hypothesis generation in their own research
2. Explore the neurobiological systems that underlie core psychological constructs
3. Develop an increased vocabulary related to neurobiological systems and assessment techniques.
4. Extract core concepts from biological papers even when methodological details are beyond the scope of their background
5. Capitalize on comparative psychology/biology in hypothesis generation

### **Grading:**

Participation (20%): This will be graded in two ways. The first is through discussion leadership (15%). Students will be expected to sign up for two class sessions for which they will prepare a brief discussion guide on the lesson to present to the class. Students will turn in their discussion guide at the end of the class. The second piece of the grade (5%) is for general participation across all days. Students who contribute regularly in terms of questions, comments, or reactions will earn full credit.

Thought papers (20%): On discussion days marked in the syllabus, a brief “reaction paper” will be required of the students who are not leading that day’s discussion. This paper should be no longer than 1 page single spaced, and turned in at the start of class. These brief papers are meant to provide you with an opportunity to prepare your thoughts in advance of class, as well as to practice writing skills.

Midterm (30%): The midterm will represent an intermediate stage of the final project. The exact requirements will be detailed within the first few weeks of the semester.

Final (30%): A 20-minute presentation to the class on a theoretical research model of your choice (in line with the midterm). Students will be assigned to present either on Wednesday or Friday of that week based on the topic.

### **Pre-requisites:**

PSU graduate student or consent of instructor.