

Instructor: Elizabeth Hennon Office: 122D Hyde Hall
E-mail: eh82@evansville.edu Office phone: 488-2511
Office hours: **MWF** 10-11; **MW** 2-3 **Tu** 11 am – 4pm

Required Texts:

Tager-Flusberg, H. (Ed.). (1999). *Neurodevelopmental Disorders*. Cambridge, MA: MIT.

Swanson, H. L., Harris, K. R., & Graham, S. (Eds.). (2006). *Handbook of Learning Disabilities*. New York: Guilford.

Course Description: This course will focus on learning disabilities and syndromic developmental disorders. Class readings will cover general learning disabilities, ADHD, dyslexia, autistic spectrum disorders, Down syndrome, and fragile X syndrome. Etiology and general descriptions of each disorder will be reviewed. Then, the readings will discuss how these disorders relate to general psychological and brain processes, such as language, thinking, emotions, and behavioral disturbances. Finally, we will discuss how children with these disorders and disabilities can be identified and how psychologists and educators can work with these populations. This class will place an emphasis on theoretical models and experimental findings and will explore areas of applied developmental psychology. Group discussion format with textbook, reaction papers, and a term paper.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of the course, students should:

- have a general understanding of learning disabilities
- have a basic understanding of attention, memory, or other influences on learning disabilities
- have a global understanding of neurodevelopmental disorders and the links between genetics and development
- have a general understanding of autistic spectrum disorders, Down syndrome, and fragile X syndrome
- understand how knowledge in specific areas of psychology can be of value in the practice of other professions
- have improved personal development in several areas
 - increased understanding of your own (and others) behavior and emotions
 - enhanced understanding of people's thinking and understanding is influenced by a variety of forces
 - improved critical thinking skills and communication skills in both speaking and writing

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Discussion: There will be a discussion board on Blackboard for this class. Each week, you should contribute to a discussion of the articles including back-and-forth discussion with the professor on the topic. Your discussion grade will be based on these online discussions. (25% of final grade)

Reaction papers: There will be 13 weeks worth of reading assignments in this course. For 10 of those weeks, you must write a reaction paper discussing the articles you've read. The reaction paper should be 3-5 pages in length (double-spaced). It should *briefly* describe the content of the article(s), and then should include your thoughts on what the chapter means. This can include how you see that article fitting into other chapters that we've read in the class, how you see that article fitting with concepts you've learned in other classes, or questions that you have about the article. It can include questions about the validity of the findings reported in the paper, or ideas about how this chapter makes you question concepts that you had learned in the past (whether in classes or in "normal" life). **You do not need any additional references for the reaction papers.** (You are welcome to use them, but they will not influence your grade.) Reaction papers are due by the beginning of class each week. After class discussion begins, you cannot turn in a paper for those readings. You can turn in the papers either as a hard copy or via e-mail. Reaction papers are graded pass/fail. For up to 3 reaction papers, you can re-write the paper (if you receive a failing grade) to attempt to earn a passing grade. Each reaction paper is worth 2.5% of your final grade. (total = 25% of final grade)

Term Paper: Each student must choose one topic from the course to explore in greater detail. While the papers are not due until later in the semester, the paper topics must be given to me, *in writing*, no later than **March 30th**. Once I approve your topic, you will be required to write one 18-20 page paper. For this paper, you will need to go beyond what was covered in the readings and discussion and find a minimum of **10 (ten)** references for this paper. All references must be from academic sources. At least 6 of the 10 references must be primary references. When you turn in the paper, you will need to provide me with photocopies or printouts of the references (unless they are from alternate chapters from the textbooks). You must also upload a file copy to TurnItIn.com. The paper will be due no later than **Monday, April 9th, by 5 pm US CT**. The paper will be worth 50% of the course grade.

Authorized aid on papers: **Acknowledge as a footnote all aid and outside assistance you obtain in preparing written assignments.** You may ask **other students** to read your paper and make *verbal* suggestions for improvement, *but they may not provide any written help*. Provide a footnote to the title of your paper acknowledging the aid. You may (and should routinely) run your word-processor's "Spelling and Grammar" check without foot note acknowledgement.

Citation System: *Failure to correctly cite and properly reference others' work can be construed as plagiarism.* For this course, you must use APA formatting for your text. Failure to correctly use APA formatting for a literature review can result in deductions from your grade.

Grade Calculation:

Discussions (25%) + Reaction papers (25%) + Paper (50%) = **Course Grade**

Course Grades:

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|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|
| 93-100 | A | 90-92.9 | A- | 87-89.9 | B+ | 83 - 86 | B | 80-82.9 | B- |
| 77-79.9 | C+ | 73-76.9 | C | 70-72.9 | C- | 67-69.9 | D+ | 60-66.9 | D |

WITHDRAWAL POLICIES A course may be dropped without a designated grade during the first two weeks of a term of the regular academic year. From the third to the eleventh weeks, a grade of "W" is assigned. After the eleventh week, a grade of "F" is assigned. Discontinuance of attendance does not automatically constitute a withdrawal. Students failing to file a proper drop/add form by the appropriate deadline must complete classes for which they are registered or received a grade of "F". Withdrawal from a course after the deadline requires petition to and approval of the Admissions and Standards Committee and/or the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

**Last day to drop without a grade for Spring 2007 is Wednesday January 17th.
Last day to drop and receive a "W" for Spring 2007 is Friday, March 30th.**

INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY All coursework is to be completed within the semester it is attempted. The grade report of "I" will be given only when justified by personal crisis or legitimate sickness; otherwise, the missing scores will be entered as zeroes. As outlined in the catalog, the following circumstances must exist as well for the receipt of an "I": (1) the student's other work in the course would earn a passing grade, and (2) the outstanding task can be completed without further class attendance. A request for an "I" must be presented in writing by either you or the Dean of Students. If granted, an "Incomplete Grade Contract" will then be drawn up and signed by both the instructor and the student. The catalog continues:

Outstanding course work normally should be completed within six weeks of the class ending, but the instructor may allow up to one year from the end of the term for which the "I" grade is granted. It is the student's responsibility to have this deficiency removed within the contractually agreed upon time or within one year, whichever is less. If no grade change has been submitted by the instructor after the maximum one-year grace period, the registrar is authorized to change all grades of "I" to "F".

ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES It is the policy of the University of Evansville to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. Written notification to faculty from the Office of Counseling and Health Education is required for any academic accommodations. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please discuss it with me and allow two weeks notice. Otherwise, it is not

guaranteed that the accommodation can be received on a timely basis. If you have questions about services for students with disabilities or procedures for requesting services, you may contact the Office of Counseling and Health Education at 488-2663.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

University of Evansville Academic Honor Code. "I understand that any work which I submit for course credit will imply that I have adhered to the Academic Honor Code: I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid nor will I tolerate an environment which condones the use of unauthorized aid." Failure to adhere to this code will result in receiving an "F" for the course.

Tentative Course Calendar: Changes in this schedule may be necessary and you will be notified if such a situation should arise. The most recent revision of the course schedule and syllabus posted on ACELink will be considered the Official syllabus.

| Week | Topic and Readings |
|-------------|--|
| 1 | Intro to course, discussion of requirements |
| 2 | Overview of learning disabilities and neurodevelopmental disorders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Handbook of Learning Disabilities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 1: Overview of Foundations... b. <i>Neurodevelopmental Disorders</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 1: An Introduction to Research on ... |
| 3 | History of research on learning disabilities and developmental disorders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Handout: b. <i>Handbook of Learning Disabilities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 2: A Brief History of the Field... ii. Ch 5: Learning Disabilities as a Field |
| 4 | Autism (part 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Handout: Autism: Deficits in Folk ... b. <i>Neurodevelopmental Disorders</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 16: Autism: Clinical Features and ... |
| 5 | Autism (part 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Neurodevelopmental Disorders</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 17: The Extreme Male-Brain Theory ... ii. Ch 18: Autism: A Genetic Perspective |
| 6 | Fragile X Syndrome and Williams Syndrome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Neurodevelopmental Disorders</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 2: Clinical and Molecular Aspects ... ii. Ch 4: Williams Syndrome: Findings from an ... |

| Week | Topic and Readings |
|------|--|
| 7 | Down Syndrome <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Neurodevelopmental Disorders</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 8: Developmental Deficits in Children ... ii. Ch 9: Down Syndrome in Cognitive ... |
| 8 | Bridging developmental disorders and learning disabilities: Dyslexia <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Neurodevelopmental Disorders</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 13: Dyslexia as a Neurodevelopmental Disorder b. <i>Handbook of Learning Disabilities</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 31: Neurobiological Indices of Dyslexia |
| 9 | Dyslexia and reading disabilities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Neurodevelopmental Disorders</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 12: Conceptual and Methodological ... b. <i>Handbook of Learning Disabilities</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 13: Language Processes: Keys to ... |
| 10 | Cognitive impacts on Reading Disabilities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Handbook of Learning Disabilities</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 9: RAN's Contribution to ... ii. Ch 10: Basic Cognitive Processes and ... iii. Ch 12: Learning Disabilities in Arithmetic: ... |
| 11 | Attention and Memory <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Handbook of Learning Disabilities</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 8: Attention: Relationships between ADHD ... ii. Ch 11: Memory Difficulties in Children and ... |
| 12 | Consequences of Learning Disabilities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Handbook of Learning Disabilities</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 14: Self-Concept and Students with ... ii. Ch 22: Science and Social Studies |
| 13 | Learning Disabilities, Developmental Disorders, and everyday life <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Handbook of Learning Disabilities</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 4: Learning Disabilities and the Law b. <i>Neurodevelopmental Disorders</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 24: Advances in the Cognitive Neuroscience of ... |
| 14 | Wrapping up <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Handbook of Learning Disabilities</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ch 3: Classification and Definition of Learning ... ii. Ch 32: What Have We Learned about Learning Disabilities ... |