

FIU – Department of Psychology
PSY7980-U32 – Ph.D. Dissertation in the HANDS Lab

LAB DIRECTOR

Dr. Eliza Nelson
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: elnelson@fiu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students enrolled in this course will obtain credit hours towards the Ph.D. in Psychology and will serve as Graduate Research Assistants in the HANDS Lab directed by Dr. Eliza Nelson. Students should enroll in the course after completing the requirements for doctoral candidacy.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- Graduate standing and permission of instructor.
- Students should contact Dr. Nelson for a course code to enroll.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Students work in the HANDS Lab on their Dissertation project.
- Students participate in lab meeting as scheduled.
- Students participate in individual meetings as scheduled.
- Students read articles and complete lab tasks as assigned.
- Students mentor undergraduate Research Assistants as assigned.
- Professionalism when working with families on the phone or in the lab, or at Monkey Jungle is expected at all times. There is no formal dress code for the lab on campus. Students working at Monkey Jungle are required to wear a uniform during research.

Mandatory Training and Other Requirements:

Students working on projects with human participants must complete the CITI online trainings “Social/Behavioral Human Research Course” and “CITI Health Information Privacy and Security (HIPS)” for Clinical Investigators”. Students will be trained on lab equipment and procedures as needed. An approved IRB must be on file with FIU if applicable for the dissertation project(s).

Students working on projects with animal subjects must complete the CITI online trainings “Working with the FIU IACUC (Lab Studies)” and “Working with Non-Human Primates in Research Settings”. Students must also complete a risk assessment form annually with Dr. Nelson; submit proof of a negative TB test dated within the past year (**cost up to \$30**); sign a waiver for Monkey Jungle; and complete an on-site safety training session at Monkey Jungle. An approved IACUC must be on file with the DuMond Conservancy and FIU if applicable for the dissertation project(s).

GRADING

This course is graded Pass/Fail based on completion of assigned tasks. Students should expect to work full-time in the HANDS lab over the semester, and meet milestones in a timely manner. Students will receive a grade of “IP” (In Progress). Once the student has successfully passed the dissertation defense, all “IP” grades will change to “P” automatically on their official transcript.

Expected Milestones (To be completed in consultation with Dr. Nelson):

- Develop a testable research question on a topic relevant to either Developmental Science or Cognitive Neuroscience (as applicable to student’s home program).
- Generate aims, hypotheses, and predictions independently.
- Seek funding independently to support dissertation work (as applicable).
- Formally propose dissertation to faculty committee consisting of Dr. Nelson (Chair), two members from student’s home program, and one external member outside Psychology.
- Collect, manage, and analyze data independently.
- Write up results and formally defend the dissertation to the faculty committee.

Students are expected to publish from their dissertation as first author with Dr. Nelson as the senior author during the dissertation (if applicable), or within 2 years of the successful defense. Co-authorship roles for collaborators will be discussed at the start of the project, and agreed upon by all authors prior to the start of any manuscript writing.

Note: Anything on this syllabus is subject to change at the Instructor’s discretion.

All data collected in the HANDS Lab are the property of Dr. Nelson.