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COURSE ANNOUNCEMENT

FALL SEMESTER, 2018

PSYCHOLOGY – 601 (Seminar), CRN 52384 (all grad students)
PSYCHOLOGY - 482 (Topics), CRN 51071 (Instr./Dept. Permission Req'd)

THE FUNCTION, EVOLUTION AND NEUROSCIENCE OF PLAY

Play is one of the most controversial and mysterious of behaviors, confounding and intriguing researchers and scholars for centuries. Largely ignored for decades by most biologists and psychologists outside child development and education, play behavior has recently experienced a major growth in research interest, and is truly an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary field. This course will explore the many exciting and even revolutionary findings of recent decades and their implications for understanding broader questions in psychology, evolutionary biology, neuroscience, anthropology, sports, education, the arts, and other fields. We will read papers on diverse aspects of play but will focus on the origins and evolution of play, neural and physiological underpinnings of play, controversies and evidence on the adaptive functions and utility of play, the development of play (from infancy to old age), and the reach of play in both many areas of human life and the ways it may have influenced both biological and cultural evolution. Current research findings will be embedded in their in historical contexts. Specific topics covered may be tailored to student interests.

Reading and discussing original sources and articles, videos, in class presentations and debates, and brief position papers in areas of specific interest are involved. There may also be some group research projects involving play, depending on interest and availability.

FRIDAYS, 9:05 AM to 12:05 PM in Austin Peay 411 (The Board Room)

This course is also open, with permission, to advanced undergraduates with appropriate backgrounds, space permitting (register in Psychology 482)

For further information contact Gordon M. Burghardt,

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Registered students will be sent an e-mail through Canvas prior to class