

Abbreviated Course Syllabus
OT-325 The Brain: Mind, Body, and Self
Fall 2025 (Section 48052)

Class Day: Tuesday & Thursday
Class Time: 9:30pm-10:50pm
Location: LVL 17

Instructor: Diego Lopez, OTD, OTR/L
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Contact me with any questions!

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will explore the beautiful way our brain functions, interacts, and relates to the meaningful activities that fill up our lives. By deepening our understanding of brain structure and function, students will investigate how nature and nurture interact with neural circuitry, biochemistry, and emotions to influence behavior and well-being. Through readings, discussions, and multimedia case studies, students will critically analyze how social contexts can support or hinder optimal growth throughout our lives.

COURSE HIGHLIGHTS!

- You get to explore how your brain and body work together to support everyday living.
- You'll get to reflect on how nature and nurture shape emotions, behavior, and well-being.
- An enjoyable way to understand the science behind growth, development, and daily occupations.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

ASSIGNMENTS	% OF GRADE
Participation Completion of, and engagement in, in-class activities	10%
Multimedia Reflection Journals (2) Two journals that allow for deeper reflection of how two films viewed in class relate to course content and understanding of the brain thus far.	10%
Midterm Paper A reflect essay where students will describe 5 concepts learned about the brain and how they relate to your lived experiences.	15%
Cohort Presentation Groups of students take turns learning the assigned materials and teaching it to the class.	15%
3 Quizzes	30%

“The Brain on _____”: Final Assignment Parts 1 & 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part 1: Students will create an informational handout about how the brain responds to certain stimuli (occupations, drugs, environment, etc.) and present information to a group of colleagues Part 2: Students will present information to someone outside the course and complete a series of reflective prompts for analysis. 	20%
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COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Topic
1	Introduction & what are occupations?
2	Brain Structure and Function
3	Brain Development Part 1
4	Brain Development Part 2
5	The Brain: Film #1
6	Sensory Systems
7	Mind + Body and Fall Recess ☺
8	Mind Games and A Changing Brain
9	Livewired for Life
10	Nature vs Nurture: Film #2
11	Brain on Trauma
12	Healing from Trauma
13	Finding your Voice
14	Thanksgiving Break ☺
15	Final Assignment Part 1
Finals Week	Final Assignment Part 1 & 2 due via Brightspace online

Note: In order to optimize the learning experiences, the course instructor reserves the right to amend the syllabus as needed throughout the semester.

Please reach out with any questions! Can't wait to have you in class.

Diego

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Check out our other Occupational Science courses here!

<https://classes.usc.edu/term-20253/classes/ot/>