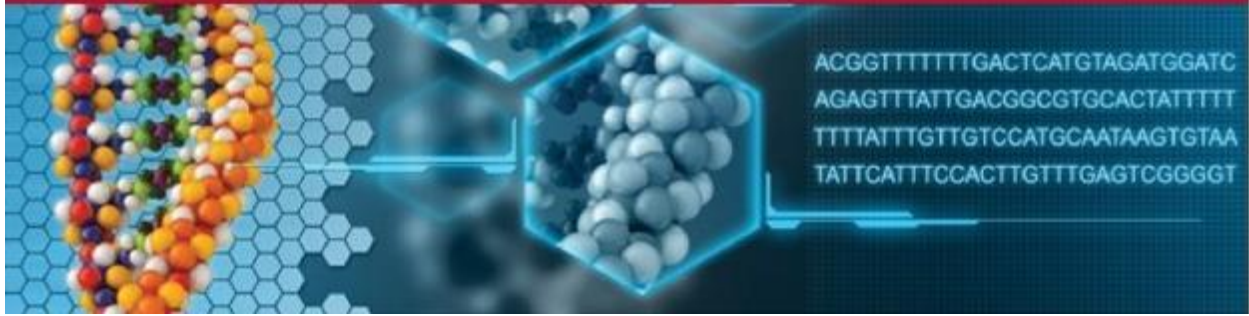




WPI

Life Sciences Seminar



“The Social and Neurobiological Mechanisms that Underlie Adolescent Psychopathology”

Alexandra Rodman, PhD

Assistant Professor

*Department of Psychology and Center for Cognitive and Brain Health
Northeastern University*

Hosted by: Richard Lopez, Assistant Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience & the Neuroscience Program

Tuesday, October 22nd 12:00 pm

Gateway 1002

Pizza will be served

Abstract:

Adolescence is marked by tremendous social, psychological, and neurobiological maturation. Changes in social cognition, motivational, and affective processes contribute to new social roles, relationships, and an intense preoccupation with peer approval. At the same time, adolescence is a period of peak risk for the emergence of psychopathology, particularly depression and anxiety. I employ experimental (i.e., task-based), neuroimaging, and observational (i.e., digital phenotyping of real-world behavior) approaches to examine the psychological and neurobiological pathways that link social experiences during adolescence with the emergence of psychopathology. In this talk, I examine how adolescents process social experiences in ways that are distinct from children and adults, determine whether these aspects of social processing influence risk for mental health problems, and evaluate how social factors can be leveraged to promote resilience in the face of stress during this developmental period. I will also share some upcoming work, where we incorporate advanced machine learning approaches to characterize digital measures of real-world behavior to predict who is at greatest risk of developing psychopathology. Understanding the underlying social and neurobiological mechanisms that give rise to adolescent psychopathology will help identify malleable targets for intervention.