Corticostriatal functioning after early life stress:
The importance of reward processing in understanding risk and resilience

Early life stress, such as child maltreatment or child poverty, is strongly linked to poor mental health, most notably increased risk for major depression. Despite this relation being well-studied and well-replicated, the mechanisms underlying the association between early life stress and later depression are poorly understood. While past investigations have noted differences in brain circuits involved with threat processing after early stress, strong links have not emerged with behavior and clinical symptomatology in this research. Here, I take a novel view on potential neurobehavioral alterations after early life stress, focusing on reward processing. Through a series of behavioral and neurobiological studies, I test the idea that early life stress would relate to altered reward learning, as well as attenuated activity in corticostraital circuitry. I will detail these novel findings and discuss how corticostraital functioning may connect to resilience to stress, and also aid in treating stress-related psychopathology.

Tuesday, February 2, 4 pm
Refreshments served at 3:45
335 Shillman Hall