



Department of Psychology
Psychology437 (L20) – Health Psychology
Fall 2010 – Course Outline

Instructor: Dr. Shawn Currie
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Lecture Location: PF110
Lecture Days/Time: M 5:00-7:50 PM
Office: Admin. 34
Office Hours: After class
(or by appointment)

Course Description and Goals

This class will provide an overview of the theory and methods within the rapidly expanding field of health psychology. Students will learn about biological, psychological and social determinants of disease onset, maintenance, and treatment. The course will follow the textbook closely, but not exclusively. The first half of the course will provide a general review of the impact of stress on illness and coping, and the modification of health-related behaviours such as smoking and exercise in health promotion. The second half of the course will highlight practical examples of health psychologists at work in the fields of cardiovascular health, pain, sleep, and addictions.

Prerequisites

Psyc 312 – Experimental Design and Quantitative Methods for Psychology
Psyc 385 – Abnormal Psychology, although not required, would be an asset.

Required Text

Taylor, S.E. and Sirois, F.M. (2009). Health psychology: Canadian edition. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson. The textbook should be available at the bookstore. Other readings can be acquired directly from the library's online resources.

Evaluation

1. 25% of your mark will come from a mid-term exam (20%) and a brief quiz (5%; 2nd class) scheduled during class time. These tests will consist mostly of short answer questions and multiple-choice questions. The first quiz (held 2nd class) is based entirely on Chapter 2.
2. 20% of your mark will be based on a group presentation project. Two presentations per class will be scheduled beginning Nov 8.
3. 25% of your mark will be based on an individual paper to be handed in no later than the beginning of class on Monday, Dec. 6, 2010. The paper will be on the same topic as the group presentation. The paper should be 6-8 pages in length (double-spaced) not including references.
4. 30% of your mark is based on a final 2-hour exam scheduled by the Registrar during the final examination period. The exam will consist of short answer and essay questions from the textbook and lectures covering material from the mid-term exam to last day of classes. Grades for the mid-term, paper/presentation, and final examination will be computed as a percentage and then combined as a weighted overall average for the course.

Grading Scale

A+	96-100%	B+	80-84%	C+	67-71%	D+	54-58%
A	90-95%	B	76-79%	C	63-66%	D	50-53%
A-	85-89%	B-	72-75%	C-	59-62%	F	0-49%

As stated in the University Calendar, it is at the instructor's discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of term work and final examinations is between two letter grades. In this course, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (e.g., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90% = A but 89.4% will be rounded down to 89% = A-).

Tentative Lecture Schedule

Date	Topic and Important Date	Readings
M Sep 13	Course overview; origins of health psychology.	Chapter 1
M Sep 20	Quiz on Chapter 2 - The body's physical systems Biopsychosocial aspects of stress.	Chapter 2 & 6
F Sep 24	<i>Last day to drop a course with no W grade and tuition refund.</i>	
M Sep 27	Stress, illness and coping <i>Last day for registration/change of registration.</i>	Chapter 7
M Oct 4	Health promotion & health behaviours; sleep & insomnia Presentation/paper topics due.	Chapter 3 & 4
M Oct 11	<i>Thanksgiving Day. No lecture. University closed.</i>	
M Oct 18	Behavioural risk factors: substance abuse, & smoking	Chapter 4 & 5
M Oct 25	Mid-term exam	
M Nov 1	Behavioural risk factors: Obesity & risk-taking Pain and pain management	Chapter 10
M Nov 8	Managing chronic illnesses Group presentations #1 and #2	Chapter 11 & 12
M Nov 15	Cardiovascular health, diabetes Group presentations #3 and #4	Chapter 13
M Nov 22	Cancer & AIDS Brain injury Group presentations #5 and #6	Chapter 14
M Nov 29	Health psychology interventions used in clinical settings Group presentations #7 and #8	Martins, R. K., & McNeil, D. W. (2009). Review of Motivational Interviewing in promoting health behaviors. <i>Clinical Psychology Review</i> , 29, 283-293. Resnicow, K., Dilorio, C., Soet, J.

		E., Borrelli, B., Hecht, J., Ernst, D. et al. (2002). Motivational interviewing in health promotion: It sounds like something is changing. <i>Health Psychology, 21</i> , 444-51.
M Dec 6	Health psychology interventions (cont'd). Review. Group presentations #9 and #10 <i>Papers due</i>	
W Dec 8	<i>Last day to participate in research and allocate research credits.</i>	
F Dec 10	Fall term ends. Last day to withdraw.	

Note: Chapters 8, 9 & 15 will not be covered.

Group presentation: 20% of final grade. Students will work in groups of four on a 30-minute presentation on a topic chosen from the list included with this outline. The purpose of the presentation is to give all students experience in public speaking and in researching issues in the field that are current and/or controversial. The experience can be invaluable in preparing you for future oral reports, whether for graduate school, medical school, law school or the business world.

The slides/overheads and any handouts should be emailed to the instructor at least one day per the presentation so I can post the material on Blackboard for the other students to access. There will be a limit of one presentation per topic so please tell me your topic A.S.A.P. Submit your topic on or before October 4. You can form your own group of four or email a ranked list of preferred topics and I will group students together. Selection of the topic and presentation date is first come, first served. Once you have your group together, provide me with your 1st and 2nd choices for topic. Each group must have exactly four students (class size is 40; 4 students per topic = 10 presentations) unless the class size drops below 40 in which case groups of three will be considered.

All students in your group will receive the same mark. Your overall grade will be based of quality of the presentation (e.g., use of A/V aids, organization, clarity of speakers, flow of the presentation) and soundness of evidence presented (use of empirical evidence vs. opinions, primary vs. secondary sources). In addition, the class will rate each team on quality of presentation and arguments using a 0-10 scale. They can also provide written comments. The ratings will not be used in your mark, but I'll provide each team feedback on the average class rating, summary of comments, and the instructor grades/feedback.

Group work: The majority of students have no problems working together in preparing for the presentations. However, occasionally a team experiences problems within their group. The most common concern I hear is that one person in the group is not doing his or her share. A few suggestions to prevent this from happening are:

1. Divide the work up logically with clear expectations on length and quality. Set deadlines in advance of the presentation date to review the material within your group.
2. Have open discussions on how the work is going and who in the group should be doing more or less. Electing a team leader is not a bad idea provided the individual delegates work equally and is not expecting to do everything him or herself.

If you are experiencing problems within your group and can not resolve them internally please talk to me before the presentation date. We can probably work out a solution. Please do not wait until after the presentation is done to tell me about the problem. At that point there is little I can do grade-wise.

Term Paper – 25% of final grade. Each student will submit a paper approximately 6-8 pages double-spaced on the same topic as the group presentation. Although all the members of each group will be drawing on the same material used in the group presentation, each group member is expected to write their own paper in their own words. Care must be taken to avoid plagiarism between students.

Consult with me in advance if you are unsure of the topic or want direction on an appropriate outline. The completed paper is due no later than the beginning of class on Monday, Dec. 6, 2010. Late submissions of the paper will be penalized. Failure to submit the paper in class on the due date will result in the loss of 10% of the paper grade per day for each day (including weekends) beyond the deadline date and time. Do not slide the paper under my office door: the office is assigned to many lecturers and since I do not work on campus I rarely go there. Late papers can be handed to the main office of the Department of Psychology where they will be date stamped. Late papers that are not date stamped will be considered accepted on the day that I receive them. E-mail submissions will not be accepted.

The paper must be in the latest APA style, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins, and written in Times New Roman 12 point font. The paper must reflect a critical analysis of the research on the topic that you have selected. You must use articles from peer-reviewed journals, although books are acceptable and I will allow a maximum of 2 book references. You must have at least 8 references from primary sources. Quoting a secondary source within an article does not count as an extra reference.

Presentation/Paper Topics

1. How effective have systemic interventions like high taxes and banning smoking in public places been in reducing the rate of smoking in the general population? Explain how these interventions are intended to encourage health behaviour change using the theoretical underpinnings presented in the course.
2. Critique the evidence supporting the use of antidepressants (Zyban and others) as smoking cessation aids. Compare the efficacy of antidepressants versus other smoking cessation aids (nicotine replacement, individual and group counseling, physician advice, self-quitting, etc.).
3. Should cannabis be prescribed for persons with non-terminal medical illnesses (e.g., chronic pain, MS)? What are the benefits and risks? Critique the evidence for and against.
4. Describe what is currently being done on this campus to prevent harm from excessive alcohol use. Which of these interventions are evidence-based (i.e., has research to show they are effective)? How could the University do more to prevent harmful alcohol use?
5. How does the strength of one's religious beliefs or spirituality influence physical and mental health? Review the suspected mechanisms of action linking spirituality to improved health.
6. How effective are prevention and health promotion programs for reducing childhood obesity. What best practices in producing health behaviour change should prevention programs for obesity include?
7. How effective is exercise as a treatment for depression and other mental disorders? Critique the evidence including comparisons with traditional treatments (e.g., medications, therapy).

8. How effective are needle-exchange programs, safe-injection sites, and prescription heroin trials in terms of (a) reducing the spread of infectious diseases, (b) reducing drug use in general and engaging users into treatment, and (c) reducing drug-related crime and associated problems?
9. Should eating disorders be classified as an addiction? Discuss current opinions and the evidence on both sides of the topic.
10. Eating disorders are uncommon in men but stereotyped images of males are also prevalent in the media (e.g., muscular, athletic). How do media portrayals of the male body image impact men's mental health and engaging in potentially harmful behaviours such as steroid use.
11. Critically review the evidence for the effectiveness of psychological debriefing techniques following traumatic or life-threatening events for preventing PTSD and other stress disorders.
12. How do policies and laws concerning the regulation and distribution of alcohol (e.g., minimum drinking age, availability in stores) impact both alcohol consumption and the prevalence of harm in the population (e.g., alcoholism, impaired driving, assaults, domestic violence, alcohol-related admissions to hospital)? Compare liquor regulation and distribution policies in Alberta with other provinces and countries. Does Alberta need to change its alcohol control policies?

To stick to the page limits, the paper should address the question as directly as possible by reviewing the supporting research, expert opinion, and pertinent facts. Please avoid providing a lot of irrelevant material.

You are likely to find lots of literature on all of these topics so the challenge is finding 'quality' literature that incorporates a psychological perspective in the issue. The following journals are considered high quality:

<i>Health Psychology</i>	<i>Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology</i>
<i>Psychophysiology</i>	<i>American Psychologist</i>
<i>Journal of Health Psychology</i>	<i>Annals of Behavioral Medicine</i>
<i>New England Journal of Medicine</i>	<i>Psychological Bulletin</i>
<i>JAMA</i>	<i>Psychology and Health</i>
<i>Psychosomatic Medicine</i>	<i>Addiction</i>
<i>Journal of Behavioral Medicine</i>	<i>Psychology of Addictive Behaviors</i>

Reappraisal of Grades

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (e.g., term paper, essay, test) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within 15 days of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class. If not satisfied, the student shall immediately take the matter to the Head of the department offering the course, who will arrange for a reassessment of the work within the next 15 days. The reappraisal of term work may cause the grade to be raised, lowered, or to remain the same. If the student is not satisfied with the decision and wishes to appeal, the student shall address a letter of appeal to the Dean of the faculty offering the course within 15 days of the unfavourable decision. In the letter, the student must clearly and fully state the decision being appealed, the grounds for appeal, and the remedies being sought, along with any special circumstances that warrant an appeal of the reappraisal. The student should include as much written documentation as possible.

Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires

that the contribution of others be acknowledged. Consequently, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Students should examine sections of the University Calendar that present a Statement of Intellectual honesty and definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct.

Academic Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of this course.

Absence from a Test/Exam

Makeup tests/exams are NOT an option without an official University medical excuse (see the University Calendar). A completed Physician/Counselor Statement will be required to confirm absence from a test/exam for health reasons; the student will be required to pay any cost associated with this Statement. Students who miss a test/exam have 48 hours to contact the instructor and to schedule a makeup test/exam. Students who do not schedule a makeup test/exam with the instructor within this 48-hour period forfeit the right to a makeup test/exam. At the instructor's discretion, a makeup test/exam may differ significantly (in form and/or content) from a regularly scheduled test/exam. Except in extenuating circumstances (documented by an official University medical excuse), a makeup test/exam must be written within 2 weeks of the missed test/exam.

Course Credits for Research Participation (Max 2% of final grade)

Students in most psychology courses are eligible to participate in Departmentally approved research and earn credits toward their final grades. **A maximum of two credits (2%) per course, including this course, may be applied to the student's final grade. Students earn 0.5% (0.5 credits) for each full 30 minutes of participation.** The demand for timeslots may exceed the supply in a given term. Thus, students are not guaranteed that there will be enough studies available to them to meet their credit requirements. Students should seek studies early in the term and should frequently check for open timeslots. Students can create an account and participate in Departmentally approved research studies at <http://ucalgary.sona-systems.com>. The last day to participate in studies and to assign or reassign earned credits to courses is **Dec 8th, 2010**.

Evacuation Assembly Point

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>. Please check this website and note the nearest assembly point for this course.

Student Organizations

Psychology students may wish to join the Psychology Undergraduate Students' Association (PSYCHS). They are located in Administration 170 and may be contacted at 403-220-5567.

Student Union VP Academic: Phone: 403-220-3911 suvpaca@ucalgary.ca

Student Union Faculty Rep.:

Phone: 403-220-3913

socialscirep@su.ucalgary.ca

Important Dates

The last day to drop this course with no “W” notation and **still receive a tuition fee refund** is **Sep 24th, 2010**. Last day for registration/change of registration is Sep 27th, 2010. The last day to withdraw from this course is **Dec 10th, 2010**.