

GRADUATE HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY (56:830:648)
SPRING, 2019

COURSE INFORMATION

Class meeting time: Monday, 6-8:50pm

Location: Armitage Hall, Room 206

Course web page (Sakai): <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal/site/d8391a94-afea-4e89-bbc3-2215d99730d0>

INSTRUCTOR

Kristin August, Ph.D.

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Office: 401 Armitage; Phone: (856) 225-6431

Office hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this seminar, we will identify major themes and research directions in health psychology. Health psychology uses a multidisciplinary perspective to examine the complex interplay of biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors on health and illness. We will use a socioecological approach to covering course topics.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The broad objectives of this course are four-pronged: 1) a *conceptual* prong will highlight major issues and trends in health psychology; 2) a *methodological* prong will emphasize research skills and strategies; 3) an *empirical* prong will illustrate innovative and seminal studies; and 4) an *applied* prong will explore practice and policy considerations. The specific learning objectives of this course are consistent with the goals of the department. Course activities are designed to assess these learning objectives. Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Identify key theories, concepts, and methods in the field of health psychology.
- Critically analyze ideas and research in health psychology and related fields.
- Effectively communicate ideas related to health psychology (orally and in writing).
- Increase personal awareness of health status and behaviors.

REQUIRED READINGS

Readings will be from scholarly journals and books. The readings involve a mix of early and influential papers, review articles/chapters, and empirical articles that highlight important findings and issues in the relevant literature.

- All readings will be available as the on Sakai course web page (under “resources”). Any readings not yet available will be posted at least one week before they are due. See the schedule below.
- *Note:* there is no text for this course. If your background in health psychology is somewhat limited and you would like an integrated overview of the field, the following text is recommended and is available at the bookstore (under course number: 50:830:348), for purchase online, and on reserve at the Robeson library.
 - Sarafino, E. P. & Smith, T.W. (2017). *Health psychology: Biopsychosocial interactions* (9th ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.

GRADING

Grades will be determined as follows:

Research paper	40 points (40% of your grade)
Reaction papers	40 points (40% of your grade)
Article discussion	10 points (10% of your grade)
Attendance and class participation	<u>10 points (10% of your grade)</u>
	100 TOTAL POINTS

Letter grades:

A: 90-100 points

B+: 85-89 points

B: 80-84 points

C+: 75-79 points

C: 70-74 points

F: Less than 70 points ("D" is not a grade in the graduate program)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

REACTION PAPERS: To promote critical analysis of research in the field, you will be required to submit a total of **ten** brief reaction papers to the weekly readings (you can choose which ten you wish to submit). These papers can take a variety of forms, although you must integrate ideas across all of the readings. For example, you might outline disagreements with an author's conceptual framework, describe methodological limitations of studies, or suggest novel directions for research in the area. Every reaction paper should also include 1-2 discussion questions for class and one idea about how the information presented in the readings can relate to your own experiences (in your personal life, in your research or applied experiences, something you heard in the media, etc.). In addition, be sure to include any questions that you had about the readings (e.g., if anything was confusing or you would like clarification on a concept). These papers should be approximately 1 single-spaced page, and should be uploaded to Sakai under the appropriate forum no later than **Friday at midnight** for the upcoming week's readings. Each reaction paper is worth 4 points. Together, these reaction papers will account for 40% of your overall grade.

RESEARCH PAPER: Write a 10-12 double-spaced paper in APA style, as described below. You are welcome to draw upon the assigned readings in developing your paper, but you should consult additional material, as well (at least 4 (four) other scholarly articles). You are encouraged to make connections with your own research interests, but be careful about too much overlap with your thesis (see section below on academic dishonesty). Your topic is **due April 15** and your paper is **due May 13**. This paper will account for 40% of your grade.

Choose **one** of the following options for your paper:

a. *Review and critique.* Write a review and critique of the literature on a specific topic in health psychology. Because the paper is relatively brief, you will need to select a fairly narrow topic in order to do it justice. You should consider the following in your paper: What key issues or questions related to your topic have engaged the attention of researchers? Have important issues been overlooked? What theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches have guided work on this topic? What are some limitations of these approaches? What alternative theoretical and methodological approaches appear promising to you? What conclusions have emerged from empirical work conducted to date? What ambiguities and unresolved issues remain? What directions for future research do you recommend?

b. *Design, measurement, or data analysis issue.* Write a paper that addresses a research design, measurement, or data analysis issue in the field of health psychology. You might wish to approach this paper option as an opportunity to learn about a methodological issue that you would like to understand better. Provide an overview of the issue that your paper addresses and summarize various ways that researchers have approached this issue. Provide a recommendation for the approach you consider to be most desirable, explaining why you favor this approach.

Research paper options (continued):

c. *Research proposal.* Develop a proposal for a study or program of research that addresses a specific question or issue that interests you and that is related to the course. Because this paper is relatively brief, you will need to describe the proposed research in fairly broad terms rather than in minute detail. Be sure to explain why the problem to be studied is important and why you think the proposed study would improve upon or extend previous research. You could use this paper option to develop your thinking about a study that you actually might want to conduct.

ARTICLE DISCUSSION: To foster an in-depth understanding of a research topic and methodology in the field, you will be required to choose an article on a health psychology topic, and prepare a short, in-class PowerPoint presentation. Articles must report the results of an original, empirical study from the past ~5 years and come from a reputable journal in the field (examples include: *Health Psychology*, *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, *Social Science and Medicine*, *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *Psychology & Health*, and *Journal of Health Psychology*). This presentation should follow the structure of the article: background/significance, methods (participants, procedure, and measures), key findings, and discussion (interpretation of findings, study limitations, and implications for policy and practice). Your presentation should be no more than 10 minutes in length. Your presentation date will depend on the topic you choose; however, only two students will be allowed to present on each of the broad topics listed in your syllabus (days not eligible for presenting are indicated); thus, *sign up early* to ensure that you can present on your first choice topic, as topics will be on a first come, first serve basis. Your article must be approved by me no later than Wednesday at noon the week before you present. This assignment will account for 10% of your overall grade. You cannot make up your presentation without a valid excuse (defined by me) and appropriate documentation.

CLASS ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION: To promote engagement in learning the course material, you are expected to attend and actively participate in class. The course will be primarily discussion-based, although I will do some lecturing to introduce topics and provide context for the readings. Therefore, it is important you come to class for an informed discussion (even on dates that you do not submit a reaction paper). You will be graded on *active* and *high quality* participation. If you must miss class, please inform me if and why you plan to miss; if you miss more than 1 class, you will lose points from your grade. Class attendance and participation will account for 10% of your overall grade.

COURSE POLICIES

- Course web page: Additional information about this class, a copy of the syllabus, grading criteria for all assignments, and required readings will be available on the Sakai course web page (sakai.rutgers.edu). It is your responsibility to keep informed of any updates made to the syllabus and other assignments posted online.
- Contacting the instructor: You may contact me by e-mail or by appointment. It is preferred that you use your Rutgers email, as emails from non-Rutgers' accounts are sometimes filtered as spam/clutter. I will be sending course announcements over email, so please check your Rutgers' account regularly. Please note that I will not respond to emails after 9pm, on weekends, during holidays, or during university breaks.
- Class etiquette: All students are expected to conduct themselves during class in a manner that does not interfere with the educational experience of other students in the course. Please be courteous to others and arrive to class on time, stay the entire time, and do not use electronic devices during class (including laptops). If you engage in any of these behaviors, you will lose points from your attendance grade.

- Missed class/assignments: Please contact me as soon as possible if you experience an event that affects your ability to attend class or complete an assignment on time. If you do not have a *valid* reason for missing class or turning in an assignment when it is due, you will lose 10% of your assignment grade for each day it is late. Valid reasons for missing class include serious/highly contagious illnesses, deaths in the family, doctoral program interviews, and conference presentations; valid reasons for not being able to completing an assignment on time are determined by me on a case-by-case basis (and do NOT include insufficient planning/time management). Please keep in mind there is limited flexibility in rescheduling article discussion dates.
- Academic dishonesty: Cheating, plagiarizing, or any other academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this course. This includes self-plagiarism (i.e., submitting substantial portions of the same paper that was submitted in another class or for your thesis). If you engage in any form of academic dishonesty in this course, you will receive a failing grade on the assignment in question and may face other sanctions as specified by the university. Please see further information about Rutgers' policies concerning academic integrity at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy>.
- Disability services: If you need disability accommodations, please contact the Director of Disability Services (Kelly Deasy: (856) 225-2717, kelly.deasy@rutgers.edu, Armitage Hall, Room 235). Students who require special accommodations should notify me during the first week of class.
- Dropping the course/incompletes: The last date to drop this course *without* a W grade is **Tuesday, January 29**; the last date to drop *with* a W grade is **Tuesday, April 2**. Please consult the academic calendar for additional dates related to dropping the course without tuition penalties. Incompletes will not be given in this course except under extremely rare circumstances that require documentation and adherence to university policies.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is *tentative*; dates may change slightly depending on our progress in covering the material. All reading assignments are posted on Sakai (under "resources"); readings not yet available will be posted at least one week in advance. You are expected to have reading assignments completed before class to ensure trenchant discussions.

Week 1: Overview of Health Psychology		
Monday, Jan. 28	<u>Readings</u> : Engel (1977) Suls & Rothman (2004)	No reaction papers or article discussions

Week 2: Methods in Health Psychology		
Monday, Feb. 4	<u>Readings</u> : Gerin (2010) Iida et al (2012) Lam & Fresco (2015) Trost et al. (2005)	No article discussion

Week 3: Stress		
Monday, Feb. 11	<u>Readings</u> : Contrada (2010) Epel et al. (2018) Taylor et al. (2000)	

Week 4: Stress and Health

Monday, Feb. 18 Readings:
 Chida & Steptoe (2010)
 Cohen et al. (2012)
 McEwen (1998)
 Tsigos & Chrousos (2002)

Week 5: Coping

Monday, Feb. 25 Readings:
 Berg & Upchurch (2007)
 Carver (2010)
 Davis et al. (2015)

Week 6: Health promotion

Monday, March 4 Readings:
 Korda & Itani (2013)
 Marks (2015)
 Sallis/Owen & Rimer/Brewer (2015)

Week 7: Health behaviors

Monday, March 11 Readings:
 Barrington-Trimis et al. (2015)
 Bauman et al (2012)
 Stevenson (2017)

Monday, March 18 – no class (SPRING BREAK)

Week 8: Intrapersonal factors and health: personality and emotion

Monday, March 25 Readings:
 Hampson et al. (2016)
 Pressman & Cross (2018)
 Suls & Bunde (2005)

Week 9: Intrapersonal factors and health: cognition and motivation

Monday, April 1 Readings:
 Erickson et al. (2015)
 Leventhal et al. (2016)
 Ng et al. (2012)

Week 10: Interpersonal factors on health

Monday, April 8 Readings:
 August et al. (2016)
 Holt-Lunstad et al. (2015)
 Rook et al. (2010)
 Roth et al. (2015)

Week 11: Interactions with health care

Monday, April 15 Readings: Paper topic DUE
 Berkman (2011)
 Levinson et al. (2010)
 Martin et al. (2005)

Week 12: Sociocultural factors and health

Monday, April 22

Readings:

Adler (2003)
Conron et al. (2010)
Phelan & Link (2015)
Helgeson (2012)

Week 13: Topic selected by class. *Options:* technology and health, religiosity and health, positive health psychology, occupational health psychology OR elaborate on any of the above topics, etc.

Monday, April 29

Readings to be determined**Week 14: Practice and policy considerations**

Monday, May 6

Readings:

Betancourt et al. (2003)
Miller & Rose (2009)
Moller et al. (2017)
Umberson & Montez (2010) – pp. 6-11 only

FINAL EXAM: MONDAY, MAY 13 @ 9PM: DEADLINE TO UPLOAD RESEARCH PAPER TO SAKAI (UNDER ASSIGNMENTS -> RESEARCH PAPER)