

# HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY (50:830:348)

FALL, 2018

## COURSE INFORMATION

Tuesday & Thursday, 3:35-4:55pm

Location: 319 Cooper Street, Room 109

Course web page (Sakai): <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal/site/55a72b6d-d775-4f8f-9f75-6cb758f32951>

## INSTRUCTOR

Kristin August, Ph.D.

Email: [kristin.august@rutgers.edu](mailto:kristin.august@rutgers.edu)

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

Office hours: Thursday, 2:15-3:15pm and by appointment

## TEACHING ASSISTANT

John Crowell

Email: [jlc554@scarletmail.rutgers.edu](mailto:jlc554@scarletmail.rutgers.edu)

Office hours by appointment

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to give you a broad overview of the field of health psychology. Health psychology applies a wide range of psychological principles and research methods to the understanding of health and illness. Health psychology approaches health and illness from a multidisciplinary perspective in which the complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors are examined. In this course, we will consider such questions as: How can stress affect your health? Are individuals with certain personality types more likely to get certain illnesses? Why do people behave in unhealthy ways? What helps people cope with illness? How do our friends and family members affect our health?

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives of this course are consistent with the goals of the psychology department and health sciences program. 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 health psychology;
- Critically analyze research in the field;
- Effectively communicate ideas related to health psychology (orally and in writing); and
- Increase personal awareness of health status and behaviors.

## REQUIRED READINGS

- Sarafino, E. P. & Smith, T.W. (2017). *Health psychology: Biopsychosocial interactions* (9th ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.  
\*The text is available for purchase at the bookstore or online; it also is available on reserve at the Robeson Library.
- Additional required readings are available on the Sakai course web page (see list on pp. 4-5 and schedule below).

## GRADING

Grades will be determined as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> Exam	60 points (/300 = 20% of your grade)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Exam	60 points (/300 = 20% of your grade)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Exam (final)	60 points (/300 = 20% of your grade)
Health behavior monitoring/modification project	60 points (/300 = 20% of your grade)
Health in the media assignment	30 points (/300 = 10% of your grade)
Quizzes on additional readings	15 points (/300 = 5% of your grade)
Attendance and class participation	15 points (/300 = 5% of your grade)

**300 TOTAL POINTS**

Letter grades:

- A: 270-300 points
- B+: 255-269 points
- B: 240-254 points
- C+: 225-239 points
- C: 210-224 points
- D: 180-209 points
- F: 179 points or less

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**EXAMS:** To assess your mastery of core concepts covered in lecture and assigned readings, you will take three exams in this course. Study guides are designed to aid in your preparation for the exams. No make-up exams will be given unless arrangements are made prior to an exam **and** proof of the necessary absence is provided (see below). Please arrive to exams on time; if you arrive more than 10 minutes late for an exam, I reserve the right not to administer the exam to you. All three exams are non-cumulative, and will account for a total of 60% of your overall grade.

**HEALTH BEHAVIOR MONITORING/MODIFICATION PROJECT:** The goals of this project are three-fold: to increase personal awareness of your own health status/behaviors, to apply key concepts and methods in health psychology, and to enhance writing skills. You will be required to complete a health behavior monitoring and modification exercise and write up your findings. Your health behavior “Wakelet” is **due on Tuesday, December 4 at the beginning of class (via Sakai)**; the final paper is **due on Tuesday, December 11 at the beginning of class** (hard copy in class). The final paper should be approximately 5-7 pages long, *including* the title page and references (typed, 12-point font, double spaced, 1” margins, APA style references). More detailed information about your Wakelet and the paper is available online (under “assignments”) and will be discussed in class. This exercise/paper will account for 20% of your overall grade. Late Wakelets will lose 2 points per day; late papers will lose 4 points per day.

**HEALTH IN THE MEDIA :** Information about our health is abundant in the media. In addition to becoming consumers of scientific research, it is important that you also become prudent consumers of research in the media and other real world outlets. To this end, we will take some time during each class to discuss how a research study/finding discussed in the media relates to health psychology. Thus, each student should sign up for a day to bring a health-related news story to class (e.g., a newspaper, website article), compare it to the original scientific source, and present their completed assignment. (You are required to **sign up** for a day to turn in your assignment/present by **Tuesday, September 11**; otherwise, you will receive zero points on this assignment.) More detailed information about the assignment is available online (under “assignments”). This exercise will account for 10% of your overall grade. Late assignments will lose 3 points per day, in addition to 3 points for not presenting in class.

**QUIZZES ON ADDITIONAL READINGS:** To assess your understanding of the material covered in the additional readings, you will take a quiz on the day an additional required reading is assigned (with one exception). There will be 7 quizzes total each worth 2.5 points. You will be able to drop your lowest quiz grade, so only 6 quizzes will be factored into your overall grade. Because quizzes will be given in class, if you miss a class for that day, you lose any points you would have earned on the quiz (**you cannot make-up a quiz**, but you can drop a quiz that you miss). All quizzes will account for 5% of your overall grade.

**ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION:** To promote engagement in learning the course material, you are expected to attend and participate in class. I welcome your comments, thoughts, and questions, and hope you take an active role in learning the course material. Activities during class will count toward your attendance grade. If you miss more than *two* (2) classes (for whatever reason) you will lose points from your attendance grade. Please do not contact me if you miss class. **I do not “excuse” missed classes**, unless you will be out for an extended period of time (i.e., more than 2 classes) for exceptional circumstances that are discussed with me in advance; in this case, I require documentation for your absences. In addition, if you miss any class meetings, you will lose points for any assignments that are due that class meeting or quizzes that are given in class. To earn attendance points for class, you will need to complete an “exit ticket” to assess your understanding of the material covered that day (see below for more details). Class attendance and participation will account for 5% of your overall grade.

#### IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR QUIZZES AND ATTENDANCE:

We will use Socrative for quizzes and to take class attendance (“exit tickets”). Please make sure to bring an electronic device (laptop, phone, tablet) with you to class each day for this purpose (to be used for this purpose *only*). (If you do not have an electronic device to bring to class, please let me know.)

- Download the Socrative (student version) app or go to: <https://b.socrative.com/login/student/>
- When you are prompted in class to complete a quiz or exit ticket, you will need to:
  - Enter the room name to join: 319RM109
  - Enter your full name

#### COURSE POLICIES

It is my sincere hope that students are successful in this course and learn information that is useful for their academic and career goals as well as their daily lives. If you experience difficulty in the course, please email me or stop by during my office hours. Please do not wait until the end of the semester to talk with me! I am always happy to review drafts of any written assignments, but I only provide feedback *in person* (not via email). Many of the policies outlined below are evidence-based, and are in place to promote student success and provide an enriching and fair educational experience for all of my students.

- Course web page: Additional information about this class, a copy of the syllabus, assignment details, and additional required readings are available on the Sakai course web page ([sakai.rutgers.edu](http://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/teaching assistant: You may contact me during my office hours or by e-mail. In addition, individual assistance is always available by appointment. You also may contact the teaching assistant by e-mail or schedule an appointment to meet with him/her. To ensure e-mails are read promptly and not filtered, please put the course name in the subject line of your message. **Please use your Rutgers email to contact me, as emails from non-Rutgers’ accounts are sometimes filtered as spam.** I will be sending course announcements over email, so please check your Rutgers’ account regularly. If you email me and do not receive a response, I did not receive your email.
- Attendance/taking notes: You will benefit the most from this class if you attend class and are an active participant. To this end, PowerPoint slides shown during class will only be made available for topics we discuss that are *not* included in your readings (posted on Sakai -> “resources” after class). In addition to encouraging attendance, taking your own notes will help you learn how to extract the most important information from readings and lectures. Further, evidence suggests that taking your own notes is related to improved recall of the information presented.

- 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 and stay the entire time. Late arrivals, early departures, “quiet conversations,” and electronic device usage are distracting and noticeable throughout the classroom (please *silence/turn off* **all** electronic devices in class, **except for when we are taking quizzes or completing your exit ticket at the end of class**). These behaviors are not conducive to a positive learning environment and will result in lost attendance points for that day.
- Missed class/meetings: If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to become informed of any announcements made in class and the material presented. You should obtain notes from a classmate and read the required readings. (Out of fairness to other students, I will not provide copies of my notes to students.) A majority of the material discussed in class can be found in the required readings. If you do not show up to a scheduled meeting time, you will lose 1 point from your attendance grade.
- Missed exams or assignments: Illnesses, death in the family, or other stressful events are an unfortunate part of life. If you experience any of these unfortunate events, a make-up exam will be given only if you contact me prior to the exam **and** provide documentation of your absence (e.g., a doctor’s note). If you unexpectedly miss an exam due to exceptional circumstances, it is your responsibility to contact me within 24 hours of the exam to discuss the possibility of a make-up exam. Make-up exams may consist of essay questions. If you miss turning in an assignment when it is due, you will lose 10% of the assignment grade for each day it is late. There will be no exceptions, as due dates of all assignments are posted in advance.
- Academic dishonesty: Cheating, plagiarizing, or any other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this course. 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 Disability Services Coordinator (Ajeenah Nuriddin-Little: (856) 225-2722, [ajeenah.nuriddin-little@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:ajeenah.nuriddin-little@camden.rutgers.edu), Armitage Hall, Room 231). 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, September 11**; the last date to drop *with* a W grade **Tuesday, November 13**. 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.

### **ADDITIONAL REQUIRED READINGS (available on the course web page under “Assignments”)**

- Cohen, S. (2005). The Pittsburgh Common Cold Studies: Psychosocial predictors of susceptibility to respiratory infectious illness. [Keynote Presentation at the 8th International Congress of Behavioral Medicine; Mainz, Germany, August 25-28, 2004]. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 12(3),
- Crockett, L. J., Iturbide, M. I., Torres Stone, R. A., McGinley, M., Raffaelli, M., & Carlo, G. (2007). Acculturative stress, social support, and coping: Relations to psychological adjustment among Mexican American college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 13(4), 347-355.

Konnikova, M. (2015, July). Why can't we fall asleep? The work we do while we sleep. The walking dead. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/why-cant-we-fall-asleep>  
<http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/why-we-sleep>  
<http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/the-walking-dead>

\*Note: There is no quiz on this reading (but it will be on Exam #2)

Nahin, R. L., Boineau, R., Khalsa, P. S., Stussman, B. J., & Weber, W. J. (2016, September). Evidence-based evaluation of complementary health approaches for pain management in the United States. In *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* (Vol. 91, No. 9, pp. 1292-1306). Elsevier.

Taylor, S.E., Klein, L.C., Lewis, B.P., Gruenwald, T.L., Gurung, R.A.R., & Updegraff, J.A. (2000). Biobehavioral responses to stress in females: Tend-and-befriend, not fight-or-flight. *Psychological Review*, 107, 411-429.

Ulrich, R.S. (1984). View from a window may influence recovery from surgery. *Science*, 224, 420-421.

Umberson, D., Crosnoe, R., & Reczek, C. (2010). Social relationships and health behavior across the life course. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36, 139-157.

Wagner, H. S., Ahlstrom, B., Redden, J. P., Vickers, Z., & Mann, T. (2014). The myth of comfort food. *Health Psychology*, 33(12), 1552-1557.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Note: This schedule is *tentative*; dates may change slightly depending on our progress in covering the material. Readings are listed at the beginning of each unit. You are expected to have reading assignments completed before class.

#### **Week 1: Course Introduction/Health Psychology Overview**

Tuesday, Sept. 4	Course introduction/overview of psychology and health	Ch. 1
Thursday, Sept. 6	Overview of psychology and health	

#### **Week 2: Research Methods/Systems of the Body**

Tuesday, Sept. 11	Research methods in health psychology	<b><i>Last day to sign up for health in the media assignment/presentation</i></b>
Thursday, Sept. 13	Systems of the body/stress	

#### **Week 3: Stress**

Tuesday, Sept. 18	Stress: its meaning, impact, and sources/measuring stress	
Thursday, Sept. 20	Stress: biopsychosocial factors and illness	Ch. 4 Taylor et al. (2000); <b>QUIZ #1</b>

#### **Week 4: Stress (cont'd)**

Tuesday, Sept. 25	Psychosocial modifiers of stress	
Thursday, Sept. 27	How stress affects health	Cohen et al. (2005); <b>QUIZ #2</b>

**Week 5: Exam #1/Coping with Stress**

Tuesday, Oct. 2	<b>EXAM #1</b>	<b>Chapters 1-4</b>
Thursday, Oct. 4	Coping with stress	Ch. 5

**Week 6: Managing Stress/Health Promotion**

Tuesday, Oct. 9	Stress management	Crockett et al. (2007); <b>QUIZ #3</b>
Thursday, Oct. 11	Health promotion	Ch. 6

**Week 7: Health Promotion (cont'd)**

Tuesday, Oct. 16	Health promotion	
Thursday, Oct. 18	Psychosocial determinants of health behaviors	Umberson et al. (2010); <b>QUIZ #4</b>

**Week 8: Health Behaviors**

Tuesday, Oct. 23	Health-enhancing behaviors	Ch. 8; Konnikova (2015) – no quiz
Thursday, Oct. 25	Health-compromising behaviors	Ch. 7 Wagner et al. (2014); <b>QUIZ #5</b>

**Week 9: Using Health Services**

Tuesday, Oct. 30	Using health services: perceiving and interpreting symptoms	Ch. 9
Thursday, Nov. 1	Health care system and doctor-patient relationship	

**Week 10: Using Health Services (cont'd)/Exam #2**

Tuesday, Nov. 6	Adherence	
Thursday, Nov. 8	<b>EXAM #2</b>	<b>Chapters 5-9</b>

**Week 11: Health Equity/Hospital Experience**

Thursday, Nov. 13	Guest speaker: Dr. M. Carolyn Daniels: Health equity	<b>Campus Center, West ABC</b>
Thursday, Nov. 15	In the hospital	Ch. 10

**Week 12: Hospital Experience (cont'd)**

Tuesday, Nov. 20	In the hospital (cont'd)	Ulrich (1984); <b>QUIZ #6</b>
Thursday, Nov. 22	<b>NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING</b>	

**Week 13: Pain**

Tuesday, Nov. 27	Pain: definition, types, physiology	Ch. 11
Thursday, Nov. 29	Pain: Biopsychosocial aspects and measurement	Nahin et al. (2017); <b>QUIZ #7</b>

**Week 14: Chronic Illness**

Tuesday, Dec. 4	Chronic illness: prevalence, coping and adjustment	Ch. 13 <b><i>DUE: Health behavior modification "Wakelet"</i></b>
Thursday, Dec. 6	A lifespan examination of three chronic illnesses	

**Week 15: The Future of Health Psychology/Course Wrap-up**

Tuesday, Dec. 11	The future of health psychology	Ch. 15 <b><i>DUE: Health behavior modification paper</i></b>
------------------	---------------------------------	---

***FINAL EXAM (#3): TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18 FROM 2:45-5:45PM (the exam starts at 2:45pm)***  
*Chapters 10-11, 13 & 15*