

The Psychology of Health
PSYCHOLOGY 220
Spring Semester 2006

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Office: 117 Clough, Ext. 3650
Office hours: M & W 1:00 – 3:00, Th 3:00 - 5:00

Course Learning Objectives

1. *Gaining factual knowledge...with regards to chronic illnesses, behavioral or psychological risk factors, as well as the effectiveness of psychologically based treatment modalities*
2. *Learning fundamental principles and theories regarding the interplay between psychology and health*

This course is intended to provide students with a preliminary understanding of the important ways in which psychological states and behaviors are involved in health and illness. There is a certain body of factual information, derived from research studies, which all students will be expected to learn. This includes a basic understanding of chronic illnesses, incidence rates, factors which affect seeking or adherence to treatment, as well as the latest information about behaviors related to maintaining a healthy lifestyle (*see objective 1*). In general, the student should attend to the role of psychology as it attempts to account for risk factors and treatment effectiveness in addition to the teaching of health behaviors and behavior modification (*see objective 2*).

I do not want this to be treated as abstract information, and so I will encourage you to attend to your own risk factors and behaviors. I want you leave college better prepared to think about your own health and how to manage illness. To accomplish this I will attempt to get you to personalize this information by relating it to your own family. To do this I will ask you to select a research topic related to some illness or health problem relevant to you or persons close to you, and to explore the implications for your own behavior in the future. I also will attempt to sensitize you to the impact of stress on health and well-being, and to introduce you to several techniques for controlling and managing your own stress. I hope, through this class, to encourage you to question you own health-related behaviors and to give you first-hand experience with the difficulty in modifying behaviors. Above all, I want you to start thinking more broadly about health, prevention, and the life-style that you want to adopt as you transition into the adult world.

NOTE: If relaxation training and behavior modification seem silly to you, I suspect that this really isn't a good course for you to take.

Text & Readings:

- Brannon, L., & Feist, J. (2004). Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health, 5th Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. (*referred to as **BF** in class schedule*)
- Daniel, E.L. (Ed) (2006). Annual editions: Health 06/07. Dubuque, IA; McGraw-Hill. (*referred to as **AE** in class schedule*)
- Sobel, D.S. (1990). The placebo effect: Using the body's own healing mechanisms. In R. Ornstein & C.Swencionis (Eds.), The healing brain, (pp. 63-74). New York: The Guilford Press. (*copies in psych library*)

The text will be the source for most of the technical information presented in the course. This information is often complicated and nuanced, and so a text provides the best format. Students will be expected to be familiar with the major research findings and the problems with the existing research, as well as some of the basic incidence rates. For example, just how common is coronary heart disease? Is it more common than cancer? What are the most likely causes of death for people your age? Further, you should appreciate the relative effectiveness of various psychological treatment strategies: Are anti-smoking TV spots effective? Can alcoholics learn to drink alcohol "safely"? Can behavior affect development of coronary heart disease? Type II diabetes? Cancer survival? We will generally use class time to consider and discuss issues that don't lend themselves to a more factual presentation or to attempt to resolve conflicting evidence.

Exams:

There will be four exams which will be a combination of multiple choice and short essays. The exams will cover the text, the Annual Editions readings, lectures, and other class activities. Multiple choice questions will

be used to evaluate your acquisition of the knowledge base while essays will primarily be used to assess your ability to integrate, draw inferences, and/or to reflect on a broader level the implications of what you have learned. The four exam grades will determine 60% of your course grade. In preparing for the exams you will want to pay particular attention to those research findings which fail to support common health assumptions.

Discussions:

Students will be responsible for leading the class discussion of the “articles” found in the Annual Editions text. Responsibility for articles will be assigned in class. Discussion leaders must meet with Dr. Ackerman in a timely fashion to review their plans for the discussion, but all class members are expected to be familiar with them (the articles) and prepared to relate the articles to other course material. 10% of the students’ grade will be determined by performance as discussion leaders as well as class participation. I will take notes regarding participation in class discussion, the level of thought behind comments/questions, insight, stimulation of response by classmates, etc.

Wellness Activities & Personal Health Assessment:

In an attempt to encourage you to become engaged with the material encompassed by health psychology, you will be given assignments relating to health behaviors and assessment of your own health, including interviewing your family regarding incidence of disease and causes of death. In addition, I will show students the most common techniques in relaxation and I will give you a schedule for practicing them.

Each of you will also be required to design and implement a behavior modification program on some aspect of your own health. The purpose of the behavior modification project (and that of relaxation) is to provide you with first-hand experience with the procedures used to modify health behaviors. Any student who smokes is strongly encouraged to attempt to lessen or stop smoking. You will chart the behavior(s) you are attempting to modify through the semester, indicating when various contingencies are implemented. At the conclusion of the semester a summary of the student’s personal health assessment & behavior modification should be presented in a 3-5 page paper worth 5% of the course grade. If you have any other health behavior that you want to modify (problems falling asleep, binge drinking, etc) Dr Ackerman would be happy to work with you.

Topic Paper and Presentation:

Students will work individually to learn more about some topic related to health psychology to be summarized in a paper. I strongly encourage you to use this opportunity to learn more about some problem that is relevant to you, a family member, or a friend. The paper will require students to delve into the published literature for some disorder or health problem and consider it from a psychological perspective. The topic must have some relevance to psychology, either due to predisposing personality or risk behaviors, psychological complications in the course of the disorder, or treatment implications. Specific instructions will be provided in class. The topic paper will be worth 20% of your final grade. Each student will make a presentation to the class specifically focusing on the behavioral/psychological implications for their topic, which will be worth 5% of the final course grade.

Several assignments pertaining to the topic have been assigned and are meant to "encourage" students to work on the project throughout the semester. Topics must be approved by Dr. Ackerman, but possible topics include:

AIDS-related dementia or treatment	Alzheimer’s (minimizing risks)
arthritis	asthma
chronic fatigue syndrome	cystic fibrosis
epilepsy	leukemia, or other specific cancers
modifying binge drinking	narcolepsy or other specific sleep disturbances
strokes	

Penalties will be assessed for any late work, including the preliminary assignments leading up to the paper, at the rate of 1/2 letter grade per day.

Daily Course Topics, Readings and Other Assignments

Class	Day	Date	Topic	Reading & Other Assignments
1	W	January 11	Introducing Health Psychology	
2	F	13		BF 1
	M	16	<i>Martin Luther King Observance</i>	
3	W	18		AE 1, 2, 3, 32, 33 (DG 1)
4	F	20	Conducting Health Research	BF 2
5	M	23		AE 40, 41 & Sobel (DG 2)
6	W	25	Seeking Health Care	BF 3
7	F	27		AE 7, 31, 34, 35 (DG 3)
8	M	30	Adhering to Medical Advice	BF 4 AE 6
9	W	February 1		<i>Topic for your final paper due (1-2 paragraphs)</i>
10	F	3	Exam 1	
11	M	6	Defining and Measuring Stress	BF 5
12	W	8		
13	F	10	<i>Relaxation Training</i>	
14	M	13	Stress and Disease	BF 6
15	W	15		AE 4, 5, 8 (DG 4)
16	F	17	Pain	BF 7
17	M	20		<i>Prelim. outline of final paper due</i>
18	W	22	Coping with Stress and Pain	BF 8 AE 36
19	F	24		
20	M	27	Exam 2	
21	W	March 1	Cardiovascular Disease	BF 9 AE 27
22	F	3		<i>Annotated bibliography of at least 5 sources due</i>
23	M	6	Behavior Factors in Cancer	BF 10
24	W	8		AE 28, 37, 38, 39 (DG 5)
25	F	10	Living with Chronic Illness	BF 11 AE 26
			<i>Spring Break!!!</i>	
26	M	20	Preventing Injuries	BF 12
27	W	22	<i>Aids & STDs</i>	AE 22, 23, 24, 25, 29 (DG 6)
28	F	24	Exam 3	
29	M	27	Smoking Tobacco	BF 13
30	W	29	<i>Public Health Campaigns</i>	AE 17, 40, 41 (DG 7)
31	F	31	Using Alcohol and Other Drugs	BF 14
				<i>Annotated outline due</i>
32	M	April 3		AE 18, 19, 20, 21 (DG 8)
33	W	5	Eating to Control Weight	BF 15
34	F	7		AE 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17 (DG 9)
35	M	10	Exercising	BF 16
36	W	12		AE 12, 14, 15 (DG 10)
			<i>Easter Recess</i>	
37	M	17	Class Presentations	
38	W	19		
39	F	21		
40	M	24		
41	W	26		<i>Final paper due</i>
	F	28	<i>Awards Convocation & URCAS</i>	
	Sat	May 6 @ 8:30	Final exam	

Reading	Title	Brannon & Feist	
1	How to Live to be 100		
2	Putting a Premium on Health		
3	Why the Rich Live Longer		
4	Happier and Healthier		
5	Enough to Make you Sick		
6	Are you OK?		
7	Dealing with Demons (public health campaigns)		
8	Too Young to be Stressed		
9	The Trouble with Trans Fat		
10	10 Myths That Won't Quit		
11	What Does Science Say You Should Eat?		
12	Sweating Makes you Smart		
13	The Skinny on Poplar Diets		
14	The Female Triad		
15	Stretching		
16	Eat More Weight Less		
17	Why We're Losing the War Against Obesity		
18	The New Drug War (buying drugs from Canada)		
19	Sports and Drugs		
20	Just Say No Again: The Old Failures of New and Improved Anti-Drug Education		
21	Dangerous Supplements Still at Large		
22	Sexual Healing		
23	Male Contraception: Search is On for Options		
24	It's Just Mechanics (sexual practices, sexual dysfunction)		
25	Promiscuous Plague (AIDS & STDs)		
26	Diabetes, a Crisis in an Expanding Country		
27	The Battle Within: Our Anti-Inflammation Diet		
28	Why We're Losing the War on Cancer and How to Win It		
29	The Puzzling Origins of AIDS		
30	The Overtreated American		
31	Stay Safe in the Hospital		
32	A High Dose of Tech		
33	Putting a Value on Health		
34	Doctoring Yourself: When is it Wise		
35	Making an Informed Decision About Breast Implants		
36	How to Ease your Pain		
37	Agencies Work to Coral Mad Cow Disease		
38	Just Too Loud (long terms stressors)		
39	What's at Risk		
40	Flu Shot Fever (shortage of vaccine, gov)		

41	When Does Autism Start?		

Write sheet that tells how to summarize an article & then discuss what is relevant to you

For each chapter, discuss what in psychology applies to the topic of health

Chose a particular medical disorder with potential psychological or behavioral impact

- a. determine the biological/biochemical
- a. identify what is known about behaviors or personality putting one at risk
- b. psych needs & impact of the disorder
- c. psychological implications for treatment
- d. do you note a particular psychological approach, theoretical, which is particularly used/ which is not used but which would be applicable?

Chpt Title Topics

1. Introducing Health Psychology (20)

Lectures: Existing two-day lecture comes from Brannon---Needs redoing.

The Mind Body relationship & the nature of health and illness--Gatchel ch1

2. Conducting Research in Psychology and Epidemiology (25)

Guest Speaker--Epidemiologist

Reading: The Placebo Effect--Sorbell

Lectures: Existing two-day lecture comes from Brannon---Needs some redoing.

3. Defining and Measuring Stress (35 pages)

Perception of stress, stressful life events

Lectures: Currently based on Brannon--redo

see chapter ;in Spacapan & Oskamp by Cohen on perception of stress & related

4. Understanding Stress and Illness (27 pages)

Psychoneuroimmunology

Reading: Kobasa reading (1982) on Hardiness ? see citation in old notes

locate previous reading on psychoneuroimmunology

Lectures: illnesses related to stress Sarafino p 132

Stress and the development of illness see Taylor 6 & 7

see Gatchel Cp 6

5. Understanding Pain (29)

Movie

Reading: Melzak & Walls goes here

Lectures:

6. Coping with Stress and Pain (26)

social support
learned helplessness

Reading from Rodin & Langer on control

Reading on social support

Lectures:

see Taylor chapter 8 -- Stress management

see Taylor What is pain? The control of pain Psychological Control of discomfort

see Spacapan & Oskamp ch 4, The negative side of perceived control

Control and Learned Helplessness! see Gatchel & Baum, ch 4

Gatchel & Baum on pain and pain management

Speaker on stress management? Pain Clinic?

7. Identifying Behavioral Factors in Cardiovascular Disease (34)

Stress and the development of illness

Type A Behavior Pattern

Speaker on behavioral therapies

Lectures: Current lecture based on Green et al

stress and the development of disease see Taylor ch 7

8. Identifying Behavioral Factors in Cancer (23)

Reading from Marsha & one of the original pieces-->discussion

Speaker from UT? from cancer clinic?

Lectures: REDO!

9. Receiving Health Care (33)

Health Beliefs (attitudes & attitude change)

Speaker on DRG & reimbursement? Insurance issues directing treatment?

Reading :by Cousins

Lectures:

see Sarafino ch 6 see Taylor chapter 3

existing lecture on seeking health care

Hospitalization (see Taylor)

10. Adhering to Medical Advice (20)

Modification of health behaviors (behavioral paradigms)

Health promotion programs

Lectures: part of lecture ready

see Taylor chapter 4

see cognitive-behavioral treatment techniques in Gatchel & Baum, Ch 10

see Prevention and health promotion, ch 13 in Gatchel & Baum

11. Living with Chronic Illness (41)

Aids: Aids speaker?

Alzheimers : Anna on working with the elderly

Lectures:

communication of feelings? this is all ready

see Taylor The management of chronic & terminal illness; part 6

Social Support and the Cancer Patient by Taylor in Spacapan & Oksamp

12. Smoking Tobacco (35)

Substance abuseHealth promotion programs

Lectures: lecture already on programs--2 days

substance abuse, see Sarafino ch 7see Taylor for control of smoking programs

extensive material in Spacapan & Oskamp

13. Alcohol & Other Drugs (37)

addiction & appetitive disorders

prevention strategies

Lectures:

see Taylor for control program on alch

see Taylor for prevention lecture

see Gatchel & Baum Ch 12 for appetitive disorders

14. Eating to Control Weight (37)

Body Image

Review of Weight Loss Programs?

Readings: Crandall & American Psychologist on Bulimia

Lectures:

Nutrition Sarafingo ch 8see Taylor for control programs

Speaker: on nutrition???

15. Exercising (28)

Speaker on Wellness programs & benefits

Lectures:

could always start student presentatiions here

16. Health Psychology: Premise and Promise (15)
student presentations

Lectures: see Taylor chapter 18

Other ideas:

***DuPont on the ER & role of professionals--Gatchel & Baum's psychological disorders & psychological assessment in medical settings

Operant Vs Classical conditioning & role in medicine--Murphy???

Sleep & role in illness--speaker from Sleep Disorders unit!

What about someone from UT Day treatment? Jerry would be great.
Jerry's wife? ooooooh...on children!