

Health Psychology

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: MADR 3206

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: Ksenija Jovanovic, Ph.D.

Course Description

Recent advances in psychological, medical, and physiological research have led to a new way of thinking about health and illness, and understanding that our health is not only the product of biological processes but also of psychological, behavioral, and social processes. Health psychology is a relatively young field of study that examines the relationship between psychology and health. This course highlights differences between health psychology and the biomedical model and examines the kinds of questions asked by health psychologists like: How does our personality affect our health? What does stress do to our health? What psychological and social factors cause people to behave in unhealthy ways? What can psychologists do to help cure illness? Are there ethnic and gender variations in health? Does it matter how your doctor talks to you?

Course Objectives

The primary objective of the course is to help students establish greater understanding of the main topics of health psychology. It will examine biological, psychological, and social factors to elucidate how these aspects of the person and environment contribute to a person's health and what they can do as future professionals and individuals to improve the health of others and their own. At the same time, it will facilitate students' professional development and strengthen their skills in critical thinking, communication, and self-awareness. By the end of the course, students should be able to identify, define, and solve problems; locate and critically evaluate information; master a body of knowledge and mode of inquiry, and communicate effectively.

Methodology

The classes are lecture-based, combined with class activities and discussions. Although some lecture content may draw from different textbooks, much will come from primary research articles and other resources. The activities will include reviews and analysis of scientific articles, videos, PowerPoint presentations, and discussions of required readings. Students may be tested on all material covered in lectures and on additional required readings that may not be covered in class. All indicated assignments are to be completed in timely fashion by the deadlines.

Course Prerequisites

All students are required to complete general university and college requirements including writing/liberal education courses as well as Fundamentals of Neuroscience.

Required Reading / Materials

No textbook is required for this course. All readings will be assigned throughout the course, posted on the Moodle website, or emailed by the instructor before the class. This is a fast-paced and demanding course. The students are expected to have read the required material before class and to be prepared to participate in integrative and meaningful discussions.

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Attendance/Participation	20%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	30%
Project	20%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

Class Attendance

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes. Instructor will assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade. Although regular attendance and punctuality are mandatory in order to earn full marks, students are allowed ONE UNJUSTIFIED absence. In the case of absences, it is the student's responsibility to seek out the information given in class, including any announcements. Instructor may deny the access to the classroom if the student arrives more than 10 minutes after the class has started.

Participation

All class activities require the student's active participation. In order to receive a high grade, the student must be prepared for class, engage in class discussions, and make meaningful observations, comments, or questions that prove his/her comprehension and interest in the subject.

Exams

There will be two exams. They will consist of multiple-choice, essay, and short-answer questions that draw from material covered in class and in readings. Exam questions are designed to test students' understanding of basic terminology and concepts, as well as their ability to apply these concepts.

Project & Class Presentation

The project assignment can be done alone or with a partner. It will be fully described during the fourth week of class and will be due the tenth week of class. The exact due dates will be

communicated in the beginning of the course. The point of the project is to create a health campaign to convince or help people change a health behavior. This may be a poster, a brief video, a pamphlet, a social media campaign, or an article. The format should be previously discussed with the instructor. These assignments should be well-thought out, well-written responses with a professional tone. Rather than simply summarizing the readings, the assignments should connect the material from the readings to either lecture material or personal life experiences, or synthesize information from the class readings and form connections between ideas.

IMPORTANT

- A written abstract (250 words max) must be submitted one week before the project presentation.
- No project assignments will be accepted after the deadlines.

Course Content

Please note that changes will be made if necessary and will be announced in class. Students are responsible for being aware of any changes.

Unit 1

Theme

- Introduction/ Methods/Biopsychosocial Model

Unit 2

Theme

- Stress and Health

Unit 3

Theme

- Psychoneuroimmunology/Coping and Social Support

Unit 4

Theme

- Relationships and Health/Bereavement

Unit 5

Theme

- Adjustment to Illness/Health Communication

Unit 6

Theme

- Sleep
- MIDTERM EXAM

Unit 7

Theme

- Pain/Placebo

Unit 8

Theme

- Health Behavior Change

Unit 9

Theme

- Personality, Gender, Age, and Health

Unit 10

Theme

- Culture and Health/Eating Behavior
- Diet and Exercise

Unit 11

Theme

- Provider-Patient Relationships

Unit 12

Theme

- Medical Systems Around the World

Unit 13

Theme

- Happiness and Health

- FINAL EXAM

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).