Health Psychology
Kristen Riley

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Course Objectives

This course is designed to introduce you to the field of health psychology. Because health psychology is a very broad field, this course will at best serve as a survey introduction. My goal is to provide you with some knowledge of its basic theoretical and research areas. My hope is that you will be inspired to dig deeper into some of these domains in your future scholarship.

Textbook and Readings


Course Requirements and Evaluation of Student Performance

1. Class Preparation and Participation
Please read required materials before class, post weekly reflections on the course website, and participate regularly in class discussion by bringing in ideas, comments and observations based on the assigned readings and other materials you encounter.

2. Class Co-leadership
As part of your participation, you will be assigned to co-lead the class discussion on one topic. For this discussion, you are encouraged to bring in additional materials (e.g., other readings, demonstrations, video, research, etc.) Topics will be assigned on the first night of the class. To prepare for this co-led class, please talk with me well beforehand. The presentations can take various formats. Alternative formats are welcomed and encouraged. The main goal of the presentation and accompanying discussion is to stimulate thought about the topic, give some evidence of your efforts to grapple with the course material, and facilitate your (and our) understanding of the topic. One possible format is to identify and critically analyze an empirical article (either from the assigned readings or your own research) that relates to the assigned topic. In such an analysis, you can describe how the article relates to the assigned topic and readings and lead a discussion regarding the rationale for the study and its findings and conclusions. Another format is to review and critique a particular methodological or theoretical approach discussed in the assigned readings. You may decide to present an overview of the area, discuss in depth the current readings, or focus more deeply on a particular area within the topic. You could also raise issues for discussion that you would like help in thinking about within this topical area. Another format is to discuss the relevance of the assigned topic and readings to a theoretical or practical problem that interests you.
3. **Class case presentation**
Each student will present one case related to a health psychology topic in this course encountered during clinical work.

4. **Reading reflections**
For each week’s readings, you are expected to post at least 2 thoughtful questions/comments from the readings that occurred to you while reading the assignments. These postings are designed to stimulate discussion and will help us maintain a seminar format for the class; they must be posted by 10 PM on the Monday before that class. Please review the comments of your classmates prior to our meetings. If you have helpful comments or questions, online dialog will be very useful for helping the whole class to think more clearly about the issues related to the week’s topic. These entries allow for critical evaluation, amplification, analysis, and discovery; they are not a place for venting your emotional responses to the readings, discussing personal anecdotes, or simply summarizing or paraphrasing the articles. You may critique particular readings, based on theoretical or methodological grounds; raise new conceptual questions; suggest directions for future research and innovation; relate the readings to outside readings or readings from other weeks; discuss the relevance of the readings to your own research or applied interests. You are welcome to post more than 2 comments, and some of the best comments I have seen are responses to points made or questions brought up by other members of the class.

5. **Paper**
You are required to write a paper that reviews and critiques the literature on a specific issue related to the study of some aspect of health psychology (15-20 pages plus references). Because the paper is brief, you will need to select a fairly narrow topic in order to do it justice. You may wish to consider some of the following in your review/critique: What key issues or questions related to your topic have engaged the attention of researchers? Have researchers overlooked important issues related to this topic? What kinds of theoretical and methodological approaches characterize work on this topic? What limitations do these approaches suffer from? What alternative theoretical and methodological approaches appear promising? What conclusions have emerged from empirical work conducted to date? What ambiguities and unresolved issues remain? What kinds of studies need to be conducted, in your opinion? **Due: December 4.**

**Grading**

Grading will be based on your involvement in the course, as reflected in your class participation (37%), your class discussion leadership (15%), your web assignments (28%), and your paper (20%).
Classroom Culture

**Statement on Disabilities:** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form.

**Statement on Academic Integrity:** The University’s academic integrity policy, to which this class will adhere, can be reviewed at: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/

**Names and Pronouns:** Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

**Respect for Diversity:** It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.
## Schedule of Topics

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter/Topic:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>August</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 1 Overview of Psychology and Health</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>September</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 3 Stress</td>
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<td>4 Stress, Biopsychosocial Factors and Illness</td>
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<td>11 5 Coping with and Reducing Stress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stress Management, Mindfulness</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 6 Health-Related Behavior/Health Promotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 7 Substance Use and Abuse (also, Chapter 2, Module 4)</td>
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<td>Guest lecture from MAP Program.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>October</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 SES/Gender/Diversity/Spanish speaking psychotherapy</td>
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<td>9 8 Nutrition, Weight Control, Diet, Exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Positive Psychology/ Spirituality/ Meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 11 The Nature of Pain</td>
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<td>12 Controlling Pain</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 13 Chronic Illness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complementary and Integrative Medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>November</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 9 Health Services/Adherence</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 14 Heart Disease and Stroke</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 <strong>HAVE A HEALTHY AND HAPPY THANKSGIVING</strong></td>
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<td>27 14 (cont.) Cancer</td>
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<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
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<td><strong>December</strong></td>
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<td>4 15 Future of Health Psychology</td>
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Readings

8/28 Introduction: Health Psychology

Sarafino, Chapter 1


9/4 Stress and Illness

Sarafino, Chapter 3 (also Chapter 2, Modules 1 & 2)
Sarafino Chapter 4 (also Chapter 2, Modules 5 & 6)


9/11 Coping

Sarafino Chapter 5


Lazar, S. Mindfulness in therapists benefits clients.

9/18 Health-Related Behavior/Health Promotion

Sarafino, Chapter 6


9/25 Substance Use and Abuse

Sarafino Chapter 7


10/2 SES/Gender/Diversity


**10/9 Nutrition, Weight Control, Diet, Exercise**

Sarafino, Chapter 8


**10/16 Positive Psychology/Spirituality/meaning**


**10/23 Pain**

Sarafino, Chapters 11 and 12


10/30 Chronic Illness/Complementary and Integrative Medicine

Sarafino, Chapter 13


11/6 Health Services, Health Provider Communication, Adherence

Sarafino, Chapter 9


11/13 Heart Disease and Stroke

Sarafino, chapter 14 (first half)


11/20 Happy and Healthy Thanksgiving!!!!

11/27 Cancer and HIV/AIDS

Sarafino, chapter 14 (second half)


12/4 Future of Health Psychology

Sarafino, Chapter 15
