

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

PSYC 3385: Health Psychology
3 Credit Hours
Spring 2018
Online Distance Learning

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Office Hours: Mondays 11:00 – 11:45 am
Tuesdays 12 noon – 12:45 pm & 4:00 – 5:00 pm
A “Virtual Office” is available through Blackboard for you to submit questions, concerns, or comments. ***However, I recommend instead*** that you **e-mail** me or the course TA directly with any questions, concerns, or comments. I will be checking email periodically during the daytime hours Monday through Friday, but cannot guarantee a response during evenings or weekends, or on holidays.

Please note that **I am not available 24/7**, and **I cannot help you with any technical problems that you experience in trying to navigate the course online; the technical support numbers are given on the website (click the Technical Support icon)**; I can only address course content issues.

You are also welcome to request a specific in-person appointment.

Online Tech Support:

Call 936-294-2780 or 877-759-2232 for technical support questions or concerns, for example, you cannot get a video to open, you cannot get LockDown Browser software to download and be functional, your assignment won't submit/upload, your screen freezes during a test, etc. See the **Technical Support icon** in the course menu.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Straub, R. O. (2017). *Health psychology: A biopsychosocial approach* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

YOU WILL NEED THE TEXTBOOK. DO NOT DELAY IN

PURCHASING IT. Although the 3rd edition overlaps considerably with the 4th and 5th editions, there are a number of changes in the 4th and 5th editions, including an entirely new chapter. Tests will be based on the 5th edition.

Book Companion Website

<https://reg.macmillanhighered.com/Account/Unauthenticated?TargetURL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.macmillanhighered.com%2flaunchpadsolo%2fstrub5e%2f3701086>

(join as an Instructorless Launchpad course; there is an access charge)

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:

The purpose of this course is to help you understand the rapidly expanding subfield of psychology that focuses on how biological, psychological, and social factors interact and contribute to health promotion, illness prevention, coping with stress, pain, and other acute or chronic diseases, and recovery from and adjustment to serious health problems. It is designed, as well, to give you opportunities to critically evaluate information on health topics and the interactions of psychology and health in order to be a more thoughtful consumer of health and health psychology information. The biopsychosocial model is the predominant focus. The course includes some information about techniques to change health behaviors but does not focus as much on interventions per se.

Goal: To gain factual knowledge and learn ideas, models, principles, and theories of psychology applied to health matters.

- Learning outcome: You will understand principles of research methods related to studies about psychology and health.
- Learning outcome: You will understand basic functioning of body systems relevant to interactions of psychology and health.
- Learning outcome: You will understand what psychological theorists, researchers, and studies have to say about interactions of stress and coping with health.
- Learning outcome: You will understand what psychological theorists, researchers, and studies have to say about health-enhancing and health-compromising behaviors.
- Learning outcome: You will understand what psychological theorists, researchers, and studies have to say about chronic and life-threatening illnesses.
- Learning outcome: You will understand what psychological theorists, researchers, and studies have to say about health services utilization, pain and related symptom management, and complementary and alternative medicine.
- Learning outcome: You will understand the future challenges for the field of health psychology, the changing nature of health care, and career opportunities in the field of health psychology.

Goal: To learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, information, models, principles, and theories pertaining to health matters and the interactions of psychology and health.

- Learning outcome: You will practice critical analysis and thinking skills and demonstrate these skills in evaluating information about health topics and the interactions of psychology and health obtained through a variety of venues and media.

Goal: To apply course material regarding psychology and health for making desired changes in health promotion, management of stress and coping effects on health, disease and symptom management, and related matters.

- Learning outcome: You will understand basic principles of psychological techniques for change or modification as applied to selected health-related interventions within the context of the biopsychosocial model.

FORMAT:

The course will include lectures, online discussions, writing assignments, and exposure to other media, in addition to the assigned textbook readings. The course is divided into five sections or segments. Since this is an online course designed to fit into highly variable individual schedules, all assignments will be posted at the beginning (or as near as possible to the beginning) of the term. **You can work at your own pace to a large extent. However, there will be specific due date deadlines which must be met in order for the assigned critical thinking exercises and other activities to be scored and given credit. AFTER THE DEADLINES, SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR SCORING. Scoring of these exercises/activities generally will not occur before their specific due dates. Also, there will be a “window” of a few specific days for each specific quiz or exam during which you must take that specific test.**

GRADING:

Quiz = 10 points

Exams

Five exams each of ±40 questions = 200 points

Exam 1 (Chapters 1, 2, & 3)

Exam 2 (Chapters 4 & 5)

Exam 3 (Chapters 6, 7, 8, & 9)

Exam 4 (Chapters 10, 11, & 12)

Exam 5 (Chapters 13, 14, & 15)

Critical thinking and

Other course activities

(5-10 points each) = 140 points

Total = 350 points

Grades will be based on the highest total number of points achieved in the class unless the highest total falls below 90% of the total points actually possible. The highest total obtained by any student in the class (or 90% of the total points actually available, whichever is higher) will determine the rest of the distribution as follows:

- A = 90-100% of the highest total points achieved
- B = 80-89% of the highest total points achieved
- C = 70-79% of the highest total points achieved
- D = 60-69% of the highest total points achieved
- F = Less than 60% of the highest total points achieved

Departmental Grade Policy:

As of the Fall semester 2009, only grades of C or better (A, B, or C) will be counted toward the student's major in Psychology or Philosophy.

Quiz

There will be one quiz. This will be given during the first section/segment of the course. It is designed to give you an idea of the kind of questions that will appear on the exams. It is also designed to be certain you are able to download the software required (namely, LockDown Browser) to take tests for this course. You **MUST** download LockDown Browser in order to take the quiz and any subsequent exams. The quiz must be taken on one of the days indicated in the window of time that will be open for taking it. The score on the quiz will count toward your final grade.

Exams

Although the exams will not be cumulative, they will cover all of the lectures and text readings assigned for that section/segment of the course. We will have to be selective about what is covered in lectures and discussions. However, it is important for you to be sure to cover all of the textbook material and you will be responsible for all of it on the tests. Test format will include multiple choice and true/false.

Students will need to take all exams online. Instructions will be forthcoming.

Missed/Make-Up Exams

Exams must be taken during the "window" of dates specified. There will be **no** make-up exams except under extraordinary circumstances (e.g., serious illness documented with health care provider's note, catastrophic weather). **It is very bad form to miss a test and contact the instructor afterwards about the matter. The final exam must be taken as scheduled. You cannot get an A in this course without taking the final exam.**

Critical Thinking and Other Course Activities

Critical thinking exercises

Periodically, assignments will be given that require critical thinking about an aspect of a health topic to be submitted in about **1-2 single-spaced typed pages**. The details of this requirement will be covered as relevant material arises in the course. It is your responsibility to stay on top of these assignments. **All papers must be submitted by 11:00 pm on the deadline date for that assignment. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Each critical thinking exercise will be worth a maximum of 10 points. Simply doing the exercise and turning in your written response will result in at least 7 points being given. A very thoughtful paper with a well-developed, well-organized line of reasoning that incorporates text and lecture material along with your own personal ideas and thoughts, and which is free of typos, will receive 10 points. Scores otherwise will be in between these: appearing to be “just going through the motions” (7 points) versus carefully thinking, reasoning, writing, and producing a response (10 points), except for extremely poor, sketchy responses (e.g., incomplete sentences and/or a few brief phrases) that may be scored lower.

Be sure to take these exercises seriously. They are designed to further enhance your ability to critically evaluate health-related information. **The points add up to a significant amount of the total and could tip the scales one way or another** in terms of your final course grade.

Other course activities

During the term, other relatively short activities will be announced that will require you to complete self-report inventories and/or other self-assessments pertinent to course material, other personal health-related exploratory activities, and/or brief reaction papers. The specific requirements for each of these will be posted on the course website. It is your responsibility to stay on top of these assignments. Each will be worth either 5 or 10 points.

Points per activity will be assigned the maximum available unless the quality of work reflects little more than “just going through the motions” without additional thoughts or comments being offered. However, by at least doing the activity and going through the motions, the minimum score will typically be 70% of the total (e.g., 7 out of 10 on a 10-point activity). Most students should be able to receive the maximum if they carefully follow the instructions.

Be sure to take these activities seriously enough to do them. They are designed to enhance your involvement in and understanding of the course content. **The points add up to a significant amount of the total and could tip the scales one way or another** in terms of your final course grade. **All papers must be submitted by 11:00 pm on the deadline date for that assignment. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Extra Credit

No extra credit is planned.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY:

You should stay up to date on course requirements as they are announced/posted. You are also welcome to participate in some online discussions. Because the nature of the subject matter lends itself to people sharing their own personal experiences and insights, I ask you to be respectful of each other. Borderline cases regarding grades (i.e., within a point or two of qualifying for a higher grade) may be decided by the degree of your participation in addition to your timeliness and thoroughness in completing assignments.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Academic dishonesty in this course will result in a grade of F.

In addition, you should not post ANY comments whatsoever regarding the content of an exam until after the window of time for taking the exam has closed. ANY posting of a comment or sharing of information regarding an exam BEFORE the window of time for the exam has closed will result in a grade of F for the course.

Please also note that required papers may be submitted to review by a plagiarism prevention/detection service, such as turnitin.com.

MORE ON OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES

CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT:

According to University guidelines and general sense of decency, students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Mutual respect and courtesy are the expected standards. These standards apply to online courses as well.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disability that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may adversely affect your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911(a)(2) defines religious holy days as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. . . ." A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will notify the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examination are to be completed.

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM:

In a regular on-campus course, unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. In general, visitors to this course should be cleared by the instructor for some specific purpose directly relevant to the educational experience. Otherwise, only registered students who have paid university/course fees are allowed to be in the classroom. As applied to online courses, only students who have paid tuition and course fees are allowed to participate.

For additional information regarding these matters, please see

<http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/#>

as well as the following:

Academic Dishonesty

<http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/728eec25-f780-4dcf-932c-03d68cade002.pdf>

Observance of Religious / Holy Days

<http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/0953c7d0-7c04-4b29-a3fc-3bf0738e87d8.pdf>

Americans with Disabilities Act – Students with Disabilities

<http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/9edd8433-cad5-40d1-b4bf-6a91b08f90e4.pdf>

INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION:

You may be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

COURSE OUTLINE/APPROXIMATE SCHEDULE (Check Course Website for Updates and for Assigned Activity/Paper Due Dates):

Course Section/Segment	Exam Window Dates*	Topic	Chapter
1		Introducing Health Psychology	1
		Research in Health Psychology	2
		Biological Foundations of Health and Illness	3
	January 25-January 29	Quiz	
	February 1-February 5	Exam 1 (Chapters 1, 2, & 3)	
2		Stress and Health	4
		Coping with Stress	5
	February 22-February 26	Exam 2 (Chapters 4 & 5)	
3		Staying Healthy: Primary Prevention and Positive Psychology	6
		Physical Activity, Exercise, and Fitness	7
		Nutrition, Obesity, and Eating Disorders	8
		Substance Abuse	9
	March 22-March 26	Exam 3 (Chapters 6, 7, 8, & 9)	
(continued...)			

4	Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes	10
	Cancer	11
	HIV and AIDS	12
April 12- April 16	Exam 4 (Chapters 10, 11, & 12)	
5	The Role of Health Psychology in Health Care Settings	13
	Managing Pain	14
	Complementary and Alternative Medicine	15
May 3- May 7	Exam 5/Final Exam (Chapters 13, 14, & 15)	

***Exam for specific course section/segment must be taken during this window of time.**