

PSY333F: Health Psychology Fall 2022

Contact Info

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Office Hours: By appointment (email me)	Office Hours: By appointment

Course Info

Classes Meet: Wednesdays, 4-7pm	Room: SS 2110 (Sidney Smith Hall)
Course Website: https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/280386	
Reading(s): Sapolsky, R. M. (2004). <i>Why zebras don't get ulcers: The acclaimed guide to stress, stress-related diseases, and coping-now revised and updated</i> . Holt paperbacks. Can be purchased via Amazon online or at other commercial bookstores. Ebooks also available.	

Course Overview & Goals

This course will give you a broad introduction to the field of health psychology, a relatively new, exciting field of study that examines the bi-directional relationships between body and mind and the implication of these processes for various health outcomes. We will explore scientific questions such as: What does stress do to your health? What psychological and social factors cause people to behave in unhealthy ways? How do various forms of stigma and discrimination impact health? What helps people cope with stress and illness? How do friends and family impact health? Does it matter how your doctor talks to you? Can a sugar pill cure back pain? And more!

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course you be able to:

1. Understand basic human physiology and the dynamic connections between mind and body.
2. Describe how a variety of psychological experiences (e.g., stigma, stress, social exclusion and support) “get under the skin” the influence health outcomes.
3. Discuss how physical health and physiological processes can influence psychological experiences.
4. Explain how individuals and health care professionals can use psychological research to promote health.

Prerequisites

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met all prerequisites listed in the Psychology section of the A&S Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites, you will be removed. No waivers will be granted.

Course Structure & Requirements

Course Webpage: Quercus

This course will use the University’s learning management system, Quercus, to post course information including readings, assignments, grades, and important announcements. You will also be submitting assignments and participating in out-of-class discussions on Quercus. I will rely on this resource heavily throughout the semester so make sure you check it regularly and/or your email is set up correctly.

Preparation

You will be required to read assigned material weekly *before* we meet for class. Lectures and in-class activities will typically draw from material in the readings so make sure you have read them in advance. There will be a group discussion almost every class meeting (more info below) so getting used to coming prepared will greatly help you.

Engagement and Participation

Your active engagement with the course material by participating in discussions and activities, taking notes, and thinking deeply about the questions that are posed helps us build a positive learning environment and enhances your understanding of the course concepts. There will also be

several opportunities to participate outside the classroom such as discussion boards and journals. Your participation will be evaluated for effort (i.e., reading material before class, contributing to discussions) and quality (i.e., insightfulness, respectfulness).

Although attendance does not directly contribute to your grade, you will miss out on important class discussions and activities if you do not attend regularly or if you do not keep up with the out-of-classroom activities. Please let me know if you will be unable to participate in class discussions for any reason.

Lectures

Almost every class meeting will involve some time for lecture. Lectures will review and synthesize material from the readings and other assigned material. I will also present material that is *not* covered in the readings and expand on important points. Slides will be provided as a PDF *after* each class period. This way you can synthesize and supplement your notes with the slides to review. Keep in mind that the slides will not include all the information covered in class so reading them is not a substitute for attending class.

Discussion Groups (10%)

To keep you engaged with the material and to give you a chance to discuss big questions in health psychology, you will participate in small group discussions frequently in this course. Groups will vary throughout the semester. For each discussion, you will complete a discussion guide with your group. These guides will comprise 7% of your final grade. You will also facilitate one discussion during the semester (3% of final grade). More details on these will be posted on Quercus and reviewed in class. There will also be chances for larger group discussions as a class and out-of-class discussions on Quercus.

Health Behaviour Change Assignment (HBA) (15%)

We all have health-related behaviours that we would like to change (e.g., exercising or sleeping more, smoking or drinking less). This assignment will allow you to apply what you learn in this class to your life. Over the course of the semester, you will choose a health-related behaviour that you would like to change, track/monitor that behaviour, and develop and implement a plan to change that behaviour. Your grade on this assignment does *not* depend on whether you achieve your behavioural change goal, but on whether you completed and engaged with the assignment.

There are three parts to this assignment, each of which are due by **11:59pm EST** on the day they are due.

	Description	Due Date
Part 1	Setting goal and initial tracking <i>Note: We will discuss material related to Part 1 on Sept 21. so you don't need to start prior to then. (2%)</i>	Sept. 28
Part 2	Implementing strategies (3%)	Oct. 12
Part 3	Reflection paper (10%)	Dec. 7

Health Psychology Science Communication Project (25%)

This project will help you think scientifically about health psychology, gain practice in dissecting empirical journal articles, dive deeper into a topic of interest, and become comfortable synthesizing and communicating scientific findings to a general audience. You will complete a 8-10 page science journalism project where you use peer-reviewed research to explain a topic in health psychology and provide recommendations for policy or programs to address the health issue. Importantly, this paper will be written for a nonscientific, nonexpert audience. Thus, you will need to be able to anticipate the reader's need for information while also limiting scientific language and jargon. More details on this assignment will be posted on Quercus and covered in class.

	Description	Due Date
Part 1	<u>Project Outline (5%)</u> A brief description (1-3 pages) of your paper topic, a list of 5 references you plan to include, and a general explanation of how you will communicate your findings to a general audience.	Oct. 19
Part 2	<u>Research Review Paper (17%)</u> A formal paper (8-10 pages) where you review existing research to analyze the impact of a health-related practice, policy, or program of your choice. This can be any behaviour, procedure, intervention, or policy that is related to health (e.g., smoking e-cigarettes, the keto diet, acupuncture, medical marijuana). You can choose any topic you'd like based on what we learn in class. This paper will include a minimum of 5 references, but additional sources are welcome. The paper will detail the issue, apply course theory and relevant research to explain why the issue is important	Peer Draft: Nov. 2 Final Draft: Dec. 7

	and how/why it impacts health, and provide future directions for research or policy development.	
Part 3	<u>Peer Feedback (3%)</u> You will review 2 of your classmates' projects and give them helpful, anonymous feedback. This is an opportunity for you to learn from each other and get helpful insight from your classmates on where your project could improve.	Nov. 23

Midterm & Final Assessments

Both assessments will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions. These questions will ask you to think critically about course themes, synthesize course content, and apply what you've learned to real-world situations. Both assessments will be online. You will be allowed to refer to your book and notes for these assessments, however, you are not allowed to take the assessments with other classmates nor consult outside resources (e.g., Google, Wikipedia). All writing must be in your own words. See *Course Policies* below for more on academic integrity.

You will have two days to complete these assessments. They will be posted on 9am EST on Tuesday and due Thursday by 11:59pm EST. This will allow you to use scheduled class time to complete the assessments, but does not require you to. We will leave some time for review prior to each assessment using a Q&A format. This means that you will need to come prepared with questions to aid your studying.

Grading/Marking Scheme

Your final grade in this course will be calculated based on the breakdown below:

	Weight (%)
Discussion Groups	10%
Health Behaviour Change Assignment	15%
Science Communication Project	25%
Midterm Assessment	25%
Final Assessment	25%

Note: Any grades posted in the Quercus gradebook are posted for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, included any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved by me at the end of the course.

Course Policies

Late Assignments

Each student gets one “free pass” for late assignments. This free pass is only good for 48 hours beyond the due date. You do not need to ask permission to use this free pass. Late assignments after your free pass has been used will incur a 5% penalty for each day it is late up to 25% (5 days after the due date). Work will not be accepted more than 5 days after the due date. If you anticipate turning in an assignment late and have already used your free pass, please contact me *before* the due date. Free passes may not be used for the midterm or final assessments.

Missed Assessments

Makeup assessments will not be issued except in cases of extenuating circumstances with appropriate documentation. If you miss the midterm assessment, you must submit documentation that demonstrates your inability to complete that assessment (i.e., the ACORN illness self-declaration tool) and let me know within 7 days of the missed midterm’s due date. In these cases, the weight of the midterm assessment will be added to the final assessment. If you miss the final assessment, you must get in touch with the College Registrar to work out an extension plan.

Regrade Requests

If you think an assignment has been incorrectly marked or if you believe you should have received more points on a specific assignment or question, you can request a regrade 24 hours after the feedback is returned. Please email me with a short paragraph identifying the distinct element of the assignment of concern and with clear reasoning for why the work deserves a regrade. I will only consider regrade requests submitted to me within 2 weeks of getting the grade. Submitting a regrade request does not guarantee a grade change. Keep in mind that regrading your assignment may result in a lower grade.

Specific Medical Circumstances

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, please email me to let me know and complete the ACORN self-declaration of illness tool as soon as possible.

Religious Accommodation

As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of backgrounds, cultural traditions, and spiritual beliefs. I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling assessments or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you cannot complete a component of the course or meet a course deadline due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Accommodation for Personal Reasons

There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical or non-religious reasons. If you have concerns about your ability to complete an assignment, please reach out to me. You do not need to tell me any details about your situation that you are not comfortable sharing, but I need to know about the issue to appropriately accommodate you. It may also be a good idea to speak with an advisor in your College Registrar's office; they can support you in requesting extensions or accommodations, and importantly, connect you with other resources on campus for help with many situations and concerns.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

All students are expected to follow the University's guidelines and policies on academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism (i.e., representing someone else's work as your own or submitting work that you have previously submitted for marks in another course) very seriously. All writing assignments will be submitted to the University's plagiarism detection tool. If you have any questions about this policy, the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty (<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity>).

Use of Course Material

Students are free to use all lecture slides and lecture material for their own use. Students are, however, not permitted to share lecture slides or materials with others not enrolled in this course without my approval. Uploading course materials to the Internet or shared server is expressly prohibited. Lectures are the intellectual property of the instructor, and the slides and related materials should be respected thus. Specifically, I do not want to discover that a student has put any of my materials into the public domain, has sold my materials, or has given my materials to a person or company that is using them to earn money. The University will support me in asserting and pursuing my rights, and my copyrights, in such matters.

Instructor Policy Statement

I intend to treat you with respect, to have empathy for your struggles (in and outside of this course), to assess your progress in a reasonable and thoughtful manner, and to offer you constructive feedback. I am available to discuss any concerns you have. I strongly encourage you to ask questions in class, book a visit with me during office hours, and/or email me to discuss any concerns or questions. You may email me at any time, and I will do my best to respond within 1 business day. Emails received on the weekends or holidays may need extra time. I will also do my best to refrain from sending out course announcements or emails on the weekends. I value work-life balance and believe in rest! With all issues, I encourage you to contact me as early as possible so we can work together on a solution.

Student Resources and Support

Accessibility Services (AS)

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS)(<http://accessibility.utoronto.ca>) at the beginning of the academic year. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will then assess your medical situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

Mental Health & Well-Being

As a student, you may experience challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation, financial concerns, family worries, and so forth. These factors may affect your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate fully in daily activities. There are many helpful resources available through Student Life

(www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed) and Counselling and Psychological Services (<http://www.caps.utoronto.ca/main.htm>).

An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. There are many resources available to you here at the University. Feel free to visit the Academic Success Centre

(<https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc/about-us>) for more information on navigating through the university experience.

Writing

As a student here at the University of Toronto, you are expected to write well. The university provides its students with several resources to help them achieve this. For more information on campus writing centres and writing courses, please visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>.

English Language Resources

For anyone who would like to advance their understanding and command of English, there are many supports available at UofT:

<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell/resources-for-students>

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change and adjustments. Students will be advised of all updates promptly on Quercus.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
1	9/14	Syllabus Overview What is Health Psych?	Syllabus Engel (1977) Kolata (2008)	
2	9/21	Theories of Behavior Change & Health Messages	The Ostrich Effect (NPR podcast) Davis et al (2015)	
3	9/28	Motivation & Goals	Ryan et al (2008) Silva et al (2010)	HBA Part 1
4	10/5	Stress & Health	Sapolsky: Ch. 1-3, 13	
5	10/12	Coping with Stress	Sapolsky: Ch. 18 Shearer et al (2016)	HBA Part 2
6	10/19	Psychoneuroimmunology & Review Session	Sapolsky: Ch. 8 LeRoy et al (2017)	Project Outline Due
7	10/26	MIDTERM ASSESSMENT Available at 9:00am EST Tuesday Oct 25 Due 11:59pm EST Thursday Oct 27		
8	11/2	Pain	Sapolsky: Ch: 9 Durso et al (2015)	Peer Review Paper Draft Due
9	11/9	READING WEEK		
10	11/16	Stigma & Health: Health Behaviours Part I	Sapolsky: Ch. 17 & 11	
11	11/23	Health Behaviours Part II	Sapolsky: Ch. 4 & 5 Mann (2015)	Peer Feedback Due
12	11/30	Chronic Illness & End of Life	De Ridder et al (2008) Singer et al (1999)	
13	12/7	The Health Care System & Review Session	Martin et al (2018)	HBA Part 3 Final Paper Due
FINAL ASSESSMENT				

TBD

All assignments are due at 11:59pm EST on their scheduled due date unless otherwise stated.