

**PSYCH 348
Stress & Health**

Meredyth Goldberg Edelson

Fall 2007

10:20-11:20am M W F Smullin 222

Office Hours: 8:30-9am M W F; 2- 3pm M W and by appointment.

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This course will explore the psychological, biological, and sociological influences that affect individuals' abilities to cope with stress and illness and promote health. Topics to be examined include how the body's biological systems function, stress and its effects on the individual, coping with stress, coping with pain and chronic illnesses, the interface between stress and cardiovascular disease, and psychoneuroimmunology. The course will be organized within three broad units: Unit 1: Biology and Stress; Unit 2: Moderators and Effects of Stress; and Unit 3: Health Issues

NOTE: This is a Blackboard course. Each student is required to enroll in the course on Blackboard.

Required Text:

Taylor, S.E. (2006). *Health Psychology, 6th edition*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Reserve Readings and *Annual Edition* readings:

A list of required reserve readings and readings from *Annual Editions: Health (07-08)*, used for Group Discussions, can be found at the end of the syllabus. These readings are posted on Blackboard in the Course Documents section for this course.

Requirements:

Points:

You can earn a total of **525 points** in the course which are distributed as follows:

1. Exams (300 points): There will be three, 100 point tests given during the semester. Each test will consist of multiple-choice items, fill-in-the-blank questions, and essay questions. The exams will cover material from the required text, reserve readings, and lectures/discussions. The tests will not be cumulative but will cover only the material since the previous test. The first two tests will be given in class, and the third test will be given during our regularly-

scheduled final exam period. There will be no make-up exams except for emergencies and only if you see me before the regularly scheduled exam.

2. Discussion Questions (100 points). On the first day we cover a new chapter from the text, students will need to write one open-ended discussion question (no Yes/No questions!) related to the chapter or a reserved reading associated with that chapter. The discussion question should raise an interesting point which is not covered in the reading, but which springs from the reading. Do not merely pose questions that ask for a reiteration of material in the reading. Instead, discussion questions should be a springboard for thinking about issues and implications that form given the reading. Students will need to respond to their own discussion question in a typed, double-spaced paragraph (no longer) and should clearly link at least part of their question or response to the reading.

The purpose of the discussion questions is to get the class thinking about questions which arise from reading the literature related to stress & health—therefore, please share your discussion questions with the class as often as possible! Students will need to link the discussion questions or answers specifically to the chapter or reserve reading by direct reference to something covered in the reading (with the appropriate APA reference). Each discussion question and response is worth **10 points**. We will cover 10 chapters throughout the semester, thus resulting in a total of up to **100 points** that can be earned through discussion questions. Discussion questions are due at the end of the class period on the first day a chapter is discussed. No late discussion questions will be accepted, although they can be emailed the day they are due if a student is not in class that day. The most emailed discussion questions will earn is **5 points**.

3. Group Discussions and Related Literature Review Paper (125 points). There will be six group discussions that take place during the semester, and each student will be responsible for working with a group of students to prepare for and facilitate one of these discussions. Students will be asked to rank their interest in the six possible discussion topics listed below, and students will be assigned to a group based on their rankings. For each topic, brief readings from *Annual Editions: Health (07-08)* will be assigned to the entire class. The readings range in length from 2 to 5 pages and engage the reader in an examination of an issue related to Stress & Health. The group of students responsible for the group discussion will need to write at least 10 open-ended discussion questions that spring from the *Annual Editions* reading and facilitate a class discussion on the topic by guiding the class through their questions. Questions can also relate back to information already covered in the text and reserve readings (if relevant) or can relate to timely items in the news or media. Each group will need to submit one typed page that lists all ten discussion questions. The discussion facilitation is worth **20 points**, and the group will be graded as a unit on this facilitation based on the quality of the questions and the effectiveness of the discussion facilitation. Each student should be prepared to ask at least one discussion question during the discussion facilitation. PLEASE NOTE: A DISCUSSION WILL ONLY WORK IF EVERYONE DOES THE READINGS IN ADVANCE OF THE DISCUSSIONS! Because the readings are short and engaging and because each student will be responsible for facilitating one discussion, please support your fellow students by having read the assigned discussion readings in advance of their discussion (just as you would want them to do so for your discussion!!). Students will be asked to turn in a brief paragraph summarizing the reading on

the day of the discussion. Although class attendance is typically optional, students will be graded for class attendance on group discussion days so that we can guarantee good discussion attendance. Students will be awarded **5 points** for being present during Group Discussions and turning in their summary of the reading. No late summaries will be accepted—students must be in class and turn in the summaries to earn the points. There is a total of **30 points** students can earn for Group Discussion attendance and reading summaries.

Group Discussion Topics are:

- Pharmacist refusals: A threat to women's health
- Too young to be stressed
- 'Diabetesity,' a Crisis in an Expanding Country
- The puzzling origin of AIDS
- Drinking too much: Too young
- The price of pain

All students will also need to write an individual paper at least tangentially related to their discussion topic, and students will be graded separately on the paper. The paper needs to include at least 4 scholarly references (journal articles reporting the results of empirical studies published since 2002), and students must summarize the literature related to their topic. Each summary should include a description of the relevant methodology of the study with the appropriate operational definitions of the variables under study described, the results of the study, and a critical examination of the study including implications of the findings and limitations of the study. The paper should be approximately 1250-1500 words not including the reference section. The paper needs to use proper APA format, must include an APA formatted title page (with your word count), and an APA formatted Reference section. Papers are due the final day of the term by class time and are worth **75 points**.

NOTE: The paper should be submitted electronically via the Digital Dropbox on Blackboard. The paper should be a Microsoft Word document, and the title page, paper, and references should all be in the same document. The document should be named "[Your last name] paper.doc"

4. Stress Journal (Optional): Students are encouraged, but not required, to keep a "Stress Journal" throughout the semester. If kept, the journal should include the following: (a) stressors encountered during the semester; (b) antecedents (both physical and cognitive) and consequences of the stressors; (c) ways of coping with the stressors that are utilized and discussion of which coping methods are most effective; (d) a record of illnesses throughout the semester and potential links to stressors; and (e) a brief summary of the students' observations re: stress in their lives and the implications for their well-being. The purpose of the Stress Journal is for students to become more aware of stressors in their lives, how they cope with stress (good, bad, and ugly!), and the possible links between stressors encountered and illness. Because it is optional, the Stress Journal will not be graded *per se*. However, if a well-written, detailed Stress Journal is maintained throughout the entire semester, students' grades will be adjusted up 1/3 of a grade (for example, a student with a B would move to a B+, a student with a B+ would move to an A-, etc.). Also, because the journal is not

required, only well-written, well-maintained journals (determined by the instructor) will be considered when adjusting grades. The Stress Journal is due on the final day of class, and there will be opportunities in class the final day to share Stress Journal observations for those who wish to do so.

Grades:

Final grades will be determined using the following system:

(a) Total points earned are computed and a frequency distribution will be calculated

(b) The upper 10% of the class distribution is determined and the mean of this upper 10% is computed. Grades are then assigned according to the scale below.

95% of mean (of upper 10%)=Lower limit of A
85% of mean (of upper 10%)=Lower limit of B
75% of mean (of upper 10%)=Lower limit of C
65% of mean (of upper 10%)=Lower limit of D

(c) This is a modified form of an absolute grading system rather than "grading on a curve." The percentage of A's, B's, C's, D's, and F's are not determined in advance. It is possible for all students to be within 95% of the mean of the upper 10% of the distribution of points and thus, earn an A. Your grade depends on what you achieve, and not on a predetermined distribution.

(d) If you fall on the border between two grades, you will be given the lower end of the upper grade (for example an A- instead of a B+) as a function of the following:

Participating in class frequently
Attending class regularly
Appearing attentive and motivated to learn
Showing consistent improvement during the semester

(e) Because your actual grade cannot be determined until all points are earned, I cannot tell you what your exact grade is at any given time. I will provide "estimates" of your grades throughout the semester.

To be fair to all students, all late papers and assignments will be graded down according to how many days they are late. For each day a paper or assignment is late, 15 points will be deducted from the total. However, all assignments must be completed to avoid getting an incomplete in the course. This means that you need to do complete every assignment and turn it in even if it is so late that you will not earn any points. The only exception to this is for discussion questions which will not be accepted after the first day a new chapter is discussed. If there are extenuating circumstances which interfere with your ability to turn in an assignment when it is due, please see me before it is late. If you haven't talked to me and you do not turn in an assignment when it's due (by class time), I will consider it late.

Computer problems are not acceptable excuses for why a paper is late; plan to have your paper completed in advance of the due date to avoid any last minute computer problems. Medical excuses for late papers or missed exams/assignments require a medical provider's note or they will not be accepted. Also, it is your responsibility to keep an electronic copy of all written assignments turned in.

A NOTE ABOUT PAPER GRADING:

I strongly believe that paper grades should reflect both how well students address the content of the paper assignments and the quality of their writing. Thus, both content and style will be graded. With regard to content, I will grade on: (a) Logic/coherence—does the writer address all relevant aspects of the assignment in a coherent manner? (b) Organization--is the paper well-organized given the nature of the assignment? With regard to style, I will grade on: (a) Spelling/punctuation--is the paper free from misspellings, typos, and punctuation errors?; (b) Fluency--does the writing flow well without awkward and incomplete sentences? Are verb tenses consistent throughout and do you keep parallel forms in your writing?; (c) Is your paper appropriately referenced using proper APA format? Both content and style will be given **equal weighting** in paper grading.

A REQUEST REGARDING GENERAL CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:

Now that we are in the age of cell phones, pagers, iPods, and laptops, I have found that the use of these pieces of technology can be both positive and negative. They certainly make life easier, but they are not necessarily helpful in the classroom. I would ask that all cell phones and pagers be turned off or placed in a silent mode prior to the start of class. Having cell phones and pagers go off during class is disruptive both to me and my train of thought (which can be easily derailed at times!) as well as to your fellow students. If there is an emergency situation where you need to be reachable during class, place your cell phones or pagers in vibrate mode. If they go off, please leave the class to take the call. Please only respond to cell phones or pagers if there is a true emergency. If you use laptops for note-taking, this is fine as long as that is truly what you are doing with your laptop. Please do not check email, use IM, or surf the web. Please do not bring iPods and MP3 players to class at all. Class attendance is optional, not mandatory, (although on Group Discussion days, students will lose points if absent) so if there are other things you would rather do than attend class, that is your call. However, you should note that there is a high correlation between class attendance and grades. I would ask that if you make the decision to attend class, you engage in the class. Thanks!

STATEMENT REGARDING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

In order to learn, you must engage in the process of learning. Thus, it is not only the outcome that matters, but what and how you've learned along the way. I recognize that there are pressures to have a good outcome, to do well, to get a good grade; and these pressures seemingly increase as one enters college. Sometimes, these pressures can result in the temptation to bypass the process of learning to get the good grade; and, when this happens, plagiarism can result.

Plagiarism is a serious offense for many reasons. First, when you have used another's work and represented it as your own, it is impossible for you to be evaluated on what you've learned. The product you turn in does not reflect your contribution to the process of learning in any way (and, in fact, you may have bypassed the process of learning altogether). Second, the principle of academic integrity holds that, ethically, one should not present another's work as if it were one's own as this is the equivalent of intellectual robbery.

There are two primary types of plagiarism, neither of which will be tolerated. Students are sometimes unsure of what constitutes plagiarism. Therefore, to avoid any confusion, I'd like to explicitly state what plagiarism entails. Please refer to this section as you write your paper assignments. The following are considered instances of plagiarism.

1. Any time one **reproduces another's words or ideas without giving proper credit**, this is plagiarism. Thus, even if one paraphrases the ideas of another author without using the author's own words, that author must still be cited.

***Citations are needed any time one makes a statement of fact which was discovered or reported by someone else and isn't common knowledge, even if this statement of fact is paraphrased from the author you read*

***If another author's words are used verbatim, these must be in quotation marks and be properly cited.*

***If you use words too close to the author's original words, even unintentionally, this is still considered plagiarism. A good strategy for paraphrasing is not to look at the author's words when you paraphrase.*

2. Any time one **presents an idea as an original idea which is not**, this is plagiarism. Thus, "borrowing" an idea from a classmate, representing an already existing theory or conceptualization as one's own, or reproducing someone else's paper or assignment and presenting it as one's own are all examples of plagiarism.

These examples are not exhaustive of the types of plagiarism which could occur but are the two most commonly seen illustrations. It is expected that students will display academic integrity when completing paper assignments. If you are not sure whether something is or is not plagiarism, it is your responsibility to check an appropriate resource to determine this or come ask me. At the point of a working draft, I will not consider anything to be plagiarized; thus, you should not feel hesitant to ask me or show me examples of writing where you may have concerns about this while you are in the process of drafting your paper. It is only once you turn in a final product that the criteria for plagiarism will apply.

Students who are found to have engaged in plagiarism will receive a "0" for the paper in question. I will ask you to rewrite the paper to avoid getting an incomplete or an "F" in the course (thus, you will still need to do the assignment, but you will not get credit for it). The purpose of the rewrite is so that you are forced to engage completely in the process of learning that was missed or partly bypassed through the act of plagiarism. Additionally, as per University policy, a report of the plagiarism will be made to the Dean's office.

Please take the issue of plagiarism seriously. While the temptation to get the good grade at all costs can be there for some students, the point of obtaining a liberal arts education is *the education*. The grades mean nothing if nothing was learned in the process of obtaining the grade.

MY TEACHING PHILOSOPHY:

I feel it is important for you to know my philosophy of teaching so that you have a better idea of what to expect both in the course itself and in the evaluation of your work. Many people throughout history have weighed in on what teaching and learning are all about, and I rather like Galileo's perspective. To paraphrase and modernize him a bit, Galileo said: You cannot teach people anything; you can only help them to find things out for themselves. I believe that this is true. I will do my best to serve as a guide as you learn about psychology this semester, but ultimately, I cannot control how well you learn; this decision is yours. The more you are dedicated to the process of learning, the more you commit to taking the time to read the text, to coming to class and participating in our discussions, the more you commit to studying, the more you will learn; this I promise. Should you, in the process of learning, have questions or need help, I'm willing to help you in whatever way I can. See me inside or outside of class, ask questions, ask more questions, challenge my answers. Be an active participant in your own learning. This teaching philosophy results in my belief that whatever grade you receive in the course is the grade you have earned; it is not the grade I have bestowed upon you. Be both proud of what you accomplish throughout this semester, but also be able to accept responsibility for those times where you have not fully engaged in the process of learning. Both of these situations are learning processes as well.

On the following page you will find the Course Calendar. This details the dates of the classes, what topics we will cover on particular days, and what the corresponding readings are. Additionally, dates of group discussions are noted. I hope you enjoy learning about Stress & Health. These are certainly relevant topics for all our lives; and remember, STRESSED spelled backwards is DESSERTS!



COURSE CALENDAR

UNIT 1: Biology and Stress

<u>Date</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>
Aug. 29	—	Intro to course
Aug. 31	Chapter 1	What is Health Psych?
Sept. 3	—	NO CLASS: Labor Day
Sept. 5	Chapter 1	What is Health Psych?
Sept. 7	Chapter 1 Rice (1999)	What is Health Psych? Research Methods in Health Psych
Sept. 10	Rice (1999)	Research Methods in Health Psych GROUP DISCUSSION: Pharmacist refusals: A threat to women's health
Sept. 12	Chapter 2 to p. 36	The Biological Systems in the Body
Sept. 14	Chapter 2 to p. 36	The Biological Systems in the Body
Sept. 17	Chapter 2 to p. 36	The Biological Systems in the Body
Sept. 19	Chapter 2 to p. 36	The Biological Systems in the Body
Sept. 21	Chapter 6 Al'Abisi et al. (2002) Mizoguchi et al. (2001)	Stress
Sept. 24	Chapter 6	Stress
Sept. 26	Chapter 6	Stress GROUP DISCUSSION: Too Young to be Stressed
Sept. 28	Chapter 6	Stress
Oct. 1	—	EXAM 1 (Chapters 1, 2, 6 plus reserve readings)

UNIT 2: Moderators and Biological Effects of Stress

<u>Date</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>
Oct. 3	Chapter 7	Moderators of Stress
Oct. 5	Chapter 7 Belle (1991)	Moderators of Stress
Oct. 8	Chapter 7	Moderators of Stress
Oct. 10	Chapter 7	Moderators of Stress
Oct. 12	Chapter 13	Stress-related Illnesses
Oct. 15	Chapter 13	Stress-related Illnesses GROUP DISCUSSION: 'Diabetes,' A Crisis in an Expanding Country
Oct. 17	Chapter 13	Stress-related Illnesses
Oct. 19	Chapters 13, 14 pp. 36-40	Stress-related Illnesses; Psychoneuroimmunology
Oct. 22	Chapter 14 pp. 36-40	Psychoneuroimmunology
Oct. 24	Chapter 14 pp. 36-40	Psychoneuroimmunology GROUP DISCUSSION: The puzzling origin of AIDS
Oct. 26	—	NO CLASS: Midsemester Day
Oct. 29	Chapter 14 pp. 36-40	Psychoneuroimmunology
Oct. 31	—	EXAM 2 (Chapters 7, 13, 14 plus reserve readings)

UNIT 3: Health Issues

<u>Date</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>
Nov. 2	Chapter 5	Health-compromising behaviors
Nov. 5	Chapter 5	Health-compromising behaviors GROUP DISCUSSION: Drinking too much: Too young
Nov. 7	Chapter 5	Health-compromising behaviors
Nov. 9	Chapter 5	Health-compromising behaviors
Nov. 12	Chapter 10	Pain and its management
Nov. 14	Chapter 10	Pain and its management
Nov. 16	Chapter 10	Pain and its management GROUP DISCUSSION: The price of pain
Nov. 19	Chapters 10,11	Pain and its management; Chronic illnesses
Nov. 21	Chapter 11	Chronic illnesses
Nov. 23	—	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK
Nov. 26	Chapter 11	Chronic illnesses
Nov. 28	Chapter 11	Chronic illnesses
Nov. 30	Chapter 4	Health-enhancing behaviors
Dec. 3	Chapter 4	Health-enhancing behaviors
Dec. 5	Chapter 4	Health-enhancing behaviors
Dec. 7	Chapter 4	Health-enhancing behaviors PAPERS DUE OPTIONAL STRESS JOURNALS DUE
Dec. 13 (9:30am-11am)	—	Exam 3 (Chapters 4, 5,10,11 plus reserve readings)

Reserve Readings

1. Rice, P. L. (1999). *Stress and health*, 3rd edition. Chapter 2 (pp. 32-66). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
2. Al'Abisi, M., Hugdahl, K., & Lovallo, W. R. (2002). Adrenocortical stress response and altered working memory performance. *Psychophysiology*, 39, 95-99.
3. Mizoguchi, K., Yuzurihara, M., Ishige, A., Sasaki, H. & Tabira, T. (2001). Effect of chronic stress on cholinergic transmission in rat hippocampus. *Brain Research*, 915, 108-111.
4. Belle, D. (1991). Gender differences in the social moderators of stress. In A. Monat & R. S. Lazarus (Eds.), *Stress and coping: An anthology*, 3rd edition (pp. 258-274). NY: Columbia University Press.

Group Discussion Readings

1. Greenberger, M.D., & Vogelstein, R. (2007). Pharmacist refusals: A threat to women's health. In E.L. Daniel (Ed.), *Annual Editions: Health* (pp. 148-150). Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill.
2. Bagdi, A. (2007). Too young to be stressed. In E.L. Daniel (Ed.), *Annual Editions: Health* (pp. 38-41). Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill.
3. Brody, J.E. (2007). 'Diabesity,' a crisis in an expanding country. In E.L. Daniel (Ed.), *Annual Editions: Health* (pp. 128-129). Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill.
4. Moore, J. (2007). The puzzling origins of AIDS. In E.L. Daniel (Ed.), *Annual Editions: Health* (pp. 141-145). Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill.
5. Boulard, G. (2007) Drinking too much: Too young. In E.L. Daniel (Ed.), *Annual Editions: Health* (pp. 94-96). Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill.
6. Spake, A. (2007) The price of pain. In E.L. Daniel (Ed.), *Annual Editions: Health* (pp. 108-109). Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill.