STRESS, COPING AND HEALTH
GS/PSYC 6465 3.0 (W)
2009 - 2010

Purpose:

This is a research based course that reviews research in the area of stress and coping from a social psychological perspective. We will critically examine existing theory, methods, and findings on stress and coping in relation to physical and mental health and quality of life. During the course, we will compare the impact of various classes of stressors (e.g., major life events, hassles, traumas), consider competing conceptualizations of coping (e.g., as response, as style, as adaptive or maladaptive), and review the role of both personality and social factors in outcomes. We will be examining work stress, burnout, work-family conflict and the role of social support and coping in relation to stressors in all of these spheres. The role of gender differences will be incorporated into most of the topics. We will also study some of the specific stressors in women and how they affect their health.

Course Instructor:

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**Student Background:**
This course is available to Master’s and Doctoral students in psychology, nursing, health policy and management, and kinesiology and health science.

**Course Format**
Each class will have required readings that will form the basis of the class discussion. Students are expected to read the materials before the class. The course instructor will lead the discussions. Time will be allocated to allow students to lead the discussions in later classes.

**Course Text / Readings**
Readings for the course include selected chapters from the following two books, both of which are in the bookstore and on reserve in the library:


In addition, selected journal articles and book chapters are assigned each week and can be found in the course outline below. Students are expected to be familiar with the required readings before class.

**Evaluation**
1. Seminar discussion leader  25%
2. Critical analysis of a journal article  15%
3. Major Paper  50%
4. Participation  10%

**Requirements**

1. **Seminar discussion leader.** Each student will be asked to choose a topic (different from the major paper), make a short presentation to the class and lead a discussion on the topic. Readings can be assigned the week before. Evaluation will be based on clarity of the presentation and responses to questions.

2. **Critical analysis.** Students are asked to choose a journal article and critically analyze the article in 3 pages + references. This review is due on **February 23, 2010**
3. Major Paper. This is a research paper that should go into detail on a topic related to the course, excluding the topic of the critical analysis. The paper itself should not exceed 12 typewritten pages (including references), and should be well integrated, well researched, and referenced. References should be mainly journal articles consisting of empirical studies. Theoretical material should also be included in the paper. Review articles should be avoided. Evaluation will be based on ability to integrate and concisely present material, critically evaluate the material presented, and suggestions for future research. APA style should be used throughout. [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

The paper is due on **March 30, 2010**.

4. Participation. Evaluation is based on student involvement in class discussion.

**Expanded Course Outline:**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td><strong>January 5, 2010</strong></td>
<td><strong>First class</strong></td>
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Introductions. Course format, student evaluation and goals for the course. Social psychological basis of the study of stress and coping. Methodological and theoretical approaches to the study of stress and coping. The relationship between health psychology and stress and coping. The importance of conducting rigorous research in the area of stress and coping.

**Readings:**

Taylor, Chapter 1

**January 12**  Definitions of stress and pathways to disease. Understanding stress and coping from a social psychological perspective

**Readings:**

Linden, Chapter 1
Taylor, Chapter 6

**January 19**  The stress process, buffers of stress, moderators of the stress experience

**Readings:**

Linden, Chapters 2 and 3
Taylor, Chapter 7
January 26  Coping- Theoretical and empirical considerations

Readings:


February 2  Stress and Social Support in the Elderly

Readings


February 9  Job stress and work-family conflict

Readings:


February 13 - 19  Reading Week

February 23  Job burnout and implications for health


March 2  Stress and positive psychology: The role of mood and positive affect

Readings:


March 9  Vigor and engagement: Implications for health

Readings:


**March 16**  
Student Presentations

**March 23**  
Student Presentations

**March 30**  
Summary and new directions for research  
(Last Class)

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