

35Health Psychology

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Class time: Tuesday & Thursday, 11:30 – 12:50
Class location: Ackerson, 106
Office hours: Tuesday, 2:00-3:00

Overview: To what degree do our psychological lives affect our health and physical well being? How do our habits of thinking and acting, our social lives and our work lives, affect our bodies' susceptibility to illness? How do our bodies shape the way we see ourselves, and how do our self-images affect the condition of our bodies? These are some of the many questions addressed by the growing field of health psychology.

This course samples from the rapidly growing domain of health psychology. It provides a general overview of the field and reflects the various approaches to understanding the mind/body connection. These include applied and theoretical studies, experimental research, clinical descriptions, and narrative reports. Although the purpose of the course is to provide a general introduction to health psychology, it will emphasize the social psychology of health and health behavior. This means we will focus on how our relations with ourselves, and with others, affect our physical states. The course will also balance both applied perspectives (ways of using psychology to improve health) with theoretical perspectives (examining health states to better understand basic psychological processes).

Course Objectives: This class has two primary goals:

1. Provide a general overview of health psychology topics and methods. This course covers the major themes in health psychology; physiological systems and how they engage with psychological dynamics; stress and coping with stress; personality and health; how social interactions affect health and how physical states affect social lives; chronic illness and mortality; risky behavior and health promoting behavior.
2. Provide a sampling of the methods and theories related to health psychology. Health psychology draws on many different theoretical approaches (cognitive,

social, personality), and these will be considered throughout the course. Health psychology also employs a variety of methods, including observations, correlational studies, and experiments. There are particular challenges to doing health psychology research, both practical and ethical. The course will discuss the specific tools and obstacles to conducting health psychology research.

Evaluation Criteria: Evaluations will be based on a midterm (30%), a final (30%), two quizzes (10% each, 20% total), a class project (15%), and attendance (5%).

PowerPoint Slides: PowerPoint slides for all classes are available on my webpage:

Texts and Readings:

Taylor, S.E. (2008). *Health Psychology, 7th Edition*. At Rutgers Newark bookstore and on-line.

Course Readings: All course readings will be posted on my webpage.

Extra Credit:

Students can earn up to 6 points extra credit to their final grade by any combination of options, below. Please note that you cannot earn more than 6 extra credit points. You can earn 2 points by completing Stigma for a Day and you can earn 4 points by completing 4 units of Subject Pool study credit (each 30 min. time-block = 1 unit). Again, the maximum number of extra credit points you can earn is 6.

1. Stigma for a Day: Complete the Stigma for a Day exercise and write-up for 2 credits. This will be available after Oct. 25. It will be due on Nov 10.

2. Subject Pool: The Psychology Department Subject Pool *might* provide opportunities for students to earn extra credit by enrolling in experiments. IF the subject pool does offer extra credit, then Health Psychology students will be allowed to earn up to 4 points toward their final grade (each ½ hour of experiment participation = 1 extra credit). You cannot earn more than 4 points of extra credit via the Subject Pool.

NOTE: Required Psych 101 and Psych 102 “R-Points” do not count toward extra credit. Also, paid experiments do not count toward extra credit.

CLASS SESSIONS

- 1/16 Introduction: What is health psychology?
Taylor, Chapter 1
Taylor, S. The Power of the Placebo
Harvard Health Publishing. The Nocebo Response
- 1/18 Physiological systems I.
Taylor, Chapter 2: pp. 17-34.
- 1/23 Physiological systems II.
Taylor, Chapter 2: pp. 34-41.
Sobel, The wisdom of the gut
Kohn, D. When Gut Bacteria Change Brain Function
- 1/25 Symptoms
Taylor, Chapter 8, pp. 201-207
Taylor, Chapter 10, pp. 264-267
Pennebaker, Perceptual Processes
- 1/30 Pain 1: Mechanisms
Taylor, Chapter 10, pp. 243-269
- 2/01 Pain 2: Personality and treatment
Gawande, Pain
- 2/06 Stress I
Taylor, Chapter 6, pp 146-154
- 2/08 Stress II
Taylor, Chapter 6, pp.154-173
Sainani, What, Me Worry? Why You Should...Embrace ...Stress.
QUIZ 1
- 2/13 Psychoneuroimmunology
Taylor, Chapter 14: pp. 361-371.
Stress & Coping I: Personality and coping styles--overview
Taylor Chapter 7: pp. 173-186
Yellowlees & Ruffin, Asthma and defenses
- 2/15 Denial, optimism, pessimism, and coping
Raikkonen, et al.
Weinstein
Tennan & Affleck, The costs and benefits of optimism

- 2/20 Hostility, negative affect, and depression
Taylor, Chapter 11: pp. 270-276
Williams, Barefoot, & Shekelle
Dryden, Depression and the brain.
- 2/22 Adjustment to threatening events
Taylor (American Psychologist article)
Kriegel: Falling into life.
- 2/27 Psychosocial resources, threat, and health
Harber, Einav-Cohen, & Lang, Resources and hearing others' physical pain.
Sherman, Nelson, & Steele. Self-affirmation and attention to scary med info.
- 2/29 **MIDTERM**
- 3/05 Coping through personal disclosure
Pennebaker, Opening Up
STIGMA FOR A DAY EXTRA CREDIT AVAILABLE
- 3/07 Collective coping
Pennebaker & Harber, Social stage model of collective coping
- 3/12 – 3/14 SPRING BREAK**
- 3/19 Social relations and health
Taylor, Chapter 7: pp. 187-194
Berkman, Social support and health
Coan, Schaefer, & Davidson, Hold another's hand and coping
- 3/21 Negative social support
Coyne, et al., Overinvolved helping
DIARY STUDY BEGINS
- 3/26 Family systems and health
Minuchin, et al. How families engender psychosomatic illness in children.
- 3/28 Stigma and illness
Hastorf, Northcraft, & Picciotto, Helping the handicapped
Hastorf, Wildfogel, & Cassman, Acknowledging a handicap
Jones, et al., Stigma
STIGMA FOR A DAY EXTRA CREDIT DUE
- 4/02 Race, gender, class and health
Bichell, ... Why Racism Hurts Health
Schopen. The healthcare gender bias.

- 4/04 Being a patient
Taylor, Chapter 8: pp. 214-223
Healthcare Business Team. History of Animal Assisted Treatment
QUIZ 2
- 4/09 The patient/provider relationship
Taylor, Chapter 9: 223-241
Bendapudi et al., Patients' perspectives on ideal MD behaviors.
Schrof, Bedside manner 101
- 4/11 Being a health care provider.
Talbot and Dean. Physicians are suffering from moral injury
Gold: Healthcare workers' mental health.
- 4/16 Humor and coping
Park, A. Curing what ails you. Laughter.
LAST DIARY STUDY ENTRY
DIARY STUDY WRITE UP INSTRUCTIONS
- 4/18 Diet, Commercialization, and Health:
Supersize Me!
- 4/23 Living a Healthy Life: Nature, Sleep, and Sex

Herrera: Sleep drastically improves your life.
Kalaichandran: Being in nature and health.
Stoppler, The surprising health benefits of sex.
- 4/25 Review Session/Make-up Session
DIARY STUDY WRITE-UP DUE
- 4/30 Reading time begins
- 5/07 FINAL [APPROXIMATE DATE]**

Texts and Readings

Text

Taylor, Shelley E. (1999). *Health Psychology, Seventh Edition*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Readings

Bendapudi et al. (2006). Patients' perspectives on ideal physician behaviors. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, 81, 338-344.

Berkman, L.F. (1995). The role of social relations in health promotion. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 57, 245-254.

Bichell, R.E. (November 11, 2017). Scientists start to tease out the subtler ways racism hurts health. *NPR Weekend Edition Saturday*.

Brody, J.E. (June 17, 2013). Cheating ourselves of sleep. *New York Times*.

Williams, R.B., Barefoot, J.C., & Shekelle, R.B. (1985). The health consequences of hostility. In Chesney, M.A. & Rosenman, R.H. (Eds.) *Anger and hostility in cardiovascular and behavioral disorders*. New York, NY: Hemisphere Publishing

Coan, J. A., Schafer, H. S. & Davidson, R. J. (2006). Lending a hand: Social regulation of the neural response to threat. *Psychological Science*, 17, 1032-1039.

Coyne, J.C., Wortman, C.B., & Lehman, D.R. (1988). The other side of support: Emotional overinvolvement and miscarried helping. In B.H. Gottlieb, (ed.). *Marshaling social support: Formats, processes, and effects*. Newbury Park, CA

Dryden, J. (1996). Recurrent depression leaves its mark on the brain. *Outlook (Washington University School of Medicine Quarterly Magazine)*, Fall, 12-15.

Gawande, A. (1998). The pain reflex. *The New Yorker*, September 21.

Gold, J. (April 3, 2020). The Covid-19 crisis too few are talking about: Health care workers' mental health. *STAT*, <https://www.statnews.com/2020/04/03/the-covid-19-crisis-too-few-are-talking-about-health-care-workers-mental-health/>

Harber, K.D., Einav-Cohen, M., & Lang, F. (2007). They heard a cry: Psychosocial resources moderate perception of others' distress. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 38, 296-314.

Harvard Mental Health Letter (May, 2011). New insights into the nocebo response. www.health.harvard.edu/mentalextra.

- Hastorf, A.H., Northcraft, G.B., & Picciotto, S.R. (1979). Helping the handicapped: How realistic is the performance feedback received by the physically handicapped? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 5, 373-376.
- Hastorf, A.H., Wildfogel, J., & Cassman, T. (1979). Acknowledgment of handicap as a tactic in social interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37, 1790-1797.
- Healthcare Business Today Team (June 16, 2020). The fascinating history of animal-assisted therapy. *Healthcare Business Today*. www.healthcarebusinesstoday.com
- Herrera, T. (Oct. 28, 2018). The simplest way to drastically improve your life: More sleep. *New York Times*.
- Jones, E.E., Farina, A., Hastorf, A.H. Markus, H., Miller, D.T., & Scott, R.A. (1984). Social stigma: The psychology of marked relationships. Chapter Four (excerpts).
- Kalaichandran, A. (July 12, 2018). Take a walk in the woods. Doctors orders. *New York Times*.
- Kohn, D. (June 24, 2015). When gut bacteria change brain function. *The Atlantic*. www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/06/gut-bacteria-on-the-brain/395918/
- Kriegel, L. (1989). Falling into life. Geoffrey Wolff and Robert Atwan (Eds.). *The Best American Essays, 1989*. 195-211.
- Minuchin, S., Baker, L., Rosman, B., Liebman, R., Milman, L., & Todd, T. (1974). A conceptual model of psychosomatic illness in children. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 32, 1031-1038.
- Park, A. (Sept. 28, 2018). Curing what ails you. *Time, Special Edition*.
- Pennebaker, J.W. (1982). *The psychology of physical symptoms*, Chapter 2; Perceptual processes I: Competition of cues. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Pennebaker, J.W. (1990). *Opening up: The healing power of confiding in others*. Chapters 1, 2, and 3. New York: Morrow.
- Pennebaker, J.W. & Harber, K.H. (1993). A social stage model of collective coping: The Loma Prieta Earthquake and the Persian Gulf War. *Journal of Social Issues*, 49, 125-145.
- Raikkonen, K., Matthews, K.A., Flory, J.D., Owens, J.F., & Gump, B.B. (1999). Effects of optimism, pessimism, and trait anxiety on ambulatory blood pressure and mood during everyday life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76, 104-113.

- Sainani, K. (May/June 2014). What, me worry? Why you should stop sweating everyday aggravations and embrace the benefits of stress. *Stanford Magazine*.
- Schopen, F. (Nov 20, 2017). The healthcare gender bias: Do men get better medical treatment? *The Guardian*.
- Schrof, J.M. (1998). Required course: Bedside manner 101. *U.S. News and World Report, December*.
- Sherman, D.A.K., Nelson, L.D., & Steele, C. M. (2010). Do messages about health risks threaten the self? Increasing the acceptance of threatening health messages via self-affirmation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26, 1046-1058
- Sobel, R. K. (2000). The wisdom of the gut. *U.S. News and World Report, April 3*, 50-51.
- Stoppler, M.C. (April 2, 2016). The surprising health benefits of sex. *On Health*.
https://www.onhealth.com/content/1/health_benefits_sex
- Talbot, S.G. & Dean, W. (July 26, 2018). Physicians aren't 'burning out.' They're suffering from moral injury. *STAT*,
<https://www.statnews.com/2018/07/26/physicians-not-burning-out-they-are-suffering-moral-injury/>
- Taylor, S. E. (1983). Adjustment to threatening events: A theory of cognitive adaptation. *American Psychologist*, November, 1161-1173.
- Tennen, H. & Affleck, G. (1987). The costs and benefits of optimistic explanations and dispositional optimism. *Journal of Personality*, 55, 377-393.
- Weinstein, N.D. (1983). Reducing unrealistic optimism about illness susceptibility. *Health Psychology*, 2, 11-20.
- Williams, R.B., Barefoot, J.C., Shekelle, R.B. (1985). The health consequences of hostility. In Margaret A. Chesney and Ray H. Rosenman (Eds.). *Anger and hostility in cardiovascular and behavioral disorders*. Washington: Hemisphere.
- Yellowlees, P.M., & Rufin, R.E. (1989). Psychological defenses and coping styles in patients following a life-threatening attack of asthma. *Chest*, 95, 1298-1303.