Course: Health Psychology

Instructor: Thomas A. Wadden, Ph.D.
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Day/Time: Tuesdays: 7:30-10:00 PM

Course Overview

This course will provide an introduction to health psychology, which examines the “application of psychological principles and research to the enhancement of health, and the prevention and treatment of illness.” The course will examine the role of behavioral, biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors that influence the maintenance of health, the onset of illness, and the treatment of disease. Readings will focus on health behaviors related to diet, physical activity, sleep, and positive mood/self-regulation. With each topic, we will examine departures from health as exemplified by obesity and eating disorders, physical inactivity (and its cardiovascular consequences), sleep disorders, addiction, and stress. Methods of coping with and treating these common conditions will be reviewed. Several classes will be devoted to examining the consequences and management of several major chronic illnesses including pain, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and HIV/AIDS. The patient’s experience of having an illness and seeking treatment, on either an outpatient (doctor’s office) or inpatient (hospital) basis, will be discussed, as will the role of complementary and alternative medicine.

The course is appropriate for psychology majors (and other students) who are interested in clinical applications of psychology (and other health sciences) to physical and psychosocial health. Students should have taken introductory psychology and have a basic understanding of experimental design and how randomized controlled trials are used to test the effectiveness of different interventions.

The course will include several guest lecturers from the University of Pennsylvania, including Dr. Kelly Allison, Associate Professor of Psychology in Psychiatry, who is internationally regarded for her research in eating disorders. Dr. Allison will lead three class sessions.
Texts

Required:


Supplementary readings (PDFs), consisting principally of journal articles, will be provided on Moodle.

Recommended/Optional:


Course Requirements

This course will use a lecture format, combined with active student participation. Thus, its success will depend upon students’ regular class attendance and completion of weekly readings. (Please e-mail me in advance if you are not able to attend class.) Student performance will be assessed by mid-term and final exams that each will count for 30% of the final grade. An additional 20% will be accounted for by an 8-10-page paper on the treatment of one of the health conditions studied. A 4-week project on changing a health-related behavior will contribute 15% of the grade. The final 5% will be based on class participation, which will include serving as an “expert reviewer” to lead discussion of one of the empirical papers discussed in class.

In covering obesity and eating disorders, two classes in Psychology 245 overlap with lectures presented in Psychology 327 (Obesity Epidemic).

Class Schedule

Sep 5  Introduction to Health Psychology; Research Design and Methods

Readings: Sarafino and Smith textbook (i.e., Textbook) chapter 1.

Sep 12  Health Behaviors: Principles and Models

Readings: Textbook, chapter 6

Supplemental readings: Banks et al; Coleman et al; Kvaavik et al; Olsen et al

Distribute Health Behavior Change Assignment
Sep 19  Diet, Physical Activity, and Obesity
Readings: Textbook, chapter 8; chapter 2, module 3 (pages 39-42);
Supplemental readings: Rolls et al; Crespo et al; Knowler et al; Brownell et al; Foster et al
Distribute Term Paper Assignment

Sep 26  Substance Use and Abuse
Readings: Textbook, chapter 7
Supplemental readings: Denis & Scott; Kalivas 2007; McKay et al; Oslin et al

Oct 3  Eating Disorders
Readings: Textbook, chapter 2, module 5 (pages 44-48)
Supplemental readings: Allison et al; Lock et al; Agras et al; Allison & Tarves; Neumark-Sztainer et al; Stice et al; Stunkard et al

Oct 10  Sleep and Sleep Disorders
Readings: Textbook, chapter 2, module 4
Supplemental readings: Bartlett et al; Blom et al; Dube et al; Jacobs et al; Manber et al
Health Behavior Change Project due 10/10/17.

Oct 17  Fall Break

Oct 24  Midterm Exam

Oct 31  Stress and Illness
Readings: Textbook: chapters 3 and 4; chapter 2, module 6
Supplemental readings: De Volgi et al; Steptoe et al; Martin et al, Marmot et al
Nov 7  Stress and Coping
Readings: Textbook, chapter 5
Supplemental readings: Hoge et al, Lee et al, Boettcher et al

Nov 14  Pain and Pain Management
Readings: Textbook, chapters 11 and 12
Supplemental readings: RCT ACT vs. CBT for pain; Bernardy et al; Ehde et al; Boscarino et al

Nov 21  Chronic Illness: Cancer and HIV/AIDS
Readings: Textbook, chapter 14 (pages 369-385);
Supplemental readings: Glanz et al, 2005; 2014; 2015; Cohen et al; Metzger et al.

Nov 28  Chronic Illness: Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes
Readings: Textbook, chapter 14 (pages 356-369); chapter 13; chapter 2, modules 2 and 5.
Supplemental readings: Pbert et al; The Look AHEAD Research Group; Holmes et al; Tang et al; Milani et al

Dec 5  Health Care Services and Patient Use
Readings: Textbook, chapter 9; supplemental readings

Dec 12  Hospitalization; Complementary and Alternative Medicine
Readings: Textbook, chapter 10; supplemental readings

Term Paper due Friday December 15th

Final Exam to be scheduled