



**Stress & Coping Seminar (PSYCH 337)**  
**Spring 2019 Course Syllabus**  
*Tues 1:00 – 3:50pm, 416 Sharpless Hall*

**Instructor:** Shu-wen Wang, PhD, Assistant Professor  
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**Office Hours:**

**Course Description and Objectives**

Stressors and their subjective experience – stress – are a part of everyday life, whether minor or major, acute or chronic. *How* one copes with stress has substantial influence on one's physical, emotional, cognitive, and interpersonal functioning. This seminar course is designed to provide in-depth study of the field of stress and coping, through brief lectures, discussion of readings, student presentations and contributions, and the practice of stress management exercises.

This seminar course will survey theory, research, and intervention across a range of topics, including: the neurobiology of stress (e.g., the HPA axis, the immune system), disease (e.g., cardiovascular disease, cancer) and mental illness (e.g., depression, anxiety), ecological stressors (e.g., social and community factors, catastrophes), common life stressors (e.g., work, interpersonal conflict), and diversity-related stressors (e.g., racism, culture-related). Moderating factors influencing stress and coping such as dispositional factors (i.e., personality), gender, and use of social support will be covered. Students will also learn and practice evidence-based stress management techniques and therapeutic strategies.

By the end of the course, students are expected to:

- 1) Understand how stress responses influence physiology, disease, and mental illness.
- 2) Think critically about the nature and function of stress and the stress-response.
- 3) Understand the various sources of stress.
- 4) Understand factors that can moderate the stress response.
- 5) Learn stress management practices and how to design and implement a stress management plan.

### **Pre-requisites**

Psyc 100 and one of the following: HC Psyc 209, 215, 224, 242, 245.

### **Course Readings**

- 1) Textbook – Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: Stress, Disease, and Coping. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (2004) by Robert M. Sapolsky. Available for purchase in the College Bookstore and online. Also on reserve in the Science Library.
- 2) Additional required readings are available via the course website (Moodle).
- 3) Consult the APA Publication Manual for guidance on proper reference citation and general guidance on scientific writing. On reserve in the Science Library.

**Slides** -- Slides will be posted on Moodle for your reference AFTER the class lecture.

### **Support, Access, and Disability**

Haverford College is committed to supporting the learning process for all students. Please contact me as soon as possible if you are having difficulties in the course. There are also many resources on campus available to you as a student, including the Office of Academic Resources (<https://www.haverford.edu/oar/>), the Writing Center (<https://www.haverford.edu/writing-center/>), and the Office of Access and Disability Services (<https://www.haverford.edu/access-and-disability-services/>). If you think you may need accommodations because of a disability, you should contact Access and Disability Services at [hc-ads@haverford.edu](mailto:hc-ads@haverford.edu). If you have already been approved to receive academic accommodations and would like to request accommodations in this course because of a disability, please meet with me privately at the beginning of the semester (ideally within the first two weeks) with your verification letter.

### **Course Requirements**

Grades are determined based on the following course requirements:

1. Article Presentation	10%
2. Weekly Reaction Posts on Moodle	10%
3. Student Topic Group Presentation	20%
4. Stress and Coping Report	25%
5. Research Proposal	25%
6. Attendance and Participation	10%

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Total = 100%

**1) Article Presentation (10%):** Each student will be responsible for giving a brief report on an empirical article that s/he selects. The article must be of empirical research (i.e., data were collected and analyzed, article has method and results sections), NOT theoretical or literature review articles. Each student will select an article corresponding to that day's topic by doing a literature search and consulting with me. You will read the article and prepare a formal oral presentation. Please use slides judiciously (no more than 8 slides; 1-2 for introduction/research questions, 1-2 for methods, 2-3 for results, 1 for discussion/implications). The presentation should be brief (~10-12 minutes) and present the study's main hypothesis(es) or research question(s), the methods by which the hypothesis was tested, the main findings, and the implications of the findings. Your emphasis should be on the results and the take-away message, as opposed to the minutia of the methods or the statistics. You must get your article approved by me beforehand and submit a PDF copy of the article (not HTML format) to me by email at least 24 hours before your scheduled day. Grades for the presentation are based on how accurately and thoughtfully you presented the information.

**2) Weekly Reaction Posts on Moodle (10%):** By **9pm Monday** of every week (Weeks 2-13), you will post a brief reaction (1-2 paragraphs) to that week's readings using Moodle Forum. You should aim for thoughtfulness, rather than length. Reactions can be a range of things, but for example, may include putting forth your own hypotheses with supporting rationale, voicing a contradictory argument, commenting on a general theme drawn from multiple readings, or finding a way to apply what you are reading to a real-world problem or situation.

**3) Student Topic Group Presentation (20%):** The last few meetings of the course are reserved for Student Topic presentations. The topics are chosen by the class and presented by groups of 2-4 students. With my help, groups will research the topic, assign a reading, prepare a 20-25 min presentation, and lead discussion. More information will be provided.

**4) Stress and Coping Report (25%):** This assignment is a 10-12 page paper on a personal stress and coping situation, your analysis of the issues using theory and research, and your development of a plan to better cope with the situation. More information will be provided.

**5) Research Proposal (25%):** You will write a 10-12 page research proposal on a topic of your choice related to the seminar, due during finals period. You will conduct a literature review, develop your hypotheses and a study design that would allow you to test those hypotheses, describe how you would conduct the study, and discuss your anticipated results that would support your hypotheses. You will also provide and receive feedback from your peers during the writing process. More information will be provided.

**6) Attendance and Participation (10%):** This course is designed as a seminar and is largely based on discussion. Your attendance is expected at every class meeting, and your contribution and energy is critical to the success of the class.

### Grading Scale

Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A / 4.0	94-100	C+ / 2.3	77-79.99
A- / 3.7	90-93.99	C / 2.0	73-76.99
B+ / 3.3	87-89.99	C- / 1.7	70-72.99
B / 3.0	83-86.99	D+ / 1.3	67-69.99
B- / 2.7	80-82.99	D / 1.0	60-66.99
		F / 0.0	59.99 and below

## Course Schedule

Week (Dates)	Topic	Reading (‘Ch.’ = textbook chapters)
Wk 1 –	Course Introduction What is Stress? What is Coping?	Ch1 p. 1-18; #1
Wk 2 –	Theoretical approaches	#2, #3, #4
Wk 3 –	Neurobiology of stress	Ch2 p. 19-36, Ch3 p. 37-56 Ch4 p. 57-61, Ch8 p. 144-160, #5
Wk 4 –	Stress reduction, intervention	Ch18 p. 384-418 #6, 7, 8
Wk 5 –	Stress, disease, and mental health	Ch5 p.71-91; Ch8 p.160-185 Ch13 p.252-270; Ch14 p.271-308
Wk 6 –	Daily and chronic stressors	#9, 10, 11, 12
	<b>STRESS &amp; COPING REPORT DUE FRI 10/13 12 noon</b>	
Wk 7 –	<b>No Class – FALL BREAK – Enjoy!</b>	
Wk 8 –	<i>Research Workshop</i> ; Diversity and marginalization	#13, 14, 15, 16
Wk 9 –	Trauma Prof. Zachary Moon visit	#17, 18, 19, 20
Wk 10 –	Personality	Ch15 p.309-334 #21, 22, 23
Wk 11 –	Gender	#24, 25, 26, 27
Wk 12 –	<i>Lit Review peer review day</i> ***** <b>Thanksgiving</b> *****	
Wk 13 –	Relationships and social support	#28, 29, 30, 31
Wk 14 –	<i>Proposed Study peer review day</i> Student Topics/Presentations	
Wk 15 –	Student Topics/Presentations Student Topics/Presentations	
	<b>FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE FRI 12/22 noon</b>	

#	Additional Readings (available on Moodle)
1	Aldwin, C. M. (2009). <i>Stress, Coping, and Development</i> . NY: The Guilford Press. Chap 2 (Why is Stress Important?, pp. 13-22) and Chap 3 (Definitions of Stress pp. 23-36)
2	Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1991). Coping and emotion. In A. M. Monat and R. S. Lazarus (Eds.), <i>Stress and Coping: An Anthology</i> (Third Edition), pp. 207-227, NY: Columbia University Press.
3	Aldwin, C. M. (2009).... Chap 7 Theoretical Approaches to Coping pp. 98-126.
4	Moos, R. H., & Holahan, C. J. (2003). Dispositional and Contextual Perspectives on Coping: Toward an Integrative Framework, <i>Journal of Clinical Psychology</i> , 59(12), 1387-1403.
5	Aldwin, C. M. (2009).... Chap 4 The physiology of stress pp. 37-54.
6	Linnemann, A., Ditzen, B., Stahler, J., Doerr, J. M., & Nater, U. M. Music listening as a means of stress reduction in daily life. <i>Psychoneuroendocrinology</i> , 60, 82-90.
7	Pennebaker, J. W. (1997). Writing about emotional experiences as a therapeutic process. <i>Psychological Science</i> , 8, 162-166.
8	Killingsworth, M. A., & Gilbert, D. T. (2010). A wandering mind is an unhappy mind. <i>Science</i> , 330, 932.
9	Wang, S., Repetti, R. L., & Campos, B. (2011). Job stress and family social behavior: The moderating role of neuroticism. <i>Journal of Occupational Health Psychology</i> , 16(4), 441-456.
10	DeLongis, A., Coyne, J. C., Dakof, G., Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1982). Relationship of daily hassles, uplifts, and major life events to health status. <i>Health Psychology</i> , 1, 119-136.
11	Marin, T. J., Martin, T. M., Blackwell, E., Stetler, C., & Miller, G. E. (2007). Differentiating the impact of episodic and chronic stressors on hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical axis regulation in young women. <i>Health Psychology</i> , 26(4), 447-455.
12	Roux, A. V. D., & Mair, C., (2010). Neighborhoods and health. In Adler, N.E. and Stewart, J. (eds). <i>The Biology of Disadvantage: Socioeconomic Status and Health</i> . Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, vol. 1186, 125-145.
13	Kessler, R. C., Mickelson, K. D., & Williams, D. R. (1999). The prevalence, distribution, and mental health correlates of perceived discrimination in the United States. <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> , 40, 208-230.
14	Sue, D. W. et al (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 62, 271-286.
15	Shorter-Gooden, K. (2004). Multiple resistance strategies: How African American women cope with racism and sexism. <i>The Journal of Black Psychology</i> , 30, 406-425.
16	Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. <i>Psychological Bulletin</i> , 129, 674-697.
17	Zoellner, T., & Maercker, A. (2006). Posttraumatic growth in clinical psychology: A critical review and introduction of a two component model. <i>Clinical Psychology Review</i> , 26, 626-653.
18	Kolassa, I., & Elbert, T. (2007). Structural and functional neuroplasticity in relation to traumatic stress. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 16, 321-325.
19	Bonanno, G. A. (2004). Loss, trauma, and resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events? <i>American Psychologist</i> , 59, 20-28.

20	Folkman, S. (1997). Positive psychological states and coping with severe stress. <i>Social Science &amp; Medicine</i> , 45, 1207-1221.
21	Bibbey, A., Carroll, D., Roseboom, T. J., Phillips, A. C., de Rooij, S. R. (2013). Personality and physiological reactions to acute psychological stress. <i>International Journal of Psychophysiology</i> , 90, 28-36.
22	Laubmeier, K. K., Zakowski, S. G., & Bair, J. P. (2004). The role of spirituality in the psychological adjustment to cancer: A test of the transactional model of stress and coping. <i>International Journal of Behavioral Medicine</i> , 11, 48-55.
23	Iwanaga, M., Yokoyama, H., & Seiwa, H. (2004). Coping availability and stress reduction for optimistic and pessimistic individuals. <i>Personality and Individual Differences</i> , 36, 11-22.
24	Porter, L., Marco, C., Schwartz, J., Neale, J., Shiffman, S., & Stone, A. (2000). Gender differences in coping: A comparison of trait and momentary assessments. <i>Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology</i> , 19, 480-498.
25	Rudolph, K. (2002). Gender differences in emotional responses to interpersonal stress during adolescence. <i>Journal of Adolescent Health</i> , 30, 3-13.
26	Hammen, C., Brennan, P. A., & Le Brocque, R. (2011). Youth depression and early childrearing: Stress generation and intergenerational transmission of depression. <i>Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology</i> , 79, 353-363.
27	Taylor, S. E. (2006). Tend and befriend: Biobehavioral bases of affiliation under stress. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 15, 273-277.
28	Seeman, T. E. (1996). Social ties and health: The benefits of social integration. <i>Annals of Epidemiology</i> , 6(5), 442-451.
29	Cohen, S., Doyle, W. J., Turner, R., Alper, C. M., & Skoner, D. P. (1997). Sociability and susceptibility to the common cold. <i>Psychological Science</i> , 14(5), 389-395.
30	Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K., Loving, T. J., Stowell, J. R., Malarkey, W. B., Lemeshow, S., Dickinson, S. L., & Glaser, R. (2005). Hostile marital interactions, proinflammatory cytokine production, and wound healing. <i>Archives of General Psychiatry</i> , 62, 1377-1384.
31	Taylor, S. E., Welch, W. T., Kim, H. S., & Sherman, D. K. (2007). Cultural differences in the impact of social support on psychological and biological stress responses. <i>Psychological Science</i> , 18(9), 831-837.

## **Class Policies**

- 1) **Academic Integrity:** I have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty of any kind. This includes 'cheating' (giving or obtaining assistance on exams) as well as plagiarism (using another person's work, words, or ideas without properly crediting them). Follow the Haverford College Honor Code. Consult the APA Publication Manual.
- 2) **Phone and Laptop Etiquette:** Please turn off or silence your cell phones. No texting. Because this is a seminar course, I strongly discourage the use of laptops. If you wish to use a laptop, please discuss with me first. I reserve the right to ask you to leave the class if I suspect you are engaging in non-class related activities.
- 4) **Office Hours:** I strongly encourage you to visit me during office hours to ask questions and discuss assignments. I hope that EACH of you will come visit at least ONCE this semester.
- 5) **Emails:** I will try to respond to emails within 24 hours. The more specific your question and the more you've thought about it, the better I'll be able to address it. For any question that requires an extensive response, I may ask you to come to office hours instead.
- 6) **Late Papers:** My policy on late papers is that for each 24 hour period of lateness, I'll deduct one grade point level. For example, if the paper is due Monday 5pm and you submit the paper Tues 4pm (within 24 hours), your original 3.3 would now become a 3.0. If you submit the paper Tues 5:30pm (past 24 hours), your original 3.3 would now become a 2.7.
- 6) **Grade Disputes:** If you believe that you did not receive a fair grade on an exam or paper, you may submit a written grade dispute to me. The typed grade dispute should include the reason why you believe your work/answer is correct including references to readings or lecture material for support, and the number of points you feel you should have received. The dispute should be submitted to me (in my hand or under my door; no emails) along with the original assignment within 1 week after the exam or the date the paper was returned to you. I will consider your case and make any adjustments at my discretion.