

Rutgers University  
Psychology 377:02: Health Psychology  
Spring 2020

Instructor: Keiko Brynildsen, Ph.D.  
Class time: Mondays and Thursdays 12:00-1:20 pm  
Class location: Livingston Campus – Tillett 254  
Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00-3:00 pm and by appointment  
Office location: Tillett Hall #329 (Livingston)  
Email: keikob@psych.rutgers.edu  
Course web page: Canvas (canvas.rutgers.edu)

|                  |                                |                       |                              |
|------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Grad TA:         | Janace Gifford                 | Undergrad TA:         | Ziad Soliman                 |
| Email:           | jjg249@scarletmail.rutgers.edu | Email:                | zhs6@scarletmail.rutgers.edu |
| Office hours:    | by appointment                 | Office hours:         | Tues. 5-7 pm                 |
| Office location: | Psychology #226 (Busch)        | Office hrs. location: | Tillett Study Lounge         |

### Course Objectives:

The objectives of this course are to understand the psychosocial processes that influence health and health care delivery. Topics to be examined are the psychophysiological and social bases of health and illness; pain; adaptation to chronic illness; stress and coping; personality and illness; substance use; eating behaviors; health-promoting behaviors; patient adherence; physician-patient communication; and using health care.

### Required readings:

Assigned articles will be posted on Canvas.

### Required equipment:

Regular and reliable access to a computer with Internet; #2 pencil for all exams.

### General course requirements:

1. **Canvas.** It is expected that all students will regularly access Canvas for course announcements and materials. Please also check your rutgers.edu email regularly.
2. **Attendance:** Attending class is essential to the learning process. Regular class attendance and reading of the assigned material are expected. *If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining the missed information from a classmate* (my lecture notes will not be provided to students).
3. **Exams:** Three midterm exams and one final exam will be given. Each exam will be based on material presented both in lecture and in the assigned readings. The final exam will be cumulative, with an emphasis on a general understanding of the material from the first 3/4 of the course and specific understanding of the material from the last 1/4 of the course. All exams will be multiple-choice. You must provide your 9-digit RUID number on all exams, and IDs may be checked at exams; you should carry your ID card with you at all times.

4. **Written Assignment: Using Psychological Methods to Improve Health Behaviors:** Using a theory or intervention strategy you learned about in class, conduct a **health behavior intervention** on yourself for **1 week** and submit a write-up about your intervention. Your 3-4-paragraph write-up should include:
- The behavior you changed
  - The theory/intervention strategy that you applied
  - The success of your intervention
  - Your reflections about why your intervention strategy did or did not work

Sample behaviors (though you are certainly not limited to this list and are encouraged to select a behavior that is important/meaningful to you):

- Starting a meditation program
- Increasing physical activity
- Improving sleep
- Keeping a gratitude journal
- Spending time in nature

*Please consult with me before starting your intervention if you have any concerns about your selected behavior.*

Due date: **Mon., Apr. 20**

Submission: Canvas (Assignments tab – “Health Behavior Intervention”)

More information about this assignment will be provided in class and on Canvas.

Alternative assignment:

Students who prefer not to participate in a health behavioral self-intervention may opt to complete an alternative assignment. The 3-4-paragraph alternative assignment is as follows:

- Select 3 empirical articles addressing a health psychological concept or issue
- Provide a brief summary of each article
- Briefly propose a new study that would address gaps in this research area not filled by the 3 articles you selected

Due date: **Mon., Apr. 20**

Submission: Canvas (Assignments tab – “Alternative Assignment”)

\*Note: all submissions will be screened for plagiarism using Turnitin.com.

## Grading:

Course grades will be based on the following:

|                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Exam 1:             | 20%         |
| Exam 2:             | 20%         |
| Exam 3:             | 20%         |
| Final exam:         | 30%         |
| Written assignment: | 10%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>        | <b>100%</b> |

Final grades will be determined by the following (standard Rutgers grading scale):

|                  |    |
|------------------|----|
| 90.00% and above | A  |
| 85.00-89.99%     | B+ |
| 80.00-84.99%     | B  |
| 75.00-79.99%     | C+ |
| 70.00-74.99%     | C  |
| 60.00-69.99%     | D  |
| below 60.00%     | F  |

\*Note: This syllabus is subject to change if adjustments become necessary during the semester.

## Make-up policy:

No make-up exams will be given unless arrangements are made prior to the day of the exam due date or written proof of unavoidable absence is provided (e.g., doctor's note). Make-up exams may be different from the original exams. If exceptional last-minute circumstances (e.g., car accident) prevent you from taking an exam, it is important that you contact me immediately. In some circumstances without a documented but still valid reason for your absence on an exam day, you may take a make-up exam with a 5-90% deduction in points (at my discretion). Missed exams will otherwise be given score of zero. Late assignments will receive a 10% deduction in points for each day late; unsubmitted assignments will receive a grade of zero.

## Academic integrity:

Rutgers University does not tolerate academic dishonesty, which includes, but is not limited to, cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity. Any suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct (see <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/> for more information on Rutgers University's policies regarding academic dishonesty).

## Disability services:

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. If you receive a Letter of Accommodations from ODS, please share this letter with me and discuss the accommodations with me as early as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. ODS can be contacted at: (848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus/ <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>.

## Final exam:

Our final exam will be held at the time scheduled by the University (<http://finalexams.rutgers.edu/>). University regulations set the time and date of all final examinations and specific guidelines that define conflicts (<http://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/forms/final-exam-conflict>). If you have a legitimate medical excuse for missing the exam, you will receive a TF in the course until the make-up exam has been completed.

## Student-wellness services:

**Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS):** (848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

**Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA):** (848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / [www.vpva.rutgers.edu/](http://www.vpva.rutgers.edu/)

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

**CONTACT We Care:** (908) 232-2880

CONTACT We Care provides confidential phone support for callers who need someone to listen.

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) - open 24/7

**Just In Case Web App:** <http://www.justincaseforcolleges.com/>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

### General policies:

Please be mindful of your fellow students by avoiding behavior that interferes with classroom activities or with other students' ability to focus such as chatting, texting, using social media, playing computer games, entering the class late, or leaving the class prematurely (if it is necessary that you arrive late or leave early, please sit in the front to minimize disruption). A student responsible for continual disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem.

Exam and assignment scores will be posted on Canvas; it is your responsibility to contact me immediately (within 1 week) if you believe you have not received credit for a submitted exam or assignment.

Final grades cannot be changed except in the case of a true clerical error. Although students may sometimes desire a different grade to get into graduate school, avoid academic probation, maintain financial aid, or for other reasons, changing any student's grade would be unfair to the other students. Therefore, I will not consider any requests for grade changes or opportunities for additional assignments.

**You may not post any class materials such as lecture slides, study guides, or practice questions to any web site. You may not record lectures without my express consent.**

## Course schedule

The following is a **tentative** schedule for this course. Dates may change depending on our **actual** progress in covering the material.

| DAY  | TOPIC  |
|--|--|
| <b>Part I: Introduction to Health Psychology</b>           |  |
| Jan. 23 (Th)   | Introduction and overview<br>What is Health Psychology?                                    |
| Jan. 27 (M)  | Research methods   |
| <b>Part II: Stress and Coping</b>                          |  |
| Jan. 30 (Th)   | Psychophysiology   |
| Feb. 3 (M)   | Stress: measurement and models   |
| Feb. 6 (Th)  | Stress moderators (social support)   |
| Feb. 10 (M)  | Stress moderators (social support)   |
| Feb. 13 (Th)   | <b>Exam 1 (WILL COVER MATERIAL (INCLUDING ASSIGNED ARTICLE(S)) ADDRESSED THROUGH 2/10)</b> |
| Feb. 17 (M)  | Stress moderators (personality)  |
| Feb. 20 (Th)   | Stress moderators (personality)  |
| Feb. 24 (M)  | Coping with and reducing stress  |
| Feb. 27 (Th)   | Coping with and reducing stress  |
| <b>Part III: Health Behaviors</b>                          |  |
| Mar. 2 (M)   | Theories of health behavior  |
| Mar. 5 (Th)  | Prevention and intervention  |
| Mar. 9 (M)   | <b>EXAM 2 (WILL COVER MATERIAL (INCLUDING ASSIGNED ARTICLE(S)) ADDRESSED THROUGH 3/5)</b>  |
| Mar. 12 (Th)   | Substance use and abuse (smoking)  |
| Mar. 16 (M)  | <b>No Class – Spring Recess</b>  |
| Mar. 19 (Th)   |  |
| Mar. 23 (M)  | Substance use and abuse (alcohol)  |
| Mar. 26 (Th)   | Eating and obesity   |
| Mar. 30 (M)  | Eating and obesity   |
| <b>Part IV: Becoming Ill and Getting Medical Treatment</b> |  |
| Apr. 2 (Th)  | Using health services  |
| Apr. 6 (M)   | Decisions in health care   |
| Apr. 9 (Th)  | <b>EXAM 3 (WILL COVER MATERIAL (INCLUDING ASSIGNED ARTICLE(S)) ADDRESSED THROUGH 4/6)</b>  |
| Apr. 13 (M)  | Patient-provider relations   |
| Apr. 16 (Th)   | Patient-provider relations (iatrogenic illness)  |

\*Note: This syllabus is subject to change if adjustments become necessary during the semester.

| <b>Part V: Physical Symptoms: Pain and Discomfort</b>         |   |
|---|---|
| Apr. 20 (M)   | Pain<br><i>Written Assignment due (on Canvas)</i> |
| Apr. 23 (Th)  | The placebo effect                                |
| <b>Part VI: Chronic and Life-Threatening Health Problems</b>  |   |
| Apr. 27 (M)   | Coping with serious illness                       |
| Apr. 30 (Th)  | Coping with serious illness                       |
| May 4 (M)   | Wrap-up   |
| <b>FINAL EXAM (cumulative): Thursday, May 7 8:00-11:00 am</b> |   |

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