

Preliminary Syllabus Subject to Change: Check Periodically

HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY—Fall 2015 (830:377:01), Index: 04864

Schedule: Tuesday and Friday, Second Period (10:20-11:40am), Tillett Hall Room 232 (Livingston)

Instructor: Richard J. Contrada, Ph.D. contrada@rci.rutgers.edu Office Hours: By Appointment

TA: Sarah Mann slmann.mail@gmail.com Office Hours: By Appointment

Readings: Required readings are from primary sources. There is **no required textbook**.

Optionally, you may wish to read any of the standard health psychology texts, including but not limited to those written by: L. Brannon & J. Feist, by S. Taylor, or by E. P. Sarafino. The more recent the edition, the better, and **be aware that certain facts and figures will differ between text books and my lecture**, though on balance any text will help you with major topics. Copies of useful texts will be placed on reserve at the Kilmer Library on Livingston.

The readings and other course material will be provided online through **Sakai**.

To see and download this syllabus: Sign in to the class website on **Sakai**.

Main Sakai portal <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>

Sakai will contain course materials including this syllabus, readings, assigned exercises, sample exam questions, and exam review guides. Students are responsible for all information and materials on all the course web pages on **Sakai**. In addition, because all the information is subject to change, students should check **Sakai** at least twice a week for changes and announcements and in response to email notifications about such changes that will come to you directly from Sakai.

Materials will be made available in Sakai under **“Resources”** unless otherwise indicated.

Lecture Outlines: These are made available in Sakai Resources. Although not always possible, they are usually posted the evening before each class. They contain much (**not all**) of the material presented in class on PowerPoint slides. It is strongly recommended that you download/print these outlines, bring them to class, and take notes using the comments feature (“Sticky Notes”) in Adobe Reader program. Or they can be printed and notes taken by hand.

Videos: Excerpts from several videos will be shown in class and then made available on Sakai or placed on reserve in the Media Center, in the basement of the Kilmer Library.

Assignments: There will periodically be brief assigned exercises for you to complete **outside** class. All will be announced and made available through **Sakai** and completed exercises will be submitted to the TA through **Sakai**.

Learning Goals: It is my purpose in teaching this class to foster your familiarity and understanding of:

1. The history, basic assumptions, main topic areas, concepts, and methods of Health Psychology
2. The relationships between health psychology and more traditional areas of psychology
3. How to think critically about psychology and health
4. The relationship between health psychology research conducted in the laboratory research and that conducted in naturalistic settings
5. The contributions of disciplines other than psychology to research and application concerning behavior and health
6. Social, economic, and political ramifications of health and psychology
7. How to write clearly and cogently about health psychology topics
8. How to improve your own health related behaviors and those of family and friends
9. How to manage illness problems experienced by yourself, friends, and family members
10. How to be a critical consumer of health- and psychology-related information presented in the media
11. Academic, professional, and other career opportunities in psychology, health, and medicine
12. Evolving problems of health/illness and health care

Class Schedule Outline

First Class: **Tuesday, September 1**

Change in designation of class days:

- **Tuesday, September 8: Monday classes are held (no Tuesday classes this week)**
- **Wednesday November 25: Friday classes (no Wednesday classes this week)**
- **Friday November 27: No classes (Thanksgiving Break)**

Main Topics and Exams: Topic coverage and exam dates are subject to change

Class 1	Course Introduction and History and Background of the Health Psychology Field
Class 2	Health and Disease in the United States Today
Class 3	Conducting Health Research: Theory and Research Methods
Class 4 and 5	Health-Related Behavior: Major Theoretical Models and Perspectives
Class 6 and 7	Interacting with the Health Care System and Adhering to Medical Advice
Class 8	Exam I: Tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, September 29
Class 9 and 10	Stress: Biological, Psychological, and Environmental Approaches
Class 11	Stress and Disease: A focus on the immune system
Class 12 and 13	Psychosocial Resources and Stress Moderators
Class 14	Pain
Class 15	Managing Stress and Pain: Coping Techniques
Class 16	Exam II: Tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, October 27
Class 17 and 18	Psychosocial and Behavioral Factors in Cardiovascular Disease
Class 19 and 20	Psychosocial and Behavioral Factors in Cancer
Class 21 and 22	HIV/AIDS
Class 23	Smoking Tobacco
Class 24	Using Alcohol
Class 25	Eating and Weight Control
Class 26	Exercising; Body Image and Eating Disorders
Class 27	Future Challenges
Class 28	Review for Final

Last Class: **Tuesday, December 8**

Final Exam: **Wednesday, December 22, 8:00am – 11:00am, Tillet Room 232, subject to change.**

How to submit your assignments via Sakai:

1. Log in to Sakai (<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/>)
2. Click on the Course tab: "HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY 01 F15" or "01:830:377:01 F15"
3. Click on "Assignments 2" tab on the left
4. Click on the assignment you wish to submit (e.g., Assignment 1)
5. Scroll down
6. Under Submissions, click on "Add Attachments"
7. Click on "Browse" to upload your assignment
8. Click "Continue"
9. Click "Submit"
10. You will see a screen that says that your assignment was submitted.

Notes:

1. Submit only one attachment.
2. Only use file types: Word, PDF, HTML, RTF, or plain text.

3. Always include file extension.

Exam Details

Exam I and II: About 50 multiple-choice and true-false questions

Final: About 75 multiple-choice questions (because we will cover more material)

Based on all course material: lectures, readings, videos

Not cumulative

Exam preparation

Study guides and practice quizzes will be provided for each of the exams

Determination of Final Grades:

Exam grades are combined (weighted in proportion to the number of questions) and together count for about 70% of the final course grade

Assignment grades are combined (with larger assignments weighted more heavily) and together count for about 30% of the final course grade

Student-Teacher Agreement

The following points form expectations that you acknowledge and with which you indicate agreement by registering for this course. Please read them carefully and let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

1. Please contact the **TA** and/or **instructor** with questions about **course material**. The **TA** should be contacted for all matters relating to **course mechanics** such as registration, assignments, exams, grade issues, and the like.
2. This class necessarily involves material having to do with anatomy, sickness, disability, death, and personal behaviors such as sex and drug/alcohol use that are related to health.
3. Please do not talk during class; it is disruptive in a lecture room this size. Also, please turn off cell phones. If you must arrive late or leave early, please sit in back.
4. Attendance is strongly recommended. If you must miss a class, get notes, and find out if you missed any announcements about changes in exam dates, lecture topics, etc.
5. If you have trouble downloading materials from Sakai, please email sakai@rutgers.edu and/or get help at one of the University computer labs because it is unlikely that I will be able to help since the issues are usually local to your PC/browser/printer. Sometimes the problem is solved by: (a) making sure you respond to a question about copyright issues in a window that may be open but hidden somewhere on your screen; (b) saving the file before opening; (c) upgrading to the latest version of relevant software (e.g., Adobe Reader).
6. Exam format is multiple choice/true-false and requires scantron sheets; students must provide a #2 pencil.
7. You must bring a picture ID (student ID or driver's license) to the exams.
8. It is expected that you will be in attendance for all exams as scheduled (or rescheduled, as may be necessary and if so will be announced in class and on Sakai) and not make plans or commitments that will create schedule conflicts. Students who miss an exam because they are physically unable to take it as scheduled must inform me in advance of the exam and may request a make-up. If granted, the make-up will include short essays and other open-ended questions. There must be documentation of severe illness in the form of a letter from a physician that includes a phone number so that the physician can be contacted for verification. The letter must be received by the instructor within one week of the missed exam.

9. There will be a reduction in credit for assignments that are submitted late.
10. Assignments must be completed based on the student's own, independent work. Plagiarism is unacceptable. **Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy:** <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>
11. Because the instructor for this course may not be on campus after the end of the semester, all students must complete all assigned exercises and take all exams prior to the end of the semester.
12. All grades will be posted electronically. Students are responsible for contacting the TA in a timely fashion if they believe they have not received credit for submitted assignments or exams they have taken.
13. It is expected that students will complete course evaluations for this class. Course evaluations, both the ratings and especially the comments, provide critical feedback for improving courses and for helping students to make decisions about course selection. Over the past many years, student evaluations have led to many improvement in Health Psychology. Please help your fellow/future students by providing evaluative ratings and comments when the time comes at the end of the semester.
14. All grades are final. If necessary, final course grades will be curved. Also, many of the assignments are simple and only require following straightforward directions; several do not even have right or wrong answers. And a lot of information will be provided to guide efforts to prepare for the exams, including specifics about what will and will not be covered. Some may feel they "just missed" the next highest final course grade, for example, because they were sick or under a lot of stress during exam periods. But remember, you will have come that close to the next highest grade only after the curve and fairly easy assignments. If I were to lower the cutoff to raise the letter grade for a student who "just misses" the next highest grade, there would be another student who scored slightly lower who now would "just miss" the new cutoff, and the logical conclusion would be to keep lowering the cutoff until everyone receives an "A". Such grades would be meaningless.
15. There are no individualized extra credit opportunities. All students will receive the same extra credit opportunities in the form of simple assignments and final course grade curve. I cannot negotiate extra credit opportunities for individual students because it would not be fair to the others. And I cannot work separately with each student until all students are satisfied with their grades. Please do not contact me to request further extra credit opportunities or just to let me know you were not satisfied with your grade. I do not under any circumstances offer "extra credit" opportunities because I believe a grading system is only fair if it is based on the same exams/exercises for all students.
16. The lectures and course web page are my personal intellectual property. I view the sale or purchase of these materials as a violation of copyright laws.