PSY 260ABC: Health Psychology

Margaret Kasimatis, Ph.D.; mkasim@carrollu.edu
Office Hours: RK309A, MW 12:00 – 2:00 & by appointment

PSY260 A meets MWF 9:20-10:30 in RK 301
PSY260B meets MWF 10:40-11:50 in RK 210
PSY260 C meets TR 2:00-3:50 in RK 204B


Based on the research of clinical, experimental social, and health psychologists, this course examines how psychological, social, and biological factors affect health and illness. Topics include coping with stress and pain, psychoneuroimmunology, and living with chronic illness, such as HIV, cardiovascular disease, or cancer. Emphasis is also placed on cultural factors in response to health problems, effective patient-clinician communication, and on the modification of health-related behaviors. Prerequisite: PSY101

COURSE GOALS: This course will provide
1. theoretical, evidence-based, & clinical information on the stress response
2. conceptual & applied ways of thinking of biopsychosocial factors affecting health
3. strategies for creating & applying behavior modification techniques
4. an orientation to non-Western ways of viewing health & disease processes

COURSE OBJECTIVES: By the end of the semester the student should be able to
1. conceptualize stress in terms of models, assessment, & management strategies
2. demonstrate awareness of levels of analysis in a biopsychosocial model
3. apply behavioral analysis & modification strategies to promote health
4. describe cultural influences on perception of health, illness, & treatment
5. evaluate the efficacy of non-Western and complementary treatment options

CLASS REQUIREMENTS:
1. Attendance is important and required through the first exam. Anyone with a solid B (85%) or better may then attend at their discretion. Please let me know if you must miss class, and why. There is also a quality of attendance to be considered! Those who participate more actively may be “bumped up” to the higher grade if they are on the cusp between grades at the end of the course. Students who text or similarly multitask in class will be told to leave for the rest of the class period and receive an unexcused absence. Three unexcused absences for any reason will result in the semester grade being reduced one full letter grade (e.g. from an AB to a B).

2. The three exams will be worth 250 points each. The final exam is not cumulative. Each class will have two exams that are multiple choice and one that is short essay. Details will be explained in class.
3. **A number of supplemental readings** will be provided as handouts or posted on eLearning. There will be test items on the readings.

4. **Students will work in groups of three or four on a health behavior project.** Each student will help his or her partners set a realistic goal and develop a measurable behavior modification program to achieve a health objective. Students will write a **brief literature review & plan outline** -- 2 ½-3 pages -- for 250 points, to develop their methodologies. Details to be discussed in class. **Students are responsible for getting approval from their health care providers for behavior mod projects that could reasonably be expected to affect their health status.**

5. **Grades** will be assigned based on the following ranges, on a 1000 point scale. I reserve the right to “bump” someone up a grade if they are on an upper cutoff, but no one is ever bumped down from a bottom cutoff:

   A = 930 – 1000  
   B = 820 – 879  
   C = 700 – 759  
   F = <600

   A/B = 880 – 929  
   B/C = 760 – 819  
   D = 600 – 699

**COURSE TOPICS**

Week of:

1/23  
**Health psychology: setting the stage (ch. 1)**  
Cultural approaches to health psychology (ch. 2)

1/30  
Cultural approaches to health psychology (ch. 2) con’t.  
Models of behavior change (ch. 6)  
Project partners & fundamentals of behavior modification

2/6  
**Essential physiology (ch. 3) & health project collaboration**  
Thurs 2/9 (C/essay) & Fri 2/10 (AB/m.c.): EXAM #1 ON CH. 1, 2, 3, & 6

2/13  
Stress: models, culture, & biological impact (ch. 4)  
Thurs 2/16 & Friday 2/17: Lit review and project proposals due

2/20  
Stress management strategies; Coping & social support (ch. 5)

2/27  
Health behaviors (ch. 7)

3/6  
Consultation with partners & implementation of health projects  
Factors surrounding illness (ch. 8)

3/11-3/19  
**SPRING BREAK**

3/13  
Placebo & immune responses; Film: Placebo

3/20  
Pain & pain management (ch.9)  
Mon 3/20 (AB/essay) & Tues 3/21 (C/m.c.): EXAM #2 ON CH. 4, 5, 7, 8, & 9

3/27  
Chronic illness, terminal illness, & death (ch. 10)  
Palliative care; consultation with partners & revision of methodologies/goals
4/3  Psychoneuroimmunology & HIV (ch. 11)
Film: Gates Foundation /global perspectives on HIV/AIDS

4/10  Culture & cancer (ch. 12)
film: cultural issues in health care

4/17  Culture & cardiovascular disease (ch. 13)

4/24  The future of health psychology (ch. 14)
Film: global challenges

5/1  Personalizing the biopsychosocial model

Thursday 5/4: READING DAY

FINAL EXAMS ON CH. 9-14: DATES PER REGISTRAR/TBA

The instructor and the College reserve the right to modify amend, or change the syllabus (course requirements, grading policies, etc.) as the curriculum and/or program requires.

The Carroll University Academic Integrity Policy is located in the student handbook. Academic integrity is expected in terms of your work and your conduct in class. Violations will, at my discretion, result in F’s (zero points) on the relevant assignments, and WILL result in a formal review at the administrative level.

Accommodations for disabilities must be arranged immediately through the Walter Young Center at Carroll University (x7335). Feel free to ask me for assistance in this matter.