

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**School of Recreation, Health and Tourism**  
**HEAL 230 Introduction to Health Behavior**  
Fall 2011

DAY/TIME: 7:20p M W  
PROFESSOR: Dr. Rich Miller  
OFFICE LOCATION: Occoquan 220D  
OFFICE HOURS: 8:30-10:30a M W

LOCATION: Art & Design Building 2003  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Introduces health behavior in context of health psychology. Explores various theoretical models to understand health, illness and sick-role behaviors. Studies health and disease from a biopsychosocial perspective. Examines means of preventing and treating health problems.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

At the completion of this course students should be able to:

1. Identify biological, psychological, and sociological factors influencing health behavior as well as health problems, diseases and injuries;
2. Describe the components comprising health behavior;
3. Differentiate health promoting (well), protecting (ill, injured and sick), and preserving (impaired) behaviors;
4. Recognize various health behavior research designs;
5. Examine and discuss health behavior theories (e.g., reasoned action/planned behavior, behavior modification, self-efficacy, social cognitive learning and others) and models (e.g., health belief, precaution adoption, transtheoretical) and how they can be used to understand and predict health behavior as well as change unhealthy behavior;
6. Demonstrate an understanding of psychometric instruments used to measure health behaviors and conditions/diseases related to not practicing health behaviors;
7. Describe health outcomes in terms of risk, functionality and life satisfaction;
8. Explore and explain determinants of seeking and adhering to conventional and alternative health care;
9. Examine the relationship of stress, immune response and disease;
10. Describe pain experience, pain syndromes and pain management;
11. Explore and explain determinants of adjusting to and recovering from injuries, chronic unhealthy conditions and diseases (e.g., Alzheimer's disease, asthma, diabetes and HIV/AIDS);
12. Describe the theoretical aspects of selected health behaviors: managing stress, having a healthy heart, reducing cancer risk, not using tobacco, responsible drinking and drugging, healthy eating, and exercising; and
13. Demonstrate a basic understanding of health behavior change techniques such as motivational interviewing, behavioral modification, social inoculation, irrational belief dismissal, and others.

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course meets the social/behavioral science requirement, one of the *core requirements* of the University General Education program. The goal of the core requirement is to help ensure that students are introduced to the broad range of intellectual domains that contribute to a liberal education. By gaining exposure to the subject matter and ways of knowing in a variety of fields, students will be better able to synthesize new knowledge, respond to fresh challenges, and meet the demands of a complex world. The overall goal of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the social and behavioral sciences. Students will be engaged in reasoning using the scientific method, the use of quantitative and qualitative information, and the analysis of empirical observations in relation to theory, among other methods. The development of major ideas in social science is also addressed. For more information, please see the University Catalog, and the Provost's Office General Education website, <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/provost/gened/index.html>

**REQUIRED READINGS**

Brannon, L., & Feist, J. (2010). Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning. ISBN: 0-495-60132-2. Additional course material at Blackboard: <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>

**EVALUATION**

15% - First test                      15% - Third test                      25% - Participation  
15% - Second test                      30% - Health behavior paper

Grading: A+ 98-100, A 93-97, A- 90-92, B+ 87-89, B 83-86, B- 80-82, C+ 77-79, C 73-76, C- 70-72, D 60-69, F 0-59

## LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Each Blackboard online test is composed of 50 multiple-choice questions. The tests are based on the content of the text as organized and presented in classroom lecture. Each test will be graded 0-100 points and weighted .15 of overall course grade. Points are deducted for not starting the test by its deadline. To best prepare for the tests, students should use their lecture notes to focus on important content in the textbook. Multiple-choice items will measure students' abilities to identify/recall, differentiate, apply and analyze subject material.

The health behavior paper involves completing four Blackboard online assignments according to posted guidelines posted by their due dates. The assignments represent the introduction, review of the professional literature, theoretical aspects, and conclusion sections of the paper. Each assignment will be graded separately using scoring rubrics with the total possible score of 100 points being weighted .30 of overall course grade. These assignments will represent cognitive, affective and psychomotor learning experiences.

According to GMU academic policy, students are expected to attend class regularly and in-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Thus, participation credit in this course involves being in full attendance during each class day and actively involved in class activities. Absence [ABSE] results in no credit. Arriving late [LATE], taking an extended break [BRK] or leaving early [LEFT] from class results in partial credit. Student non-course computer use or cell use [NCCS] is not active involvement in class activities and, therefore, results in partial credit. Although medical excuses are not accepted, each student is entitled to one excused [EXCU] absence during the semester. The percent of attended days will be weighted .25 of overall course grade. Class activities are based on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning experiences and they will reinforce the important subject material in the course.

## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE (see Blackboard for dates)

Each class session will be a combination of lecture, small group work, discussion, simulations, and other class activities.

	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Session 1	Introduction	Ch 1
Session 2	Conducting health behavior research	Ch 2
Session 3	Seeking health care	Ch 3
Session 4	Adhering to medical advice	Ch 4
Session 5	Managing stress	Ch 5, 6
	<i>First Test</i>	<i>Covers material from Chs 1-6</i>
Session 6	Managing pain; Considering alternative approaches	Ch 7, 8
Session 7	Behavioral factors in cardiovascular disease	Ch 9
Session 8	Behavioral factors in cancer	Ch 10
Session 9	Living with chronic disease	Ch 11
	<i>Second Test</i>	<i>Covers material from Chs 7-11</i>
Session 10	Smoking tobacco	Ch 12
Session 11	Using alcohol and other drugs	Ch 13
Session 12	Eating and weight	Ch 14
Session 13	Exercising	Ch 15
Session 14	Future challenges	Ch 16
	<i>Third Test</i>	<i>Covers material from Chs. 12-16</i>



For additional School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism information, please visit: <http://rht.gmu.edu>

- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/> for the full honor code.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the Mason Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. [See <http://ods.gmu.edu>].
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers a wide range of services to students that are provided by a staff of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors. The Center provides individual and group counseling, workshops, and outreach programs – experiences to enhance a student's personal and academic performance. [See <http://caps.gmu.edu>].
- All students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students through their Mason e-mail account only. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly.
- University policy states that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the professor.