

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism  
**HEAL 230-B01 DL Introduction to Health Behavior**  
Summer 2015, June 1-July 23

PROFESSOR: Dr. Jacqueline Johnson      EMAIL: [jjohns62@gmu.edu](mailto:jjohns62@gmu.edu)

OFFICE LOCATION:      PHONE NUMBER:

OFFICE HOURS:      FAX: (703) 934-2195

**PREREQUISITES/COREQUISITES:** (None)

**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.

**DELIVERY METHOD:**

This course will be delivered online using an **asynchronous** (not “real time”) format via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before “@masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on Aug. 25, 12:01a. There will also be synchronous learning activities through Bb Collaborate (by appointment).

**TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:**

To participate in this course, students will need the following resources:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox. Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard;
- Consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of the course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs respectively, available for free downloading by clicking on the link next to each plug-in:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
  - Windows Media Player: <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/downloads/windows-media-player>
  - Apple QuickTime Player: [www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)
- A headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool

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**EXPECTATIONS:**

- **Course Week:** Because online courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will **start** on Mon, and **finish** on Sun.
- **Log-in Frequency:** Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, at a minimum this should be 2 times per week.
- **Participation:** Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester/session, which include viewing of all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- **Technical Competence:** Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students are expected to seek assistance if they are struggling with technical components of the course.
- **Technical Issues:** Students should expect that they could experience some technical difficulties at some point in the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- **Workload:** Expect to log in to this course **at least three times a week** to read announcements, participate in the discussions, and work on course materials. Remember, this course is **not** self-paced. There are **specific deadlines** and **due dates** listed in the **CLASS SCHEDULE** section of this syllabus to which you are expected to adhere. It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- **Advising:** If you would like to schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues, and you are unable to come to the Mason campus, we can meet via telephone or web conference. Send me an email to schedule your one-on-one session and include your preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
- **Netiquette:** Our goal is to be **collaborative**, not combative. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be misconstrued. I suggest that you always re-read your responses carefully before you post them to encourage others from taking them as personal attacks. **Be positive in your approach to others and diplomatic with your words.** I will do the same. Remember, you are not competing with each other but sharing information and learning from one another as well as from the instructor.

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**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: 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

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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>

**NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY**

Face-to-face through lecture, small group discussions in class and via Blackboard Discussions, role-plays, and website explorations.

**REQUIRED READINGS**

Brannon, L., & Feist, J. (2013). Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning. 0-495-60132-2. ISBN: 9781133593072.  
Additional course material at Blackboard: <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>

**EVALUATION**

This course will be graded on a point system, with a total of 100 points.

<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Points</b>
<i>Mid-term Exam</i>	25
<i>Final Exam</i>	25
<i>Health Behavior Project/Paper</i>	30
<i>Participation</i>	20
<i>Quizzes (5 for 2 pts each)</i>	10
<i>Discussions (Blackboard)</i>	10
<i>TOTAL</i>	100

**Grading Scale**

A = 94-100	B+ = 88-89	C+ = 78-79	D= 60-69
A- = 90-93	B = 84-87	C = 74-77	F = 0-59
	B- = 80-83	C- = 70-73	

**ACADEMIC POLICY**

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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. Participation credit in this course involves being in full attendance during each class day, actively participating in class activities and Blackboard discussions. Absence (ABSE) results in no credit; Arriving late (LATE), taking an extending break (BRK) or leaving early (LEFT) from class results in partial credit. Student non-course computer use or cell-phone use (NCCS) is not active involvement in class activities and, will result in partial credit. Each student is entitled one excused (EXCU) absence during the semester. Participation is based on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning experiences with each meant to reinforce the learning of the subject material in the course.

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Health Behavior Change Project/ Paper

The health behavior change project and paper involves each student selecting one health behavior to focus on changing/ adopting. (Keep the behavior simple.) Students are not evaluated on succeeding/failing in changing/adopting a behavior. Students are evaluated on understanding and applying the concepts of health psychology, the theories of health behavior, the risks associated with unhealthy behaviors, and the benefits of adopting and maintaining healthy behaviors. This assignment will evaluate how well students understand the various health behavior theories presented in the course, and understand the application of each in real life behavior change attempts.

Students will also consider the broader spectrum of behavior change with a target population, based on their learning in course content, and personal experience in changing a behavior. Students will select a specific target population and provide recommendations to promote the specific behavior change.

Students will be prompted (cued) through the course of the semester to complete specific behavior change assignments that will culminate into the complete final project paper due at the end of the semester. The assignments will be posted in Blackboard as online writing assignments, with guidelines and their due dates. The assignments represent the introduction (the behavior, risks/benefits, etc.); a review of the professional literature, theories, etc.; a discussion of your behavior change, including strategies employed, a reflection of your behavior before changing it, an assessment of your adherence, willingness, etc.; and the summary/ conclusion of your paper. Each of these four assignments will be graded separately using scoring rubrics. Students will have one opportunity to improve the final paper, integrating all of these four assignments, for their final project/paper grade. This behavior change project and paper represents cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning experiences.

A guide, grading rubric, and sample project paper will be provided to students for this project and paper.

**CLASS STRUCTURE:**

I. As an on-line course, using Blackboard, students will be responsible for monitoring new posts for assignments, course content, and any changes that may occur. Students are responsible for checking the Discussion: What's in the News? A discussion of health topics currently in the news and how health psychology has been/ can be considered and applied in each case. Research articles will be posted in Blackboard for specific class sessions, to be discussed in class and in the Blackboard discussions.

II. Lectures will be posted as powerpoint files.

III. Discussion, based on textbook readings, research articles, and additional comments posted in the Discussion area of Blackboard.

Each Thursday will be a quiz of the preceding lecture topics, available for 48 hours.

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TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS
June 1	Introduction What is Health Psychology? What is Health? Review Syllabus/ and assignments	Read Chapter 1 Read Chapter 2
June 2	What's in the News? Conducting Health Research Behavior Change Project	Read Chapter 3 for Wednesday, July 3, 2013
June 3	Health Care Discussion/ small groups	Read Chapter 4 Choose Health Behavior Written assignment #1 due (BB)
June 4	What's in the News? Healthy Behavior Critical review of research QUIZ #1	Read Chapter 5 Research your health behavior
June 5	What's in the News? Stress Behavior Change Project	Read Chapter 6 Begin journaling behavior
June 8	What's in the News? Stress, Immunity and Disease Discussion/ small groups	Read Chapter 7 Journal behavior Strategies for changing behavior
June 9	What's in the News? Pain, and pain management Behavior Change Project	Read Chapter 8 Develop plan to change behavior Written assignment #2 Due (BB)
June 10	What's in the News? Alternative Medicine and Therapy Yoga and Meditation	Read Chapter 9 Put behavior change plan into action; journal the change
June 11	What's in the News? CVD QUIZ #2	Mid-Term is on-line, open book, covers Chapters 1-9
June 12	What's in the News? Cancer Discussion	Continue behavior change
June 15	What's in the News? Chronic Illness	Continue behavior change

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June 16	What's in the News? Smoking Tobacco Discussion	Continue behavior change
June 17	What's in the News? Alcohol and Drugs Literature Review QUIZ #3	Continue behavior change
June 18	What's in the News? Eating Weight	Continue behavior change
June 19	What's in the News? Exercise and Physical Activity	Read the Reading posted in Blackboard
June 22	What's in the News? Body Image and Eating Disorders	Behavior Change Project, read comments from Part #2
June 23	College and Weight	Psychosocial aspects of weight among college students
June 24	MID-TERM	Mid-term available from June 24- June 26
June 25	Motivational Interviews: Students will be paired with another student based on behavior topic Research Review	Group work, interviews  Read Chapter 10
June 26 July 29-July 3	Motivational Interviews No new assignments	Meetings with course instructor Use this time to catch up on work
July 6	What's in the News? The Future Discussion	Read Chapter 11
July 7	What's in the News?	Read Chapter 12 Written assignment #3 Due (BB)
July 8	What's in the News?	Read Chapter 13
July 9	QUIZ #4	Read Chapter 14
July 10	Group Discussions: Students will be grouped based on behavior topic and theories	Read Chapter 15
July 13	Theory Discussions	Read Chapter 16
July 14	Theory Discussions	Finish Behavior Change Project
July 15-16	Theory Discussions	Submit Behavior Change Project



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		Behavior Change Project Paper DUE July 16 by midnight
July 17	QUIZ #5 <b>Final Review</b>	Final, on line, open book and Final covers Chapters 10-16
July 20-22	FINAL	Final is available until July 22, midnight
July 23	END OF SEMESTER	All work due!

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*Student Expectations*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>]
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

*Campus Resources*

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism, please visit our website [See <http://rht.gmu.edu>].

**CORE VALUES COMMITMENT:** The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

