

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism

HEAL 230 – 001 — Introduction to Health Behavior (3 credits)
Spring 2016

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|---------------|---------------------|----------------|--|
| DAY/TIME: | Thursday, 7:20-10pm | LOCATION: | Robinson Hall B208 |
| INSTRUCTOR: | Amanda Gordon, M.S. | EMAIL ADDRESS: | agordon8@gmu.edu |
| OFFICE HOURS: | By appointment ONLY | CELL NUMBER: | 646-326-9863 (call or text) |

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. This course presents studies in health and disease from a biopsychosocial perspective, and examines means of preventing and treating health problems.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will 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, 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, asthmas, 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, health 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 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>

CLASS POLICIES

- Students are expected to be on time, attend all class meetings, do the readings, and be prepared to participate in class discussions. If you need to come in late for any reason, please do so quietly so as not to disturb your classmates. If you need to leave early, please let me know before the beginning of class.
- Be an active participant. Participation makes this class a more valuable experience for everyone. Sleeping is not an active form of participation. If you are sleeping in class, you will be asked to leave.
- Be respectful of others and their belief systems, and help to create a safe environment where people feel comfortable sharing information. Disrespect will not be tolerated.
- **Make-up exams will only be given in the case of extreme circumstances.** These circumstances must be documented in detail. If a student misses an exam due to a circumstance that is not extreme (e.g., it is a beautiful day out and you can't bear the thought of completing the exam on Blackboard), then it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the exam will be given and what automatic point deduction will occur for missing the original exam date.
- **Late work will NOT be accepted.** Extenuating circumstances will be determined by instructor.
- All assignments that include sources should have in-text citations and a References list. Incorrect citation of sources will result in a point deduction. Plagiarized work from any outside source (i.e., books, articles, websites) is unacceptable and will result in a zero. All sources cited must be **reputable sources of information.** These include scholarly journal articles, government websites, and factsheets or other publications from recognized expert agencies. Wikipedia will not count as a source. If you have questions about what is considered a reputable source, please come and talk to me.
- You are free to bring in food and drinks, as long as you throw your trash away.
- In the event of inclement weather or any other emergency, follow the decision of the University. Please check the university website for any weather-related cancellations. In the event of class cancellation, students will be contacted via email about rescheduling, assignments due, etc.
- Blackboard will be used for posting course files, rubrics, readings, and assignments and communicating with the class. It is your responsibility to check the course site on a regular basis for updates to the syllabus, readings, etc.
- The use of cell phones during class is NOT allowed, and cell phones must be turned off or muted. Please do not answer phone calls or send/read text messages during class, as it is very distracting to others. If you are expecting an important phone call and know that you may need to step out to take it, please let me know before class. Otherwise, please make calls and send texts before or after class, or on the break.
- The use of laptops during class is NOT allowed, as this has proven to be quite disruptive in the past. Students sometimes use their laptops to check email, visit social media sites, etc., and therefore, their engagement in class is diminished. Laptops are not needed for this class, as much of the class revolves around activities and large and small group discussions. If a student feels they need an exception made, please come and speak to me on an individual basis.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

Face to face; attendance is required.

REQUIRED READINGS

Brannon, L., Feist, J., & Updegraff, J. (2013). Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning. ISBN: 9781133593072.

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard throughout the semester.

EVALUATION

This course will be graded on a point system, with a total of 200 possible points.

Requirements

| | Point Value |
|---|--------------------|
| In-Class Reflections and Attendance (10 reflections at 4 points each) | 40 pts. |
| Individual Assignments (2 total at up to 15 points each) | 30 pts. |
| Group Presentation | 30 pts. |
| Mid-Term | 50 pts. |
| Final Exam | 50 pts. |
| TOTAL: | 200 pts. |

Grading Scale

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 187 pts. or above | A (94 and above) |
| 186 – 179 pts. | A- (90-93) |
| 178 – 175 pts. | B+ (88-89) |
| 174 – 167 pts. | B (84-87) |
| 166 – 159 pts. | B- (80-83) |
| 158 – 155 pts. | C+ (78-79) |
| 154 – 147 pts. | C (74-77) |
| 146 – 139 pts. | C- (70-73) |
| 138 – 135 pts. | D+ (68-69) |
| 134 – 127 pts. | D (64-67) |
| 126 pts. and below | F (63 and below) |

In-Class Reflections and Attendance (4 points each – 40 total points):

Students are expected to attend class regularly and fully participate in class activities and discussions. There will be 10 unannounced in-class journals that will take place in the middle or the end of the class. You will be asked to respond to a specific activity or question based on the required reading for the week in no more than 1 page. Students who are not present when the journal is offered will not be able to make it up. *Exceptions will only be considered for requests received in advance by the instructor.

2 Individual Assignments (30 points):

There will be 2 written assignments due in the course. The assignments include responding to a documentary (viewed outside of class) and informally interviewing 2-3 people and analyzing their responses. Details and grading rubrics for each assignment will be provided on Blackboard.

Group Presentation (30 points):

Students will be put into small groups based on class size. Each group will work on creating educational materials directed at a particular problem within a particular age group. You will research the efficacy of programs and materials and use this information in designing your own project. For example, you can outline a curriculum for preventing drug use, smoking, alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, unsafe sex, etc. This curriculum can focus on elementary school, middle school, high school, and/or college. You can plan media campaigns to educate the general public. You can also develop specific materials that would be effective in educating and influencing specific groups. The choice is yours and will be discussed more in class once groups are assigned.

You will present your curriculum/media campaign/materials to the class. Presentations should be no more than 20 minutes each. They should also be creative, as this will be part of your grade. In addition to the presentation, groups must create a one-page fact sheet to be handed out to the class. At least 3 references in APA style should be included for the fact sheet and presentation. References must be reputable sources (please refer to “class policies”), and one of the references MUST be your textbook.

Each person in the group is responsible for a portion of the oral presentation. Presentations will take place on the last day of class. Groups must hand in a copy of the presentation (e.g., PowerPoint, curriculum, etc.) and the fact sheet. Grades will be based on creativity, content, grammar, punctuation and spelling, format (e.g., references), and presentation skills.

All group members will receive the same group grade unless there are unique extenuating circumstances. Should this be the case, I will have the final say in grades for your group presentation.

Exams (50 points each):

A mid-term and final exam (non-cumulative) will be given to assess your understanding and knowledge of course materials. They will both be taken on Blackboard; on the day of the midterm and final exam, students will not come to class. Students must log on during the specified time frame to complete the exam. Both exams will be multiple choice and based on information from the text, readings, and materials discussed during lectures.

Optional Extra Credit (up to 5 points):

Students will have an opportunity during the first day of class to sign up for a class session/topic on which they would like to find a “current event” and write a 1-2 page reaction paper. For this assignment, students must find a recent article (within the last 6 months) related to the topic for which they have signed up. Students will give a short presentation in class on the day we are discussing their chosen topic, summarizing the article’s main points AND their reflections on the article itself. These presentations should be no more than 5 minutes in length. Students should post the article of their choosing as well as their reaction paper on Blackboard on or before the day they present.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

| DATE/WEEK | TOPIC/READING | READINGS/ASSIGNMENT DUE |
|--|--|--|
| 01/21 Week #1 | NO CLASS – will start the following week | |
| 01/28 Week #2 | Introductions/Syllabus Review Overview of Chapter 1: <i>Introducing Health Psychology</i> | Chapter 1 |
| 02/04 Week #3 | Topic: <i>Conducting Health Research</i> Topic: <i>Seeking and Receiving Health Care</i> | Chapters 2 and 3 |
| 02/11 Week #4 | Topic: <i>Adhering to Healthy Behavior</i> <i>Virtual Class- Watch Documentary</i> | Chapter 4 |
| 02/18 Week #5 | Topic: <i>Defining, Measuring and Managing Stress</i> | Chapter 5 |
| 02/25 Week #6 | Topic: <i>Understanding Stress, Immunity and Stress</i> | Chapter 6 Assignment #1 Due |
| 03/03 | Topic: Understanding and Managing Pain Topic: Considering Alternative Approaches | Chapters 7 and 8 |
| 03/10 Week #7 | Spring Break! | |
| 03/17 Week #8 | Midterm (Chapters 1 – 8) | Exam via Blackboard |
| 03/24 Week #9 | Topic: <i>Behavioral Factors in Cardiovascular Disease</i> | Chapter 9 |
| 03/31 Week #10 | Topic: <i>Behavioral Factors in Cancer</i> | Chapter 10 Assignment #2 Due |
| 04/07 Week #11 | Topic: <i>Living with a Chronic Illness</i> | Chapter 11 |
| 04/14 Week #12 | Topic: <i>Smoking Tobacco</i> Topic: <i>Using Alcohol and Other Drugs</i> | Chapters 12 and 13 |
| 04/21 Week #13 | Topic: <i>Eating and Weight</i> Topic: <i>Exercising</i> | Chapters 14 and 15 |
| 04/28 Week #14 Last day of class | Topic: <i>Future Challenges</i> Group Presentations/Course Evaluations | Chapter 16 Copy of Presentation and Fact Sheet Due |

| DATE/WEEK | TOPIC/READING | READINGS/ASSIGNMENT DUE |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| 05/5 Week #15 | Final Exam (Chapters 9 – 16) *Students are required to be available on the scheduled day set by the university. This is not negotiable. | Exam via Blackboard |

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule or syllabus as necessary. Changes will be announced in class. The instructor is not obligated to modify changes to syllabus posted on Blackboard or email students the revised syllabus. It is the responsibility of the students to attend class on a regular basis in order to stay up-to-date on assignments, due dates, and changes.

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/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- 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.

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>].

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR: Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

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.

