



**Stress & Coping Seminar (PSYCH 337)  
Fall 2015 Course Syllabus**

*Tues/Thurs, 10:00 – 11:30am, 410 Sharpless Hall*

**Instructor:** Shu-wen Wang, PhD, Assistant Professor  
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**Office:** 408 Sharpless Hall  
**Office Hours:** Fridays 10:30-12:00 (starting 9/11) and by appointment  
(I hope EACH of you comes to see me at least once this semester!)

**Course Description and Objectives**

Stressors and their subjective experience – stress – are a part of everyday life, whether minor or major, acute or chronic. *How* one copes with stress has substantial influence on one's physical, emotional, cognitive, and interpersonal functioning. This seminar course is designed to provide in-depth study of the field of stress and coping, through brief lectures, discussion of readings, student presentations and contributions, and the practice of stress management exercises.

This seminar course will survey theory, research, and intervention across a range of topics, including: the neurobiology of stress (e.g., the HPA axis, the immune system), disease (e.g., cardiovascular disease, cancer) and mental illness (e.g., depression, anxiety), ecological stressors (e.g., social and community factors, catastrophes), common life stressors (e.g., work, interpersonal conflict), and diversity-related stressors (e.g., racism, culture). Moderating factors influencing stress and coping such as dispositional factors (i.e., personality), gender, and use of social support will be covered. Students will also learn and practice evidence-based stress management techniques and therapeutic strategies.

By the end of the course, students are expected to:

- 1) Understand how stress responses influence physiology, disease, and mental illness.
- 2) Think critically about the nature and function of stress and the stress-response.
- 3) Understand the various sources of stress.
- 4) Understand factors that can moderate the stress response.
- 5) Learn stress management practices and how to design and implement a stress management plan.

### **Pre-requisites**

Psyc 100 and one of the following: HC Psyc 209, 215, 224, 242, 245.

### **Course Readings**

- 1) Textbook – Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: Stress, Disease, and Coping. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (2004) by Robert M. Sapolsky. Available for purchase in the College Bookstore and online. Also on reserve in the Science Library.
- 2) Additional required readings are available via the course website (Moodle).
- 3) Consult the APA Publication Manual for guidance on proper reference citation and general guidance on scientific writing. On reserve in the Science Library.

**Slides** -- Slides will be posted on Moodle for your reference AFTER the class lecture.

### **Support, Access, and Disability**

Haverford College is committed to supporting the learning process for all students. Please contact me as soon as possible if you are having difficulties in the course. There are also many resources on campus available to you as a student, including the Office of Academic Resources (<https://www.haverford.edu/oar/>), the Writing Center (<https://www.haverford.edu/writing-center/>), and the Office of Access and Disability Services (<https://www.haverford.edu/access-and-disability-services/>). If you think you may need accommodations because of a disability, you should contact Access and Disability Services at [hc-ads@haverford.edu](mailto:hc-ads@haverford.edu). If you have already been approved to receive academic accommodations and would like to request accommodations in this course because of a disability, please meet with me privately at the beginning of the semester (ideally within the first two weeks) with your verification letter.

### **Course Requirements**

Grades are determined based on the following course requirements:

1. Discussion Leader	5%
2. Article Presentation (2 X 5%)	10%
3. Student Topic Group Presentation	15%
3. Stress and Coping Report	25%
4. Research Proposal	30%
5. Attendance and Participation	15%

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Total = 100%

**1) Discussion Leader (5%):** Once during the semester, each student will be responsible for providing ~3-4 discussion questions and 1-2 hypotheses pertaining to the readings for that week. Depending on class size, we may have 1-2 discussion leaders for that topic. Discussion questions are thoughts, clarifications, or questions you may have regarding a particular reading, an idea presented in a reading, or the readings as a whole that help to promote dialogue during the class. Hypotheses are educated guesses based on prior knowledge about potential findings for a set of phenomena. Your hypothesis should be a brief statement grounded in existing research and theory, and you should be prepared to provide a rationale in class for why you believe each to be true. The questions and hypotheses will be projected on the screen in class to provide some structure for our discussions, and we will design studies to test the hypotheses together as a group.

You must submit your questions to me by email no later than Monday noon before Tuesday's class. Questions and hypotheses received on-time that show thought, effort, and an understanding of the readings will receive full credit.

**2) Article Presentation (2 X 5%):** Two times during the semester, each student will be responsible for giving a brief report on an empirical article that s/he selects. The article must be of empirical research (i.e., data was collected and analyzed, article has method and results sections), NOT theory articles or literature review articles. Each student will select an article corresponding to that day's class topic by doing a literature search and consulting with me. You will read the article and prepare an informal oral presentation to be given during class. While no slides or handouts are needed (and will not be permitted!), a clear and organized presentation is expected. The presentation should be brief (~7-10 minutes) and present the study's main hypothesis(es) or research question(s), how the hypothesis was tested, what are the main findings, and what are the implications of the findings.

You must get your article approved by me beforehand, and submit a PDF copy of the article (not HTML format) to me by email at least 24 hours before your scheduled day. Grades for the article presentation are based on how accurately and how clearly and thoughtfully you presented the information.

**3) Student Topic Group Presentation (15%):** The final two weeks of the course (Weeks 14 and 15) are reserved for Student Topic presentations. The topics for those 4 class meetings will be chosen by the class, and the class material will be partly presented by groups of students. Groups of 2-3 students will pick the topic for the day, and with guidance from me, find relevant readings, develop discussion questions, and lead discussion for part of that class period. I will add lecture material or discussion questions as necessary. More information regarding these days will be available as the semester progresses.

**4) Stress and Coping Report (25%):** This assignment is a 10-12 page paper on a personal stress and coping situation, your analysis of the issues using theory and research, and your development of a plan to better cope with the situation. More information regarding this assignment will be available as the semester progresses.

**5) Research Proposal (30%):** You will write a 12-15 page research proposal on a topic of your choice related to the seminar, due during finals period. You will conduct a literature review, develop your hypotheses and a study design that would allow you to test those hypotheses, describe how you would conduct the study, and discuss your anticipated results that would support your hypotheses. More information regarding this assignment will be available as the semester progresses.

**6) Attendance and Participation (15%):** This course is designed as a seminar and is largely based on discussion. Your attendance is expected at every class meeting, and your contribution and energy is critical to the success of the class.

### Grading Scale

Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A / 4.0	94-100	C+ / 2.3	77-79.99
A- / 3.7	90-93.99	C / 2.0	73-76.99
B+ / 3.3	87-89.99	C- / 1.7	70-72.99
B / 3.0	83-86.99	D+ / 1.3	67-69.99
B- / 2.7	80-82.99	D / 1.0	60-66.99
		F / 0.0	59.99 and below

**Course Schedule**

<b>Week (Dates)</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading (‘Ch.’ refers to chapters in textbook)</b>
Wk 1 – 9/1 9/3	Course Introduction What is Stress? What is Coping?	Ch1 p. 1-18; #1
Wk 2 – 9/8 9/10	Theoretical approaches	#2, #3, #4
Wk 3 – 9/15 9/17	Neurobiology of stress	Ch2 p. 19-36 Ch3 p. 37-56 Ch4 p. 57-61 #5
Wk 4 – 9/22 9/24	Disease and mental health	Ch5 p. 71-91 Ch8 p. 144-185 Ch13 p. 252-270 Ch14 p. 186-201
Wk 5 – 9/29 10/1	Daily stressors and hassles Chronic stressors and life events	#6, 7, 8 #9, 10, 11
Wk 6 – 10/6 10/8	Stress reduction, intervention	Ch18 p. 384-418 #12, 13
Wk 7 – 10/13 10/15	***** <b>FALL BREAK</b> *****	
Wk 8 – 10/20 10/22	Personality	Ch15 p.309-334 Ch16 p.335-352 #14, 15
Wk 9 – 10/27 10/29	Gender	#16, 17, 18
Wk 10 – 11/3 11/5	Relationships, social support	#19, 20, 21, 22
	<b>STRESS &amp; COPING REPORT DUE MON 11/9 noon</b>	
Wk 11 – 11/10 11/12	Diversity and stress	#23, 24, 25, 26
Wk 12 – 11/17 11/19	Trauma	#27, 28, 29, 30
Wk 13 – 11/24 11/26	<i>No Class</i> ***** <b>Thanksgiving</b> *****	
Wk 14 – 12/1 12/3	Student Topics	
Wk 15 – 12/8 12/10	Student Topics	
	<b>FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE FRI 12/18 noon</b>	

#	Additional Readings (available on Moodle)
1	Aldwin, C. M. (2009). <i>Stress, Coping, and Development</i> . NY: The Guilford Press. Chap 2 (Why is Stress Important?, pp. 13-22) and Chap 3 (Definitions of Stress pp. 23-36)
2	Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1991). Coping and emotion. In A. M. Monat and R. S. Lazarus (Eds.), <i>Stress and Coping: An Anthology (Third Edition)</i> , pp. 207-227, NY: Columbia University Press.
3	Aldwin, C. M. (2009)... Chap 7 Theoretical Approaches to Coping pp. 98-126.
4	Moos, R. H., & Holahan, C. J. (2003). Dispositional and Contextual Perspectives on Coping: Toward an Integrative Framework, <i>Journal of Clinical Psychology</i> , 59(12), 1387-1403.
5	Aldwin, C. M. (2009)... Chap 4 The physiology of stress pp. 37-54.
6	Wang, S., Repetti, R. L., & Campos, B. (2011). Job stress and family social behavior: The moderating role of neuroticism. <i>Journal of Occupational Health Psychology</i> , 16(4), 441-456.
7	DeLongis, A., Coyne, J. C., Dakof, G., Folkman, S, & Lazarus, R. S. (1982). Relationship of daily hassles, uplifts, and major life events to health status. <i>Health Psychology</i> , 1, 119-136.
8	Repetti, R. (1996). The effects of perceived daily social and academic failure experiences on school-age children's subsequent interactions with parents. <i>Child Development</i> , 67, 1467-1482.
9	Roux, A. V. D., & Mair, C., (2010). Neighborhoods and health. In Adler, N.E. and Stewart, J. (eds). <i>The Biology of Disadvantage: Socioeconomic Status and Health</i> . Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, vol. 1186, 125-145.
10	Baum, A., Fleming, R., & Reddy, D. M. (1986). Unemployment stress: Loss of control, reactance and learned helplessness. <i>Social Science &amp; Medicine</i> , 22, 509-516.
11	Wilkie, C. F., & Ames, E. W. (1986). The relationship of infant crying to parental stress in the transition to parenthood. <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> , 48, 545-550.
12	Milgrom, J., Schembri, C., Ericksen, J., Ross, J., & Gemmill, A. W. (2011). Towards parenthood: An antenatal intervention to reduce depression, anxiety, and parenting difficulties. <i>Journal of Affective Disorders</i> , 130, 385-394.
13	Workbook chapters
14	Connor-Smith, J., & Flachsbart, C. (2007). Relations between personality and coping: A meta-analysis. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , 93, 1080-1107.
15	Laubmeier, K. K., Zakowski, S. G., & Bair, J. P. (2004). The role of spirituality in the psychological adjustment to cancer: A test of the transactional model of stress and coping. <i>International Journal of Behavioral Medicine</i> , 11, 48-55.
16	Taylor, S. E. (2006). Tend and befriend: Biobehavioral bases of affiliation under stress. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 15, 273-277.
17	Porter, L., Marco, C., Schwartz, J., Neale, J., Shiffman, S., & Stone, A. (2000). Gender differences in coping: A comparison of trait and momentary assessments. <i>Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology</i> , 19, 480-498.
18	Rudolph, K. (2002). Gender differences in emotional responses to interpersonal stress during adolescence. <i>Journal of Adolescent Health</i> , 30, 3-13.
19	Hammen, C., Brennan, P. A., & Le Brocque, R. (2011). Youth depression and early childrearing: Stress generation and intergenerational transmission of depression. <i>Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology</i> , 79, 353-363.
20	Seeman, T. E. (1996). Social ties and health: The benefits of social integration. <i>Annals of Epidemiology</i> , 6(5), 442-451.

21	Cohen, S., Doyle, W. J., Turner, R., Alper, C. M., & Skoner, D. P. (1997). Sociability and susceptibility to the common cold. <i>Psychological Science, 14</i> (5), 389-395.
22	Randall, A. K., & Bodenmann, G. (2009). The role of stress on close relationships and marital satisfaction. <i>Clinical Psychology Review, 29</i> , 105-115.
23	Kessler, R. C., Mickelson, K. D., & Williams, D. R. (1999). The prevalence, distribution, and mental health correlates of perceived discrimination in the United States. <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 40</i> , 208-230.
24	Sue, D. W. et al (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life. <i>American Psychologist, 62</i> , 271-286.
25	Shorter-Gooden, K. (2004). Multiple resistance strategies: How African American women cope with racism and sexism. <i>The Journal of Black Psychology, 30</i> , 406-425.
26	Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. <i>Psychological Bulletin, 129</i> , 674-697.
27	Zoellner, T., & Maercker, A. (2006). Posttraumatic growth in clinical psychology: A critical review and introduction of a two component model. <i>Clinical Psychology Review, 26</i> , 626-653.
28	Kolassa, I., & Elbert, T. (2007). Structural and functional neuroplasticity in relation to traumatic stress. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science, 16</i> , 321-325.
29	Bonanno, G. A. (2004). Loss, trauma, and resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events? <i>American Psychologist, 59</i> , 20-28.
30	Folkman, S. (1997). Positive psychological states and coping with severe stress. <i>Social Science &amp; Medicine, 45</i> , 1207-1221.

## **Class Policies**

- 1) **Academic Integrity:** I have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty of any kind. This includes 'cheating' (giving or obtaining assistance on exams) as well as plagiarism (using another person's work, words, or ideas without properly crediting them). At the very least, you will receive a 0 for the assignment and there will likely be more severe consequences. Follow the Haverford College Honor Code. Consult the APA Publication Manual.
- 2) **Phone and Laptop Etiquette:** Please turn off or silence your cell phones. No texting. Students who use laptops must sit in the first row and restrict use to class activities.
- 4) **Office Hours:** I strongly encourage you to visit me during office hours to ask questions and discuss assignments. I hope that EACH of you will come visit at least ONCE this semester.
- 5) **Emails:** I will try to respond to emails within 24 hours. The more specific your question and the more you've thought about it, the better I'll be able to address it. For any question that requires an extensive response, I may ask you to come to office hours instead.
- 6) **Access and Disability:** Haverford College is committed to supporting the learning process for all students. Please contact me as soon as possible if you are having difficulties in the course. There are also many resources on campus available to you as a student, including the Office of Academic Resources (<https://www.haverford.edu/oar/>) and the Office of Access and Disability Services (<https://www.haverford.edu/access-and-disability-services/>). If you think you may need accommodations because of a disability, you should contact Access and Disability Services at [hc-ads@haverford.edu](mailto:hc-ads@haverford.edu). If you have already been approved to receive academic accommodations and would like to request accommodations in this course because of a disability, please meet with me privately at the beginning of the semester (ideally within the first two weeks) with your verification letter.
- 7) **Late Papers:** My policy on late papers is that for each 24 hour period of lateness, I'll deduct one grade point level. For example, if the paper is due Monday 5pm and you submit the paper Tues 4pm (within 24 hours), your original 3.3 would now become a 3.0. If you submit the paper Tues 5:30pm (past 24 hours), your original 3.3 would now become a 2.7.
- 6) **Grade Disputes:** If you believe that you did not receive a fair grade on an exam or paper, you may submit a written grade dispute to me. The typed grade dispute should include the reason why you believe your work/answer is correct including references to readings or lecture material for support, and the number of points you feel you should have received. The dispute should be submitted to me (in my hand or under my door; no emails) along with the original assignment within 1 week after the exam or the date the paper was returned to you. I will consider your case and make any adjustments at my discretion.