



**Stress & Coping Seminar (PSYCH 337)**  
**Fall 2018 Course Syllabus**  
*Thurs 1:30 – 4:00pm, 416 Sharpless Hall*

**Instructor:** Shu-wen Wang, PhD, Assistant Professor  
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**Office:** 410 Sharpless Hall  
**Office Hours:** Thursdays 11:30am-1:30pm and by appointment

**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), common life stressors (e.g., work, interpersonal conflict), and diversity-related stressors (e.g., racism, culture-related). 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.

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. 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 providing equal access to students with a disability. If you have (or think you have) a learning difference or disability – including mental health, medical, or physical impairment, please contact the Office of Access and Disability Services (ADS) at [hc-ads@haverford.edu](mailto:hc-ads@haverford.edu). The Coordinator will confidentially discuss the process to establish reasonable accommodations.

Students who have already been approved to receive academic accommodations and want to use their accommodations in this course should share their verification letter with me and also make arrangements to meet with me as soon as possible to discuss their specific accommodations. Please note that accommodations are **not retroactive** and require advance notice to implement.

It is a state law in Pennsylvania that individuals must be given advance notice if they are to be recorded. Therefore, any student who has a disability-related need to audio record this class must first be approved for this accommodation from the Coordinator of Access and Disability Services and then must speak with me. Other class members will need to be aware that this class may be recorded.

## **Course Requirements**

Grades are determined based on the following course requirements:

1. Weekly Reaction Posts on Moodle	10%
2. Article Presentation	10%
3. Student Topic Group Presentation	20%
4. Stress and Coping Report	25%
5. Research Proposal	25%
6. Attendance and Participation	10%

Total = 100%

- 1) **Weekly Reaction Posts on Moodle (10%):** By **9pm Wed** of every week (Weeks 2-13), you will post a brief reaction (1-2 paragraphs) to that week's readings using Moodle Forum. You should aim for thoughtfulness rather than length. Reactions can be a range of things, but for example, may include putting forth your own hypotheses with supporting rationale, voicing a contradictory argument, commenting on a general theme drawn from multiple readings, or finding a way to apply what you are reading to a real-world problem or situation.
- 2) **Article Presentation (10%):** Each student will be responsible for giving a brief report on an empirical article that they select. The article must be of empirical research (i.e., data were collected and analyzed, article has method and results sections), NOT theoretical or literature review articles. Each student will select an article corresponding to that day's topic by doing a literature search and consulting with me. You will read the article and prepare a formal oral presentation. Please use slides judiciously (no more than 8 slides; 1-2 for introduction/research questions, 1-2 for methods, 2-3 for results, 1 for discussion/implications). The presentation should be brief (~10-12 minutes) and present the study's main hypothesis(es) or research question(s), the methods by which the hypothesis was tested, the main findings, and the implications of the findings. Your emphasis should be on the results and the take-away message, as opposed to the minutia of the methods or the statistics. 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 72 hours (i.e., by Monday 1:30pm) before your scheduled day**. Grades for the presentation are based on how accurately and thoughtfully you presented the information.
- 3) **Student Topic Group Presentation (20%):** The last couple of meetings of the course are reserved for Student Topic presentations. The topics are chosen by the class and presented by groups of 2-4 students. With my help, groups will research the topic, assign a reading, prepare a 20-25 min presentation, and lead discussion. More information will be provided.
- 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 will be provided.
- 5) **Research Proposal (25%):** You will write a 10-12 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. You will also provide and receive feedback from your peers during this iterative writing process. More information will be provided.
- 6) **Attendance and Participation (10%):** This course is designed as a seminar and is largely based on discussion and engagement. Your attendance is expected at every class meeting, and your contribution and energy is critical to the success of the class.

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.’ = textbook chapters)</b>
Wk 1 – 9/6	Course Introduction What is Stress? What is Coping?	#1, #2
Wk 2 – 9/13	Theoretical approaches	Ch1 p. 1-18, #3, #4, #5
Wk 3 – 9/20	Neurobiology of stress	Ch2 p. 19-36, Ch3 p. 37-56, Ch4 p. 57-61, Ch8 p. 144-160
Wk 4 – 9/27	Stress reduction, intervention	Ch18 p. 384-418, #6, #7, #8
Wk 5 – 10/4	Stress, disease, and mental health	Ch8 p.160-185, Ch13 p.252-270, Ch14 p.271-308
Wk 6 – 10/11	Daily and chronic stressors <i>Research Workshop</i>	#9, 10, 11, 12
	<b>STRESS &amp; COPING REPORT DUE FRI 10/12 12 noon</b>	
Wk 7	***** <b>Fall Break – No Class</b> *****	
Wk 8 – 10/25	Diversity and marginalization <i>Form presentation groups – work day</i>	#13, 14, 15, 16
Wk 9 – 11/1	Trauma <i>Guest Speaker?</i>	#17, 18, 19, 20
Wk 10 – 11/8	Personality <i>Peer Review Part 1</i>	Ch15 p.309-334 #21, 22, 23
Wk 11 – 11/15	Gender <i>Presentation groups – work day</i>	#24, 25, 26, 27
Wk 12 –	***** <b>Thanksgiving – No Class</b> *****	
Wk 13 –11/29	Relationships and social support <i>Peer Review Part 2</i>	#28, 29, 30, 31
Wk 14 – 12/6	Student Topics/Presentations	
Wk 15 – 12/13	Student Topics/Presentations	
	<b>FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE FRI 12/21 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)
2	Aldwin, C. M. (2009). <i>Stress, Coping, and Development</i> . NY: The Guilford Press. Chap 3 (Definitions of Stress pp. 23-36)
3	Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1991). Coping and emotion. In A. M. Monat and R. S. Lazarus (Eds.), <i>Stress and Coping: An Anthology</i> (Third Edition), pp. 207-227, NY: Columbia University Press.
4	Aldwin, C. M. (2009)... Chap 7 Theoretical Approaches to Coping pp. 98-126.
5	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.
6	Linnemann, A., Ditzen, B., Stahler, J., Doerr, J. M., & Nater, U. M. Music listening as a means of stress reduction in daily life. <i>Psychoneuroendocrinology</i> , 60, 82-90.
7	Pennebaker, J. W. (1997). Writing about emotional experiences as a therapeutic process. <i>Psychological Science</i> , 8, 162-166.
8	Killingsworth, M. A., & Gilbert, D. T. (2010). A wandering mind is an unhappy mind. <i>Science</i> , 330, 932.
9	Repetti, R. L., Wang, S., & Saxbe, D. (2011). Adult health in the context of everyday life. <i>Annals of Behavioral Medicine</i> , 42(3), 285-293.
10	Marin, T. J., Martin, T. M., Blackwell, E., Stetler, C., & Miller, G. E. (2007). Differentiating the impact of episodic and chronic stressors on hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical axis regulation in young women. <i>Health Psychology</i> , 26(4), 447-455.
11	Robles, T. F., Carroll, J. E., Bai, S., Reynolds, B. M., Esquivel, S., & Repetti, R. L. (2016). Emotions and family interactions in childhood: Associations with leukocyte telomere length. <i>Psychoneuroendocrinology</i> , 63, 343-350.
12	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.
13	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</i> , 40, 208-230.
14	Sue, D. W. et al (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 62, 271-286.
15	Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. <i>Psychological Bulletin</i> , 129, 674-697.
16	Villarosa, L. (2018, April 11). Why America's Black mothers and babies are in a life-or-death crisis. <i>The New York Times</i> .
17	Lott, A. (2016, Sept 20). Understanding Traumatic Stress. <a href="http://www.anxiety.org">www.anxiety.org</a>
18	Kolassa, I, & Elbert, T. (2007). Structural and functional neuroplasticity in relation to traumatic stress. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 16, 321-325.
19	Bonanno, G. A. (2004). Loss, trauma, and resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events? <i>American Psychologist</i> , 59, 20-28.
20	Folkman, S. (1997). Positive psychological states and coping with severe stress. <i>Social Science &amp; Medicine</i> , 45, 1207-1221.
21	Bibbey, A., Carroll, D., Roseboom, T. J., Phillips, A. C., de Rooij, S. R. (2013). Personality and physiological reactions to acute psychological stress. <i>International Journal of Psychophysiology</i> , 90, 28-36.
22	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.
23	Iwanaga, M., Yokoyama, H., & Seiwa, H. (2004). Coping availability and stress reduction for optimistic and pessimistic individuals. <i>Personality and Individual Differences</i> , 36, 11-22.
24	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.

25	Rudolph, K. (2002). Gender differences in emotional responses to interpersonal stress during adolescence. <i>Journal of Adolescent Health, 30</i> , 3-13.
26	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, 79</i> , 353-363.
27	Taylor, S. E. (2006). Tend and befriend: Biobehavioral bases of affiliation under stress. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science, 15</i> , 273-277.
28	Seeman, T. E. (1996). Social ties and health: The benefits of social integration. <i>Annals of Epidemiology, 6</i> (5), 442-451.
29	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.
30	Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K., Loving, T. J., Stowell, J. R., Malarkey, W. B., Lemeshow, S., Dickinson, S. L., & Glaser, R. (2005). Hostile marital interactions, proinflammatory cytokine production, and wound healing. <i>Archives of General Psychiatry, 62</i> , 1377-1384.
31	Parker-Pope, T. (2018, July 10). The Power of positive people: Are your friendships giving you a boost or bringing you down? <i>The New York Times</i> .

### **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). Follow the Haverford College Honor Code and consult the APA Publication Manual.
- 2) **Phone Etiquette:** Please turn off or silence your cell phones. No texting – it is disrespectful and distracting to me and your peers, and I can always tell if you're texting (people don't typically look down at their crotch and smile!).
- 3) **Laptop Etiquette:** Because this is a seminar course, I strongly discourage the use of laptops as they often change the dynamic of our classroom. If you wish to use a laptop, please discuss with me first. I reserve the right to ask you to leave the class if I suspect you are engaging in non-class related activities.
- 4) **Office Hours:** I strongly encourage you to visit me during office hours to ask questions and discuss assignments.
- 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) **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.
- 7) **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.