Course Description and Objectives

This course, Health Psychology, is concerned with the interaction between the mind and the body: how the mind moves (and is moved by) the body. More specifically, the course mainly explores the effects of our thoughts, emotions, behavior as well as social situations and contexts on our (physical) health, and illness. This exciting exploration moves toward responding to such questions: Why do we stay healthy? Why do we become ill? How are such conditions and diseases as pain, obesity, blood pressure, heart disease, and cancer brought about by mental and social (as well as physical) factors? How do we react to illness? What can we do to stay healthy? What can we do to avoid illness? What psychosocial interventions and treatments are available to help us increase our well-being and decrease our sufferings? Clearly, all of these questions involve health promotion and illness prevention directly and indirectly. Therefore, health promotion and illness prevention will have an important place in this course and will be extensively explored and discussed.

The main objective of this course is to help students understand that physical health and illness are driven not only by physical factors but also by psychological and social factors. Through various activities and assignments, students can examine the interactions between the mind and the body in a new way. Of course, most people intuitively know a lot about the games the mind and the body play against and with each other, but in this course, students will be able to look at the interactions in a more conscious and scientific way. Another related leading objective of the course is to help students acknowledge and appreciate the value of applying knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course.

Course Text

ISBN 978-0-786181-0
Course Format

Mondays: Lectures and Student Activities/Participation

Wednesdays: Lectures and Student Activities/Participation

Lectures will cover the assigned textbook, chapter by chapter. Lectures will also bring in material from external sources. So students are expected to be present in class in order to not miss the out-of-the-text-book materials as they may appear on the quiz and/or exam questions. Moreover, students are expected to read each book chapter before class and be ready to respond to possible in-lecture questions – or provide comments.

In-Class Activities and Participation

At the end of each class -- right after each lecture – students will engage in a series of in-class activities individually and/or in groups. The activities will enable students to think and write about, examine, and discuss various topics in health psychology. Twenty points (out of the whole course grade points) will be allocated to these activities. So class participation is important and involves two parts: Part 1) showing such behaviors and attitudes as active listening to the lectures and other students, giving opinion during class discussions, asking questions, and being respectful to others and Part 2) taking part in the class activities and exercises.

Out-of-Class Exercise

An out-of-class hands-on exercise will be presented. This assignment – carrying 10 points out of the whole 100 course grade points – will give students the opportunity to test their health psychological knowledge and receive immediate feedback. Previous experiences indicate that students, in general, like such activities. The instructions appear below:

Heart rate check exercise: Health psychology is a science and uses scientific method to investigate the mind-body relationship. To help student familiarize themselves with the basic knowledge and skills in health psychological research, an assignment in the form of a single case study is presented in which students learn to measure and record their heart rate in a simple device-free fashion -- under various situations. The heart rate measure is an important psychophysiological tool which provides a wide range of information about an individual's physical and psychological health. The information on how to measure heart rate appears in the link below:

http://www.move.va.gov/docs/NewHandouts/PhysicalActivity/P09_HowToTakeYourHeartRate.pdf

During a 10-day period, students will measure and record their heart rate under these situations: a) right after experiencing an emotion such as anger, fear, sadness, happiness, etc, b) during reading (e.g., a book, or newspaper), c) during browsing the internet and/or checking email, d) after a social meeting (e.g., having lunch with at least another person) in the afternoon, and e) before going to bed. Students are expected to calculate the sum, mean, standard deviation and also correlations for all the five events scores at the end of the period. All of these statistical procedures can be carried out by using the UTEP website SPSS app or other resources easily
accessible on the Internet. The final written-up report, presenting the various numerical data and correlations tables, will cover all the story: what happened from the beginning to the end -- in your own words. The report will also reflect a simple interpretation of the observed data. For example: why the correlation between the “social meeting event heart rate” and the “reading event heart rate” is/was negative. The final report will contain at least 1500 words and is due on November 30, 2015. The assignment will be explained in more details during the early weeks of the semester. Finally, if a student can't conduct this assignment for any reasons, she/he can contact me to discuss considering another one.

Course Quizzes and Exams

You will take two random unannounced quizzes, a midterm exam, and a final exam throughout the semester (see Course Assessment below). The quizzes and exams -- which are not cumulative -- consist of multiple-choice items. The exams dates are specified in the course timetable (see below). Each quiz begins at 1:30 pm and takes 15-20 minutes to finish. Note that each question on the quizzes and exams counts one percent towards the final grade. Also, please keep in mind that the possibility of a quiz or exam makeup is zero. If you, for some reason, couldn’t attend a quiz or exam, let me know to deal with it.

Course Assessment

1. Quiz 1 10%
2. Quiz 2 10%
3. Midterm exam 25%
4. Final exam 25%
5. Heart rate check exercise 10%
6. In-class activities 20%

Grading Scale

90% - 100% = A
80% - 89.9% = B
70% - 79.9% = C
60% - 69.9% = D
00% - 59.9% = F

Class Attendance

Class attendance is expected because you can learn better when you are physically present. Also, there will be two random unannounced quizzes throughout the semester (both on Tuesdays and Thursdays). Missing a quiz means losing an influential portion of the final grade.

Classroom Behavior

Please turn off your cell phone on arrival. Don’t talk when others are talking. If you want to ask
a question or make a comment, raise your hand and try not to interrupt others as they speak. Don’t use your computer for irrelevant in-class activities such as emailing, visiting a social network profile, playing games, watching videos, listening to music and so on. These activities prevent you from focusing on lectures and other class engagements and may distract other students.

**Disability**

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass.

**Academic Conduct, Discipline, and Integrity**

It is assumed that students are implicitly aware of the principles of academic conduct, discipline, and integrity. But having an explicit knowledge of the principles will be highly beneficial for anybody working within the realm of academia. The following link provides a wide-range information about academic conduct and discipline at UTEP. Please read the file carefully and enthusiastically:

[http://admin.utep.edu/LinkClick.aspx?link=HOOP-Section+II.pdf&tabid=30181&mid=63285](http://admin.utep.edu/LinkClick.aspx?link=HOOP-Section+II.pdf&tabid=30181&mid=63285)

**Course Timetable**

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**Week 1**

August 24: Introduction and Chapter 1  
August 26: Chapter 1

**Week 2**

August 31: Chapter 2  
September 2: Chapter 2

**Week 3**

**September 7:** No classes  
September 9: Chapter 3

**Week 4**

September 14: Chapter 3
September 16: Chapter 4  
**Week 5**  
September 21: Chapter 4  
September 23: Chapter 5  
**Week 6**  
September 28: Chapter 5  
September 30: Chapter 6  
**Week 7**  
October 5: Chapter 6  
**October 7: Midterm Exam**  
**Week 8**  
October 12: Chapter 7  
October 14: Chapter 7  
**Week 9**  
October 19: Chapter 8  
October 21: Chapter 8  
**Week 10**  
October 26: Chapter 9  
October 28: Chapter 9  
**Week 11**  
November 2: Chapter 10  
November 4: Chapter 10  
**Week 12**  
November 9: Chapter 11  
November 11: Chapter 11
Week 13
November 16: Chapter 12
November 18: Chapter 12

Week 14
November 23: Chapter 13
November 25: Chapter 13

Week 15
November 30: Chapter 14
December 2: Chapter 15

December 9: Final Exam at 4 pm – 6:45 pm

This syllabus is subject to change.