

**The University of Texas at El Paso**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**Health Psychology (PSYC 3350, CRN 22038)**  
**Spring 2023**

**Instructor: Dr. Abdolhossein Abdollahy Zarandi**

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**Office:** Department of Psychology

**Class Days:** Tuesday and Thursday: 6:00 pm – 7:20 pm

**Location:** Liberal Arts Building, Room 318

**Office Hours:** Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm (Please, email me for appointments.)

### **Communication**

In addition to in-class face-to-face communication, students can contact me via email. I will check my email multiple times per day Monday through Friday, and also during weekends. However, please allow 24 hours for a response (48 hours if you send a message Friday evening or during the weekend). Each email you send me should contain a subject line that includes “PSYC 3350”, a proper greeting (i.e., Dear Dr. Abdollahy Zarandi), and your full name. All emails you send me should come from your UTEP email account. Questions regarding the course and its content are expected to be emailed to me at [aabdollahyzarandi@utep.edu](mailto:aabdollahyzarandi@utep.edu). Note: Blackboard has a Course Messages tool, but before using this tool, please try emailing me via [aabdollahyzarandi@utep.edu](mailto:aabdollahyzarandi@utep.edu)

### **Blackboard**

This course will use Blackboard as an additional learning-teaching platform. I will make announcements regarding the course via Blackboard periodically. Please check Blackboard for announcements (by clicking on the link **Announcements**). Blackboard is also a place where you will find some course-related information and materials, for example, the textbook PowerPoint slides files. When, especially for the first time, you visit Blackboard, look at the left side of the screen (the dark menu) to learn about **Announcements**.

### **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. Finally, this course aims to give all students an opportunity to engage in a collaborative oral presentation by selecting a topic and preparing and presenting a speech which will be a significant motivational educational element for each student.

### **Course Text**

**Taylor, Shelley E. (2021). Health Psychology (11th edition). McGraw Hill.**

<https://www.mheducation.com/highered/product/health-psychology-taylor/M9781260253900.html>

### **Course Assignments, Participation, and Activities**

#### **1) Instructor-Facilitated Student Oral Presentations**

Students are expected to give a talk on an assigned book chapter subject. The oral presentation, facilitated by me (Dr. Abdol), may take two forms: Individual presentation or up-to-5-member group presentation. During the initial class meetings, students will be scheduled to give their talk. A **user-friendly rubric** appears below:

1. The inclusion, in the oral presentation, of at least 15 PowerPoint slides (2 points)
2. The inclusion, in the oral presentation, of at least two topic-related short (not more than 3 minutes) video adapted from a valid Internet source (2 points)
3. The inclusion, in the oral presentation, of at least 5 questions to be posed to the audience (2 points)
4. The inclusion, in the oral presentation, of at least 15 questions, ideas, and comments that show the presentation group's disagreement with the content. (2 points)
5. The demonstration of a clear and coherent oral presentation (2 points)

#### **2) In-Class Activities and Participation**

At the end of each class meeting -- 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 cross-cultural psychology.

#### **3) Research Paper**

An out-of-class hands-on exercise will be presented. This assignment -- carrying 5 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](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 is/was the correlation between the “social meeting event heart rate” and the “reading event heart rate” negative? The final report will contain at least 1000 words and is due on **April 30, 2023**. The assignment will be explained in more detail during the early weeks of the semester. Finally, if a student can't conduct this assignment for any reason, she/he can contact me to discuss considering another one.

### **Quizzes and Exams**

You will take, throughout the semester, two quizzes, a midterm exam, and a final exam (see Course Assessment below). The quizzes and exams will mainly consist of multiple choice and each item on the quizzes and exams counts one percent towards the final grade. The quizzes and exams dates are specified in the course schedule (see below). Finally, it is to be noted that the content of the quizzes and exams will come from both the lectures and the textbook chapters.

### **Class Attendance, Participation, and Course Drop**

Class attendance is expected because you can learn better when you are physically present. If a student has more than four unexcused absences throughout the semester, they will lose a possible extra credit opportunity. Also, please note that if you are in a situation in which you need or plan to drop the course, you are expected to do it by yourself. If you don't drop the course, your final grade will be reported based on your available quiz, exam, and participation grade record.

Class participation is important and has its own points as shown below. Class participation involves two parts: Part 1) Showing such behaviors and attitudes as active listening to the lectures and to other students, making comments during class discussions, asking questions, and being respectful to others and Part 2) Taking part in an activity I call “Discussion Group”. In this activity, students are expected to



## **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:

<https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>

### **Course Schedule and Lecture Topics**

#### **Week 1**

**CHAPTER 1: What Is Health Psychology?**

#### **Week 2**

**CHAPTER 2: The Systems of the Body**

#### **Week 3**

**CHAPTER 3: Health Behaviors**

#### **Week 4**

**CHAPTER 4: Health-Promoting Behaviors– Quiz 1**

#### **Week 5**

**CHAPTER 5: Health-Compromising Behaviors**

#### **Week 6**

**CHAPTER 6: Stress**

#### **Week 7**

**CHAPTER 7: Coping, Resilience, and Social Support**

#### **Week 8**

**CHAPTER 8: Using Health Services**

**Thursday: Midterm Exam**

#### **Week 9**

**Spring Break: No Classes**

**Week 10**

**CHAPTER 9: Patients, Providers, and Treatments**

**Week 11**

**CHAPTER 10: The Management of Pain and Discomfort**

**Week 12**

**CHAPTER 11: Management of Chronic Health Disorders**

**Week 13**

**CHAPTER 12: Psychological Issues in Advancing and Terminal Illness **Quiz 2****

**Week 14**

**CHAPTER 13: Heart Disease, Hypertension, Stroke, and Type 2 Diabetes**

**Week 15**

**CHAPTER 14: Psychoneuroimmunology and Immune-Related Disorders**

**Week 16**

**General Review**

**Final Exam: May 11, from 7:00 pm to 9:45 pm**

**This syllabus is subject to change.**