

Human Stress
Spring 2016
Thursday 6:30-9:30 SSH

Instructor:

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Course Overview

Humans experience various types of stressors on a daily basis. We also experience negative life events and traumas which can be either discrete or ongoing (chronic) in nature. Research has indicated that the stressors that people experience – and the way in which individuals respond to these stressors - can have a huge impact on physical, emotional, and psychological health. In this course, we will take an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the way humans experience, adapt and respond to stressful life events, and how these responses contribute to physical health, illness, resiliency and psychopathology.

First, we explore the concept of human stress from a historical perspective. Second, we will examine the psychological and physiological processes which underlie variability in the stress response and explore how these reactions influence our physical health. Third, we will examine the relationship between exposure to stress and trauma and psychopathology. Fourth, we will examine stress responses within the context of interactions with others and society. Fifth, we will examine “myths of coping” with stressful life events and will conclude with an overview of interventions used to reduce the potential negative consequences of stressful events.

It is my expectation that students will complete all readings prior to each class session. If you would like to get a great experience and a good grade in this class, it is not enough to attend lectures only or to do the readings only.

Overview of Course Requirements

There will be two exams (a midterm and final). You will be given a study guide approximately one week before the exam. We will offer two review sessions per exam to accommodate varying schedules. You will also complete a short paper based on a stress log that you will complete for a period of 10 days during the quarter. (Requirements listed at the end of the syllabus)

Attendance is mandatory and will be accounted for by iClicker participation and other in-class activities. You must be present for 100% of the activities on a given day to receive credit.

Allocation of Course Points

Midterm	100
Final	100
Paper	80
Participation (I-clicker)	20

Total Points 300

Grade	Percent	Points	Grade	Percent	Points
A	93-100	279-300	C	73-76	219-230
A-	90-92	270-278	C-	70-72	210-218
B+	87-89	261-269	D+	67-69	201-209
B	83-86	249-260	D	63-66	189-200
B-	80-82	240-248	D-	60-62	180-188
C+	77-79	231-239	F	<60	<180

Extra Credit

To improve your grade, you have the opportunity to earn up to 8 extra credit points by writing a book review (approximately 3-4 pages) of a personal account of a traumatic or stressful life event. In this book review, you should summarize the author's experience, their physiological and psychological responses, and how their story applies to course concepts (e.g., Myths of Coping, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Depression). More information on the Extra Credit assignment is available on the course website. Extra credit must be completed by **June 2nd at 6:30pm** (beginning of last class). No exceptions will be made so please plan accordingly.

Recommended books:

Wave by Sonali Deraniyagala

A House in the Sky by Amanda Lindhout and Sara Corbett

RAMJET: My Secret Life With PTSD by Roger Blake

If you have a book that is not listed above, you are welcome to send Dr. Garfin the name of the book, author, and Amazon link to approve if appropriate.

Course Outline

Date	Topic	Sapolsky Readings	Supplementary Readings
History & Concepts of Stress			
March 31	Course Overview Historical perspective Methods of assessment	Chapter 1	Sarafino, E.P. (2008). <i>Health Psychology (6th ed.)</i> . Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. pp. 61-85.
April 7	Appraisals and Coping Personality & Individual Differences	Chapter 13 Chapter 15 Chapter 16	
Physiological & Psychological Responses			
April 14	Physiology of Stress Autonomic nervous system, endocrine system, cardiovascular and neuroendocrine reactivity	Chapter 2 Chapter 3	
April 21	Psychoneuroimmunology Stress & physical diseases	Chapter 8 Chapter 5	Cohen, S. (1996). Psychological stress, immunity, and upper respiratory infections. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 5(3), 86-90.
April 28	Early negative life events Biological Embedding Socioeconomic status	Chapter 6 Chapter 17	Adler, N. E., & Snibbe, A. C. (2003). The role of psychosocial processes in explaining the gradient between socioeconomic status and health. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 12(4), 119-123. Chen, E. (2004). Why socioeconomic status affects the health of children. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 13(3), 112-115.
May 5	Midterm Exam Guest speaker – Oree Freeman from the Orangewood Foundation		
Societal & Social Stressors			
May 12	Acute stress disorder, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder	Chapter 14	Ozer, E. J. & Weiss, D. S. (2004). Who develops posttraumatic stress

	Epidemiology & consequence of trauma Depression		disorder? <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 13(4), 169-172.
May 19	Myths of Coping Terrorism, Disaster Resilience, Culture Social Support		Helmarath, T.A., M.S.W. (1978). Death of an infant: Parental grieving and the failure of social support. <i>The Journal of Family Practice</i> , 6, 785-790. Bonanno, G. A. (2004). Loss, trauma, and human resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events? <i>American Psychologist</i> , 59, 20-28.
Stress, Daily Life, & How to Deal			
May 26	Sleep Memory	Chapter 10 Chapter 11	
June 2	Interventions – Support groups, community based interventions, complementary/alternati ve medicine, cognitive behavioral therapy, meditation	Chapter 18	Creswell, J. D., & Lindsay, E. K. (2014). How does mindfulness training affect health? A mindfulness stress buffering account. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 23(6), 401-407. Spiegel, D. & Kimerling, R. (2001). Group psychotherapy for women with breast cancer: Relationships among social support, emotional expression, and survival. In C. D. Ryff & B. H. Singer (Eds.), <i>Emotion, Social Relationships, and Health</i> (pp. 97-123). New York: Oxford University Press.
FINAL: June 9 th , 2016 6:30pm (will be confirmed by Registrar later this quarter)			

Note: The Sapolsky chapters refer to the *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers* textbook. All other readings are posted on the course website.

Required Course Readings

REQUIRED READINGS

To get the most out of the lectures, all readings should be completed prior to the class for which they have been assigned.

Textbook

Sapolsky, R. M. (2004). *Why zebras don't get ulcers: The acclaimed guide to stress, stress-related diseases, and coping (3rd edition)*. New York: W. H. Freeman & Company. ISBN: 0-8050-7369-8.

The Sapolsky book is a highly readable, interesting, and informative account of how stress influences the body. The book can be purchased at the University Bookstore, or through most online retailers and bookstores (Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, etc.). Please be sure to buy the 3rd edition (published in 2004). A copy of the book will also be placed on reserve at the Langson Library.

There is a "Notes" section at the end of the book that contains interesting and useful information pertaining to each chapter. I encourage you to read the notes!

Additional Required Readings

Additional readings are also posted on the course website. Please see the course schedule for a list of when each reading is due.

EXAMS

There will be 2 exams: a midterm and a final. The exams will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer. The final exam will emphasize the material covered during the second half of the course, but it will require knowledge and an understanding of the concepts from the first half of the course as well. Make-up exams will only be administered in the case of documented emergencies or illnesses. In these cases, the student must contact Dr. Garfin before the exam takes place. **Proof of the emergency or illness is required.**

PAPER

There will be one paper, due on **May 19th at 6:30pm** (beginning of class). **Late papers will not be accepted and will be assigned a grade of zero.** You must turn in a hard copy of your paper to me; papers submitted via email will not be accepted. The last several pages of the syllabus provide additional information regarding the paper assignment.

POLICIES

Cheating/Plagiarism

The academic code is published in the undergraduate course catalogue and is available online at: http://www.senate.uci.edu/senateweb/9_IrvineManual/3ASMAppendices/Appendix08.html. The code outlines proscribed conduct with regard to cheating and plagiarism. Any student who cheats and/or plagiarizes on the tests, paper, or extra credit will receive an F in the course and will not be permitted to withdraw. Please see the UCI course catalogue for a definition of cheating and a summary of further disciplinary actions that may be taken. In addition, students agree that by taking this course all required and/or extra credit papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy agreement posted on the Turnitin.com website.

Add/Drop and Incompletes

Adding or dropping this class is possible via WebReg. It is your responsibility to make sure you complete any adding or dropping of courses by the appropriate deadline. Incompletes will not be given in this course except under extremely rare circumstances that require documentation and adherence to University policies.

Disability Statement

If you have a documented disability that requires assistance, you will need to go to the Disability Services Center (DSC) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The DSC phone number is (949) 824-7494 /TDD (949) 924-6272 or you can visit their website at www.disability.uci.edu. For a detailed description of their policies and procedures, please visit: http://www.disability.uci.edu/policies_procedures/testing_accomodations.pdf. Please notify us as soon as possible if you plan to use these services.

CLASS ETIQUETTE

Please be courteous to others and arrive to class on time. Late arrivals, early departures, cell phones, and “quiet conversations” are distracting and noticeable throughout the classroom. Students must turn off cell phones during class as well as any other electronic device that may ring or otherwise disrupt class.

CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR AND TAs

Email is the most effective way to contact us! To ensure that your message is read promptly and is not filtered, please put the course name and/or number in the subject line of your message. ***Do not reply to class emails sent to everyone!*** You can generally expect to receive responses to your email inquiries **within 24 hours during the week, and 48 hours on the weekend**. You must have an active UCI email account to participate in this course. We will also use email to make announcements about the course as well as to correspond with you individually. We will reply to emails from non-UCI accounts, but course announcements made over email will be sent to your UCI email address, so please check this account regularly.

Email Etiquette

All emails but include a salutation at the beginning of your email (e.g., “Hi Sarah” or “Dear Dr. Garfin”) and a closing at the end (e.g., “Thank you, Sarah” or “Best, Lauren). College is a place where you can hone your skills and learn how to interact with others professionally. As such, please try to refrain from using text message acronyms (“btw”, “lmk”) whenever possible in your emails to Dr. Garfin or the Teaching Assistants.

Paper Assignment
Human Stress
Spring, 2016

DUE May 19th 6:30pm in *HARD COPY & uploaded on Turnitin.com*

Purpose: This project is designed to further your understanding of how daily stressors play a role in your own life and how you cope with stressors. The stressor awareness log serves three important goals:

1. To help you familiarize yourself with how you respond to stressors,
2. To help you consider how stressors are related to symptoms you might have, and
3. To help you integrate the theories and research discussed in class to your own experiences.

Please complete the log for a 10-day period.

Recording Instructions: Create a sheet recording any event that causes you to feel “stress.” It is important that you maintain your diary conscientiously if you want it to be helpful to you. Please record the following information for each stressful event experienced:

Day and date: Record the day and date (e.g., Monday, April 02, 2016)

Time of day: Record the time of day that the stressor occurs (e.g., 12:00 PM)

Stressor: Record what caused the stress. What was the stressor? (e.g., traffic, running late, exam, interpersonal conflict, work overload, etc.). What were its properties? (e.g., controllable, social, etc.)

Stress responses: Record any responses to the stressor, and how long you felt this way. You should note any manifestations, signs, symptoms, or reactions to the stressor, which could include:

- Physical signals (e.g., headache, muscle tension, perspiration, rapid heart rate, stomachaches)
- Mental signals (e.g., loss of attention, poor concentration, impaired judgment)
- Positive or negative emotions (e.g., sadness, anger, shame, happiness)

Coping strategies: Record the coping techniques or mechanisms, if any, that you used to deal with the stressor. These could include:

- Behavioral strategies (e.g., increased smoking, eating too much/not enough, sleeping too much/not enough)
- Social strategies (e.g., seeking out the advice/support of others, picking fights/criticizing others)
- Actions taken (e.g., did you confront the stressor, avoid it, etc.)

How effective have I been? This section would include whether or not you were able to resolve the stressor in a satisfactory way. Were the strategies you used helpful or effective?

After completing your stress log for 10 days, you should write a paper which includes the following:

You should discuss the **frequency and types of stressors** you experienced (e.g., How many days did you experience stressors? Did you experience multiple stressors on any days? Were your stressors related or independent of each other?). You should describe some of the stressful experiences you had; including their properties (e.g., was the stressor uncontrollable, social, etc.?). You should also discuss your **responses to the stressors**. For example, you might want to talk about the signals or symptoms that you experienced following a stressor, and whether these were prevalent or consistent. What were your emotional responses to the stressors? You will want to discuss this in detail, for example, did certain stressors elicit different responses (e.g., did fights with your roommate elicit certain emotions, while being late for class elicited other emotions?). Can you determine any patterns for certain categories of stressors eliciting specific responses? You should also discuss the **strategies you used to deal with or manage the stressors**, in terms of the types of coping you engaged in and whether these were effective. Is there anything you could have done to cope better, or to avoid or lessen the impact of the stressors? Finally, you should talk about **what you learned** from completing the assignment. Based on class lectures and readings, were there things that you expected and found? Were there things that surprised you?

Your paper should not just be a repeat of your log – the goal is to take a step back and analyze your experiences using course material. ***The most important component of the paper is careful and thorough integration of theories and research presented in the readings and lectures!!*** The readings on appraisals and coping will be especially relevant for this assignment. Feel free to draw on outside materials (e.g., research articles, etc.) as well. Your paper should be 5 double-spaced pages in length (Times New Roman 12-point font, 1-inch margins). You should be sure and address the topics above in your paper; please use a narrative format and include an introduction and conclusion in your paper. ***Please staple your stress log to your paper and turn them in together.***

A note on grading:

You can have wonderful ideas in a poorly written paper. These will be lost in your presentation. You can have a beautifully written paper that is empty and without original thought. Your final grade will reflect both writing style and content. Please use the following to get an idea of what we expect for A, B, C, and D papers:

A: Paper is logical, clear, nicely written and presented. Proofing and spellchecking are done. Ideas are well-developed and thought out. Course material is well-integrated, applied correctly, and referred to frequently.

B: Some minor problems with writing and proofing (e.g., spelling, grammar, outline) occur. Ideas are sometimes well-developed, although sometimes superficial or vague. Course material is applied in a less critical way that communicates a more superficial understanding.

C: Some major problems with writing and proofing (e.g., spelling, grammar, outline) occur. Ideas are often superficial, vague and poorly developed. Course material is rarely integrated or is integrated inappropriately.

D: Outline is very weak or nonexistent. Significant problems with writing or proofing are present. There are few ties to course materials.