

PSY D33H3S (Sec 31)- Stress & Coping

Course Outline (Winter 2010)

Class Meets: Wednesdays, 7-9pm

(Classroom HW308)

Instructor: Anna Nagy (a.nagy@utoronto.ca)

Office: SW415

Home page: Blackboard ('The Portal')

Office Hours: Wednesdays from 6-7 (other hours by appt)

*******Please check the PSY D33 Blackboard page on a regular basis for important announcements*******

Pre-requisites—

Readings: Reading packages will be available at the UTSC Bookstore.

Note: Supplemental readings may be posted on Blackboard.

Course Description: This course provides an evidence-based overview of stress, its potential impact on health, and various coping techniques. A critical review of prevalent theories and application of concepts will provide students with an understanding of how stress is operationalized from biological, psychological, and integrative perspectives; the practical implications of these models will also be discussed. Ultimately, students will come to understand the complexity of the individual stress response, and become aware of various techniques known to mitigate potential harmful effects of chronic reactivity.

Learning Objectives: Upon completion of this course (includes class attendance, participation in exercises, readings, and assignments), students will be able to describe and discuss the prevalent models of stress; the physical and psychological consequences of stress; aspects contributing to individual differences in the stress response; and, factors and techniques of successful stress management. Critical interpretation of research is demonstrated and encouraged through class examples and discussion. Application of concepts is also supported through the completion of the major writing assignment.

Grading: Your final grade will be based on a final term paper (25%), one short written assignment (thought paper) (10%), a classroom presentation (15%), a final examination (35%), and weekly participation (15%). The final exam will consist of two comprehensive long essay questions; possible topics will be announced ahead of time so that you may adequately prepare (you will be given several topics to prepare for—two questions will be drawn at the exam). The date for the final examination will be arranged by the Registrar and held during the official exam period.

Thought Paper: Please submit a 1-2 page (max!) thought paper on a topic of your choice (on an issue covered in class, or on an issue that stems from something discussed in class). Select an issue that struck you, or that is particularly meaningful and present an argument around it. You do not need to use outside sources, although you may do so if you wish.

The assignment is **due March 10**, although I encourage you to hand it in earlier. They will be accepted anytime after February 3rd.

Final Assignment: You have two choices for the final assignment:

1. Prepare a 12-15 page research review paper on a topic of your choice. The starting point of the paper should be based on research question relevant to the study of stress or trauma and its effects, or on coping techniques. Your task is to research the topic more fully, and to write a paper that contains a valid argument relating to the issue of interest. The paper must include at least ten references; all must be peer-reviewed journal articles. You may include additional references that are books or review papers, however, please be sure that the majority of your work is based on empirical studies. The format of the paper should conform to APA style. A detailed overview of the marking scheme and requirements for the paper will be posted on the course webpage closer to the deadline. This information is detailed and will be a helpful reference. It is expected that assignments will be handed in on the due date, unless prior appropriate arrangements have been made with your instructor. Late assignments will result in a loss of 4% of the total score for the paper per day. In other words, please hand them in on time😊!

2. Prepare a stress reduction manual. The stress reduction manual should first explore the stressors experienced by a particular group of people, briefly reviewing the relevant research and incorporating appropriate theoretical perspectives. Thus, an appropriate context is required. Some examples of specific populations you might focus on include:

- different age group or generation (e.g. elderly or very young);
- specific careers (e.g. teachers, police officers, nurses, coaches, other health care workers);
- particular sectors of society (e.g. first year university students, competitive athletes, recreational exercisers);
- marginalized groups (e.g. First Nations, immigrants, specific ethnic groups, gender-based, or sexual orientation based).
- health issues (e.g. those suffering from a psychological disorder such as depression or anxiety; cancer victims; trauma victims)

Then, drawing from the literature to ensure that your methods are efficacious, design an additional section of the manual that the particular group can use to reduce stress (note: you may integrate the two sections throughout the manual if you feel this is more appropriate). Remember, you are writing the manual to

inform a target group, so use language that is appropriate. Be sure to incorporate evidence-based practice, and practice that is consistent with your explanation of stress (make sure to reference throughout). For example, you wouldn't explain stress as being purely physiological in nature, and then suggest a purely cognitive intervention. In sum, think critically, and apply both relevant theory and intervention practice.

Attach to the project a brief two-three page (max!) overview that explicitly addresses the relevancy of the theoretical perspective(s) you have chosen and the evidence supporting the efficacy of your intervention(s) from an academic perspective. Make sure your manual and overview are referenced using APA style.

Overall, this is your chance to be creative! You may incorporate photographs, diagrams, videos, exercises, and/or any other addendums to enhance your project. However, all work must be properly referenced, acknowledging all sources of information; and, your manual must incorporate relevant research showing your methods to be effective. You must incorporate a minimum of ten references, all of which must be peer reviewed journal articles. Additional references may be drawn from edited books and review papers. Moreover, please be mindful of copyright rules and regulations. Do not incorporate anything copyrighted into your manual without explicit permission from the owner(s) of the material.

General Assignment Information:

A detailed overview of the marking scheme, requirements for the assignment, and project proposal form will be posted on the course webpage. This information will be a helpful reference. Please submit the project proposal form to me by February 10th. **Projects are due on the last day of class (Wednesday, March 31st).**

It is expected that assignments will be handed in on the due date (in class), unless prior appropriate arrangements have been made with the instructor. Late assignments will result in a loss of 4% of the total score for the paper per day. In other words, please hand them in on time☺!

Academic Integrity: Please see <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize> for guidelines on how not to plagiarize. It is expected that all sources of ideas and information will be properly acknowledged. See also: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/documentation> ; scroll down to 'APA style guide'

Note: Adherence to the Student Code of Conduct and the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters will be strictly enforced in this course.

Group Presentation: Students will be expected to participate in one group presentation, with one or two classmates during the last few weeks of class. This is an

opportunity to be creative and to have some fun, as well as to improve your presentation skills! Students will select a topic relevant to stress and coping (readings should not have been specifically covered in a previous class, although you may build on a topic), and present on the topic for 30 minutes (research to be conducted within the last 5 years). Your task is to introduce your classmates to new research, and to engage them in discussion. For example, you may want to prepare a set of discussion questions ahead of time, and introduce appropriate and relevant real-life examples. The presentation should include interactive components that demonstrate an application of the concepts. You may use audio-visual material, debates, games, group-work, or other creative endeavours to make the material more interesting. Please check with your instructor a week prior to your presentation for additional help and resources. More information will be provided once classes begin.

Lecture Notes: Much of the material will be presented in the form of interactive class exercises and discussions, so attendance is important to do well in this course. Please read the corresponding assigned readings prior to class each week. When used, powerpoint slides will be posted.

Office Hours: See above for hours and location. If you have any questions, or are having difficulty with the course material, please come and see me during office hours. You may also e-mail me with any questions.

Good luck and welcome to Psy D33 😊!

COURSE OUTLINE (Tentative—Subject to Change)

Week of:	Topic
Jan 6	Introduction; What is Stress?
Jan 13	The Emotional & Intellectual Basis of Stress
Jan 20	The Social Basis of Stress (Conservation of Resources)
Jan 27	Physiological Basis of Stress Hormones & Behaviour/Neurobiology Allostatic Load
	Stress and Health Immune Function Cardiovascular System
Feb 3	Stress and Health (con't) Mental Health/Psychopathology
Feb 10	Mind-Body Connection
Feb 17	Reading week—no class!!
Feb 24	Children and Stress (epi-genetics)
March 3	Trauma (PTSD)
March 10	Occupational (work) stress (Burnout)
March 17	Stress Mgt/Coping Strategies: Rethinking/Reframing Student Presentations
March 24	Stress Mgt/Coping Strategies: Social Support Student Presentations
March 31	Stress Mgt/Coping Strategies: Physical Interventions (exercise, yoga, nutrition) Stress Mgt/Coping Strategies: Reducing/Organization/Time Mgt Student Presentations

Projects are due March 31st in class!

(See Reading List for weekly assigned readings)

Reminder: Please check Blackboard weekly for important announcements!

Note: Exam will cover material from both discussion and readings.