

# **PSY D33H3S (Lec 02)- Stress and Mental Health**

## ***Course Outline (Summer 2018)***

*Class Meets: Tuesdays, 1500-1700hrs*

*(Classroom SW 316)*

***Instructor: Anna Nagy ([a.nagy@utoronto.ca](mailto:a.nagy@utoronto.ca))***

***Office:*** Portable 0103, Rm 123

***Home page:*** Blackboard ("The Portal")

***Office Hours:*** Tuesdays 1400-1500 hrs

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

***Pre-requisites—***

***Readings:*** Course readings will be drawn from scholarly literature, and other peer reviewed sources. A reading list (with links to online resources) will be posted on the blackboard course page for Psy D33.

**(Please note that this is a seminar class that entails active participation, and critical discussion around the course material. As such, it is essential that readings be completed PRIOR to coming to class each week.)**

***Course Description:*** This course provides an evidence-based overview of the concepts of “stress” and “trauma”, and their complex relationship with mental health and various psychological disorders. A critical review of prevalent theories and application of concepts will provide students with an understanding of how stress and trauma are operationalized from neurobiological, psychological, and integrative perspectives; and, how they may affect risk and severity of mental illness. Ultimately, students will come to understand the complexity of the individual stress response, and explore the importance of adopting a holistic perspective when considering prevention and treatment in vulnerable children and adults.

***Learning Objectives:*** Upon completion of this course (includes class attendance, participation in exercises, readings, and assignments), students will be able to explain and integrate the contributions of the various models of stress and trauma; describe how genes and environment interact to enhance risk to mental illness; and, explore the complex relationships between stress, trauma, and various psychological disorders. 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 critical review paper (25%), review paper outline (5%), one short written assignment (thought paper) (10%), a classroom presentation (15%), a final examination (35%), and weekly participation (10%). 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—three questions will be drawn at the exam, and you will choose two). The date for the final examination will be arranged by the Registrar and held during the official exam period.

**Thought Paper:** Please submit a 2 page (max!) thought paper on a topic of your choice (on an issue covered in class; or, on an issue that appears in popular media relevant to stress and health). Select a topic that struck you in some way, or that is particularly meaningful, and present an argument around it—supporting your premises with evidence from a minimum of two peer reviewed articles. See instructions on blackboard for further information.

**The thought paper assignment is due June 5<sup>th</sup> in class.**

***Final Assignment:***

**Prepare a 10-12 page critical 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 on mental health. Your task is to research the topic more fully, and to critically evaluate the literature that exists in response to your question, formulating a clear “take home message”. The paper must include approximately 15 references (12-20); all must be peer-reviewed primary journal articles. You may include additional references that are books or review papers (including meta-analyses); 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☺!

**The outline for the final assignment is due June 26<sup>th</sup> in class.  
The final assignment is due July 24<sup>th</sup> in class .**

**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'

**“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site”.**

Please submit an electronic copy of your papers to turnitin, and a hard copy to your instructor.

***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 three to four other classmates. This is an opportunity to be creative, and to improve your presentation skills! Students will present material to bring to life the course readings, adding/introducing at least two additional peer reviewed articles (of your choice) to the assigned literature. Your task is to introduce your classmates to the topic, and to the literature, and to engage them in discussion. One way to do this might be to provide a relevant case study drawn from the internet or other sources, and to apply the academic material you present to the clinical case (bring the case to life in some way, and engage the class in debate/discussion on the topic).

Overall, 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 note that an outline of your talk is due two weeks prior to your presentation, so that feedback, additional help and resources, may be provided, and to ensure that your presentation plan is suitable (assistance is gladly provided). More information will be shared 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.

**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.

***Missed Term Work due to Medical Illness or Other Emergency:***

All students citing a documented reason for missed term work must bring their documentation to the Psychology Course Coordinator in SW427C **within three (3) business days** of the assignment due date. You must bring the following:

- (1.) A completed Request for Missed Term Work form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), and
- (2.) Appropriate documentation to verify your illness or emergency, as described below.

Appropriate Documentation:

For missed **TERM TESTS** due to ILLNESS:

- Submit an **original** copy of the official UTSC Verification of Illness Form (<http://uoft.me/UTSC-Verification-Of-Illness-Form>) or an **original** copy of the record of visitation to a hospital emergency room. Forms are to be completed in full, clearly indicating the start date, anticipated end date, and severity of illness. The physician's registration number and business stamp are required.

For missed **ASSIGNMENTS** due to ILLNESS:

- Submit **both** (1.) a **hardcopy** of the Self-Declaration of Student Illness Form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-self-declare-form>), and (2.) the **web-based** departmental declaration form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-self-declare-web>).

For missed term tests or assignments in OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES:

- In the case of a **death of a family member**, a copy of a death certificate should be provided.
- In the case of a **disability-related concern**, an email from your Disability Consultant at AccessAbility Services should be sent directly to both the Course Coordinator ([psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca)) and your instructor, detailing the accommodations required.
- For U of T Varsity **athletic commitments**, an email from your coach or varsity administrator should be sent directly to the Course Coordinator ([psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca)), detailing the dates and nature of the commitment. The email should be sent **well in advance** of the missed work.

Documents covering the following situations are **NOT acceptable**: medical prescriptions, personal travel, weddings, or personal/work commitments.

Procedure:

Submit your (1.) [request form](#) and (2.) [medical/self-declaration](#)/other documents in person **WITHIN 3 BUSINESS DAYS** of the missed term test or assignment.

**Submit to:** Course Coordinator, Room SW427C, Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 4 PM

If you are unable to meet this deadline for some reason, you must contact the Course Coordinator via email ([psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca)) within the three business day window. Exceptions to the documentation deadline will only be made under exceptional circumstances.

Within approximately one week, you will receive an email response from the Course Instructor / Course Coordinator detailing the accommodations to be made (if any). You are responsible for checking your official U of T email and Blackboard/Quercus course announcements daily, as accommodations may be time-critical.

Completion of this form does NOT guarantee that accommodations will be made. The course instructor reserves the right to decide what accommodations (if any) will be made. **Failure to adhere to any aspect of this policy may result in a denial of your request for accommodation.**

Note that this policy applies only to missed assignments and term tests. Missed final exams are handled by the Registrar's Office (<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/registrar/missing-examination>).

### **COURSE OUTLINE (Tentative—Subject to Change)**

<b>Week of:</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<b>May 8</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>May 15</b> <b>of Stress</b>	<b>History of the Stress Concept; The Emotional &amp; Cognitive Basis of Stress</b>
<b>May 22</b>	<b>Social determinants of mental health; Intro to neurobiology of stress</b>
<b>May 29</b>	<b>Neurobiology of Stress Stress and Health</b>

**June 5      Pre-Natal Stress and Mental Health  
Thought paper due**

**June 12    Toxic childhood stress and mental health**

**June 19    READING WEEK—NO CLASS!**

**June 26    Genes and Epigenetics  
Outline for Critical Research Review Paper due**

**July 3      Mood Disorders**

**July 10    Trauma, and PTSD**

**July 17    Schizophrenia**

**July 24    Treatments and Prevention  
Final Research Review Paper due**

**July 31    Implications for Policy (prevention)**

**(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.**