

PSYC73: Wellness and Resilience Laboratory

Fall 2024

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Class time and location:

Mondays 1-3 pm KW262

Course Objective:

The university experience is both an exciting and stressful time for everyone. The increased freedom and independence can be daunting, leading many students to struggle in new ways or with emotions that seem to have increased in intensity. Conversely, research has shown that individuals who develop and use mental health and wellness strategies are more likely to be effective in their job roles, involved in strong relationships, physically and mentally healthy, and satisfied with their lives overall. The purpose of this course is to teach strategies for having resilience in the face of commonly experienced stressors and difficulties in order to help you live a happy, fulfilling, and successful life (in other words, *thrive*), as well as provide basic skills training for those interested in a career in mental health and wellness. This course will provide you with a set of strategies and skills for self-care and optimize your academic and social experiences while at the University of Toronto Scarborough and beyond. Utilizing lectures, readings, videos, discussion forums, practice exercises, group work and coaching, we aim to assist and encourage you in meeting the learning outcomes while developing your more resilient and skillful self.

Learning Outcomes:

- Directly practice a variety of mental health and wellness skills, habits, and routines that are focused on the goals of minimizing stress and optimizing well-being.
- Describe why intentionally 'practicing' these skills is critical to developing the fluency to use and reap the benefits from them, as well as teach these skills to others.
- Develop a resilience toolbox of skills and strategies that serves as the vehicle on your roadmap for your future, both in terms of personal development and careers in the clinical psychology/mental health workforce.

COURSE LOGISTICS

Quercus:

This course uses the University's learning management system, Quercus, to post information about the course. This includes posting materials required to complete class activities and course assignments, as well as sharing important announcements and updates. The site is dynamic and new information and resources will be posted regularly as we move through the term, so please make it a habit to log in to the site on a regular, even daily, basis. To access the course website, go to the U of T Quercus log-in page at <https://q.utoronto.ca>. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, you should see the link or "card" for Wellness and Resiliency Lab: PSYC73. You may need to scroll through other cards to find this. Click on the Wellness and Resiliency Lab: PSYC73 link to open our course area, view the latest announcements and access your course resources. There are Quercus help guides for students that you can access by clicking on the "?" icon in the left side column.

All assignments, deadlines, and important announcements are found on Quercus.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT GRADES POSTED ONLINE: Please also note that any grades posted are for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, including any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved and posted on ACORN at the end of the course. You may contact me if you think there is an error in any grade posted on Quercus.

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10-11 beginning September 11 2024

Office hours are conducted in drop-in format through Zoom for the entirety of the semester (please use link below). You will be held in the waiting room until it is your turn to speak to the professor. Office hours should be used exclusively for course-related matters. Additional office hours can be made by appointment if the student has a work, personal, or class-related conflict at the normal time. Remotely attending office hours requires the student to participate from a location offering reasonable privacy and noise level. Students should turn on their camera and microphone and their Zoom name must reflect their preferred name plus last name.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/81870971217>

Meeting ID: 818 7097 1217

Passcode: Wellness

Our TA, Katie Vandelloo, will have office hours on Tuesdays from 10-11am

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/7805113781>

Meeting ID: 780 511 3781

Behavioural Expectations

Students, the teaching assistant, and the professor is expected to be on time (by 10 minutes past the hour), pay attention, do not use your cell phone, or use your computer for non-class activities (e.g., Netflix, emails). This is a laboratory class – while it is not a “traditional” lab like you might see in a chemistry or neuroscience course, consider you and your classmates as both the experimenters and experiments! Together we will test out and practice different skills, so your attention, maturity, and respect are vital to everyone having an enjoyable and fruitful lab experience.

Trigger Warning and Mental Health Subject Matter

While we will discuss and practice emotion, mental health, and wellness skills and strategies, this course is not a therapeutic intervention. Class time and office hours are not to be used to discuss personal mental

teaching assistant will provide mental health advice and will instead refer the student to the Health and Wellness Centre on campus.

That being said, our discussions will often touch on difficult emotions, experiences, and behaviours. Students will be expected to write about and/or share personal experiences as part of the class. Some of the assignments and/or experiential exercises may be triggering to some students. Feel free to review the syllabus and reach out to the professor for ways to approach the class in a healthy way. Please note that there are multiple resources offered to students, including several via the Health and Wellness Centre (<https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/hwc/>), as well as external services like helplines: Distress Centre (416-408-HELP), Good2Talk (866-925-5454). In addition, if you are currently experiencing a physical or mental health issue that will significantly interfere with your ability to participate in this class, you should seek out *AccessAbility* consultations as soon as possible so your grade is not affected.

Assignments and Marking Schemes

See Late and Missed Work and Absence Policy below for further information

Class Participation: (5% of final grade)

Students are expected to attend every class. Remember, this is a lab course and you must be present to participate in experiential learning. Note, you are responsible for reviewing class materials, completing the homework, and obtaining notes from a classmate if you cannot attend class for any reason, including excused absences.

There will be an in-class participation assignment each week. They are to be done in-class only. If you miss class, there will be no opportunity to make up these points.

Weekly Homework: Due each Sunday by 11:59pm (25% of final grade)

Homework assignments consist of a 2-3 page reflection (double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins) that will differ each week and will generally include the following key components: 1) Skills Practice Reflection; 2) Lecture and Reading Reflection.

Gratitude Practice: Due each Monday by 9am (5% of final grade)

Gratitude practice is an important element in building resilience and encouraging positive emotions. Each week students will post 3-6 sentences on the designated Discussion Board on Quercus detailing three things (items, people, events) that they are grateful for. They can also include ways they are practicing gratitude. Students are encouraged to read other students post and comment, as well as gain inspiration from others' ideas. Students will be assigned 1 (submitted late, criteria not fully satisfied), 2 (criteria not fully satisfied OR submitted late, criteria satisfied), or 3 (criteria satisfied) points per attended class.

Class Project: Due November 26th by 11:59pm (25% of final grade)

Students will be placed in groups of 3-5 at the beginning of the course. Groups will decide on a wellness/resiliency topic relevant to postsecondary mental health to explore over the subsequent 8 weeks. Topics might include difficulties faced by international students, stress associated with co-op program, managing finances, sleep hygiene, transitions from high school to university, and navigating the mental health system. Students will collaboratively decide on a topic and submit it for approval. There are two primary objectives to this project: 1) review relevant literature around the chosen topic and 2) select a specific skill or technique that would be valuable for other postsecondary students. Student groups will be expected to collaboratively make a powerpoint slide deck reviewing the relevant research and then describing the specific skill or technique. This presentation will be done on zoom and recorded (not presented in class), and then submitted via Quercus.

Final Exam: (40% of final grade)

There will be a comprehensive exam during finals week. This will include 50 multiple-choice and true/false questions. This will be a two-hour test covering lecture material, weekly readings, and videos.

Course Details

	Topic	Date
Week 1	Introduction to Mental Health and Wellness Lab <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course goals and class requirements • Define class-relevant terms 	September 9
Week 2	Awareness through Mindfulness-Based Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits of mindfulness 	September 16
Week 3	Values Clarification and Commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What matters most to you • How to live within your values 	September 23
Week 4	Habits, Willpower, and Distress Tolerance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to withstand difficult experiences • How to be healthy and kind to yourself 	September 30
Week 5	Reality Acceptance Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratitude 	October 7
	No class October 14 (Thanksgiving)	
Week 6	Choosing your Attention and Practicing Gratitude <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending to positive aspects of life 	October 21
	READING WEEK (No class October 28)	
Week 7	Model of Emotion: Identifying Targets for Interventions and Cultivating Positive Emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing vulnerability to negative emotions 	November 4
Week 8	Identifying Unhelpful Thoughts and Changing them to Helpful Thoughts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive restructuring 	November 11
Week 9	Managing Intense Negative Emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research-based strategies to reduce the intensity of negative emotions 	November 18
Week 10	Developing Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking for something you need • Building relationships • Maintaining self-respect 	November 25
Week 11	Balancing Options and Intensity in Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to build authentic relationships 	December 2
Week 12	Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting relaxing and recreational activities • Engaging in religious or spiritual activities 	(Tuesday) December 3

Course and Departmental Policies

Submission of Coursework:

All coursework should be submitted via Quercus as a file attachment. No assignments should be sent via email to the professor or teaching assistant.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. The University of Toronto does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

AccessAbility Services:

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services Office (<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/ability/>) as soon as possible.

AccessAbility Services staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. Please contact 416-287-7560 (tel/TTY) or email ability.utsc@utoronto.ca for more information. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Syllabus Changes:

The professor may make changes to the course syllabus based on pacing and needs of the class, or other unexpected events. These will not impair your ability to succeed in the class, and you will be notified when this occurs through Quercus.

Course Materials and Access:

This course is limited to registered students only. Allowing unregistered students or other people access to the class or any class-related materials is not permitted. As outlined in the Provost's guidelines on Appropriate Use of Information and Communication Technology, for reasons of privacy as well as protection of copyright, distributing video or audio recordings from this class is prohibited unless written permission has been granted by the professor or for students with specific accommodations to do so. In this course, you are permitted to download materials for your own academic use, but you should not copy, share, or use them for any other purpose without the explicit permission of the professor.

Email Communication:

Please keep your emails professional, concise, and clear: start with an informative title that includes the course name and some detail on your question (i.e., "PSYC73 - question about Mindfulness"). Emails to the professor should address her as "Dr. Uliaszek" or "Professor Uliaszek". The most effective emails are short, focused on a single question, and demonstrate some effort on your part to explain your understanding or where you are stuck.

Academic Integrity:

The University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences in papers and assignments include using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement, submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor, making up sources or facts, obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any

assignment. On tests and exams cheating includes using or possessing unauthorized aids, looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test, misrepresenting your identity, or falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools

Students may not use artificial intelligence tools for taking tests or completing any course assignments. The knowing use of generative artificial intelligence tools, including ChatGPT and other AI writing and coding assistants, for the completion of, or to support the completion of, an examination, term test, assignment, or any other form of academic assessment, may be considered an academic offense in this course.

Religious Accommodations

The University has a commitment concerning accommodation for religious observances. I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. According to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course activity (like a test, or in-class assignment) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Late and Missed Work and Absence Policy: Fall 2024

What is an Allowable absence or an excuse for a late work?

- Allowable absences or missed work include illness, emergency, bereavement, or extreme mitigating factors.
- The following reasons are not considered sufficient for missed work or absence: social activities, recreational travel, technological issues, avoidance of assessments or deadlines, work commitments.
- Multiple assignments due on the same day are not considered academic conflicts. Students are expected to manage their time effectively to meet assignment deadlines.
- Back-to-back tests/quizzes are not considered academic conflicts.
- Students are responsible for keeping their course timetables conflict-free. Students who register in two courses with overlapping lecture/tutorial/lab schedules will not be accommodated.

What if I miss the final exam?

- [Missed Final Exams](#) are handled by the Registrar's Office and should be declared on eService.

Other important information:

- Instructors cannot accept term work any later than five business days after the last day of class. Beyond this date, accommodations are only possible via the Registrar's Office [petition process](#).
- If you are unable to submit your request within the specified number of business days, you must still email your instructor within that window to explain the nature of the delay. Exceptions to the deadlines are made only under exceptional circumstances.

AccessAbility:

- If an extension is desired and it is **within the scope** of your Accommodation Letter you don't need to do anything! The instructor will adjust Quercus to include your accommodation automatically. Please note that this does not apply to Class Participation.
- If your desired accommodation is **outside the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. your letter includes "extensions of up to 7 days" but you need more time than that), **contact your AccessAbility consultant** and have them write to the course instructor detailing the accommodations needed. This should ideally be done **before** the assignment is due.
- If you miss class due to an accessibility reason, **contact your AccessAbility consultant** and have them write to the course instructor detailing the accommodations needed.

Specific Late and Missed Policy per Assignment:

Assignment	Information	What do I do?
Class Participation	Allowable absences are detailed above. If you have an allowable absence and follow these directions, you will be exempt from the assignment for that day.	<p>You must email the instructor by 11:59pm the day of the missed class with the reason for the absence. The instructor will reply within 48 hours and let you know if the absence is allowable or not.</p> <p><u>Please do not send medical documentation, personal health information, or more than a brief description of absence explanation.</u></p>
	Non-allowable absence or not following instructions for allowable absence.	If you have not submitted an email by the day of the missed class with an allowable excuse, you will be given a 0 on the in-class assignment. There are no makeups.
Weekly Homework	Allowable extension	<p>You must email the instructor within 24 hours of the homework due date providing an explanation for the needed extension. It is fine to email early! For example, if you are very ill Tuesday-Friday, you may want to send an email on Friday requesting an extension until Wednesday.</p> <p>The instructor will reply within 48 hours and let you know what, if any, extension is being provided.</p> <p>If an extension is provided and you do not submit by that new date, the late penalty will imposed.</p> <p>*Because we are all human, all students will receive one free 24-hour extension.</p>
	Late work without allowable extension	20% will be deducted each day of late submission starting at 12:01am on Mondays.
Gratitude Practice	No allowable late work	<p>Because this assignment only takes a few moments and you have all week to do it, there are no allowable late assignments.</p> <p>*Because we are all human, all students will receive one free 24-hour extension.</p>
Class Project	Allowable extension	<p>You must email the instructor within 24 hours of the homework due date providing an explanation for the needed extension. All group members must be cc-ed on this email.</p> <p>The instructor will reply within 48 hours and let you know what, if any, extension is being provided.</p> <p>If an extension is provided and you do not submit by that new date, the late penalty will imposed.</p>
	Late work without allowable extension	10% will be deducted each day of late submission starting at 12:01am on November 27.