Course Syllabus

PSY 323: Health Psychology (PSY 323 900/970, CRN: 40791/40521)
School of Psychological Sciences, University of Northern Colorado
Summer 2015, 2nd Session Online (June 29 – August 7, 2015)

Professor: Kristina Phillips, Ph.D.
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Email: kristina.phillips@unco.edu (preferred contact)
Office Hours (via email): Mondays 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM VIRTUAL (please email and I will respond in this time frame or email to schedule a time to talk by phone/skype if needed)

Please note: Email is the easiest and most reliable way to contact me. When you email me, please put the course number in the subject line of the email along with the subject you are emailing about so that the message does not get sorted as spam, and always sign your email with your name. During the workweek, I will make every effort to respond to your email within 24 hours but I tend to check my email frequently (sometimes obsessively 😊). On weekends, my response time may be longer, but I will still make an effort to respond to all emails received on the weekend no later than the following Mon. If you ask a question in your email and do not receive a response from me within this time frame, please assume that I did not receive your email, check the sending address, and resend the email. The university system uses an aggressive filter. If you send me an email message from an alternative email (e.g., hotmail, yahoo), I may not receive it. If your email is important (e.g., related to an exam or a grade), you should save a copy of your sent email AND ask for a return reply.

Course Information

Course Prerequisites:
PSY 120 (Principles of Psychology)

Course Objectives and Description:
This course is meant as an introduction to the field of health psychology, a subspecialty of psychology that is concerned with how people stay healthy, how and why they become ill, and how they behave when ill. The discipline of health psychology approaches those questions using elements of psychobiology, personality psychology, social psychology, and clinical psychology. Students will at times be asked to draw upon their knowledge from prior psychology courses to understand how those approaches contribute to our knowledge of health. Students will be introduced to major theories and themes of health psychology, including strengths and critiques of those theories. The class is interactive in nature, with videos and group discussion.

Educational Objectives:
Upon completion of this course, the successful student will be able to:
• explain basic concepts that guide the work of health psychologists
• define the biopsychosocial model and apply it to problems tackled by health psychologists
• describe the kinds of settings in which health psychologists work and the functions they carry out in those settings
• describe the organization of the US healthcare system and its impact on health outcomes
• describe ways in which social, economic and political factors impact the work of health psychologists
• explain how psychological aspects of health and health care interact with gender, ethnicity and culture, socioeconomic status, sexuality and age
• explain the impact of behavior on various diseases
• develop critical thinking skills that can be applied to future coursework

How this Course Works:
**This course is NOT self-paced!

To be successful in this course, you will need to stay on top of the schedule. Every week there will be a number of chapter readings to complete from your textbook AND some additional articles/readings on blackboard. These are listed by week on the course schedule AND are located in the materials by week. In addition to these readings, you will need to also review the learning modules for that week and purchase and read the book Fast Food Nation.

There will be an assignment AND/OR discussion board post due EVERY week. There will also be an EXAM EVERY week. You will need to complete your readings and review the weekly modules BEFORE completing your discussion board post and
assignment and completing the exam. As explained below, you will have a 2-day period (Wed.–Fri.) with which you can complete the exam. All of the content you need for each week is located on the side bar for that week (e.g., “Week 1 Materials”).

**Time Requirement and Online Participation on Discussion Boards:**
Depending on how fast you read and type, this course should take you around 15+ hours per week. We are expected to cover the same content in this short, 6-week course as we do in a typical 16-week course.

This course is TOTALLY ONLINE but it is NOT SELF-PACED. You will need average computer skills and reliable Internet access to take this class. It is suggested that you have a fairly new computer with Word, Adobe Reader, and Quicktime or iTunes. If you can download and upload files and cut and paste you should be in good shape.

Each week by Monday morning, I will be posting the weekly discussion board questions on the Blackboard DISCUSSION BOARD. It is recommended that you log into the website every day or so to read and respond. If you can manage to log in every day, you will get much more out of the discussion. Think about these discussions as an extended face-to-face seminar.

Your job will be to read the material for each week, review the weekly modules, and make at least ONE discussion board posting each week based on the question provided by Dr. Phillips. Postings should be thoughtful and substantial. For your weekly post, you should answer all of the elements of the weekly question. In addition, you should consider responding to others’ comments or raising a new question for full points.

There will always be an area in the Discussion Board for SPECIFIC QUESTIONS each week, so don’t hesitate to ask if you are wondering about something. There is NO SUCH THING as a dumb question! If you have a question, chances are someone else does too.

**Technical Issues:**
I can answer SOME minor technical questions, but your best bet is the UNC HELP DESK, which is available to answer questions about everything 24/7/365. Their local phone number is 970-351-HELP (970-351-4357). They also have a toll free number which is 1-800-545-2331 and you can get help online as well at https://help.unco.edu/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=15212&_referrer=http://www.unco.edu/it/

Have your Bear number handy when you call.

**Required Course Readings:**


3) Occasional pdf or weblink readings may be assigned

**Helpful Link:**
The Purdue OWL is a great online reference for APA style if you cite any references in your paper: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

**Blackboard:**
On Sun. of each week, I will activate the module for that week’s material to be covered for each section on Blackboard. In addition, I will update grades weekly on blackboard throughout the course. I highly recommend that you check your bear email account and blackboard daily, as I will regularly post information and announcements on blackboard and will send messages to your bear mail account.
Policy on Missed Assignments or Exams:
As a 6-week summer course, this class will move very quickly. You will need to stay on top of all due dates for assignments and exams. As noted below, assignments that are turned in late will lose 10% of the total points for each day that the assignment is late.

The deadlines for assignments and exams are very clearly laid out on the course schedule. If you have a serious emergency due to personal illness/hospitalization or another personal matter, please let me know immediately. If I do not hear from you and you miss an exam, there are no make-ups. Students will be asked to provide documentation of any such emergencies to the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to verify any documentation she receives. If a student must miss the final exam due to a legitimate reason, s/he must meet with the instructor regarding filing paperwork for a grade of Incomplete.

Assessment:
Students’ progress in this course will be assessed using class participation in the discussion board, exams, quizzes, and assignments.

Syllabus Quiz (Week 1; 10 points): To ensure that you have an understanding of the course, course requirements, and course schedule, you will be asked to complete a Syllabus Quiz several days after the course begins. This quiz will open the first day of class and will close by Wed. at 5:00 PM of Week 1. It is required that you get 100% on the quiz and you can take it as many times as needed by the first Wed. If you do not achieve 100%, you will receive a “0.”

Discussion Board (60 points): Your will be required to participate in the Blackboard Discussion Board every week. Responses are due no later than Fri. at 10:00 PM. Each post is worth a total of 10 points, but you will be graded on the quality of your response (points allocated between 0 – 10 points). Each week you will be provided with a question prompt that you will respond to in approximately 2 paragraphs. Do not expect that minor levels of participation will get you a high score. As noted below, the more you contribute to the discussion board, the higher your score.

A substantive post should: 1) meet the required length noted in the question prompt, 2) focus on the content requested, 3) include proper grammar, and 4) be based on evidence. Substantive responses should not be based solely on opinion (unless specifically requested) and should be supported by evidence from textbook readings, learning modules, etc. When appropriate, it is alright to include personal experience and/or information from outside sources that supports the content from the assigned reading.

The point system below indicates how I calculate your weekly discussion board score:

9 – 10 points  One very substantive posting in response to the question prompt, with at least ONE additional comment or new questions raised related to other students’ or Dr. Phillips’ comments (yes, this may require you to get onto the discussion board multiple times each week).

7 – 8 points  One substantive posting in response to the question prompt (i.e., a response that includes the four points above)

5 – 6 points  One moderate posting in response to the question prompt (i.e., a response that includes three of the four points above)

3 – 4 points  One minor posting in response to the question prompt (i.e., a response that includes two of the four points above)

1 – 2 points  One very minor, brief posting in response to the question prompt (i.e., a response that includes only one of the four points above)

0 points  No response

Your ideas, comments, insights, and questions will not only enhance your learning but will improve the quality of interesting discussions. Students are encouraged to share differing opinions and viewpoints. However, students are expected to respect one another’s views and interact considerately with each other. Please use appropriate language on the Discussion board and do not respond using any abbreviations or slang (full sentences only). Please use good grammar and spelling. I will take off points for responses that do not meet these requirements.

Each set of discussions will be open for two weeks (though you must respond every week by Fri. evening for your response to be considered on time). I will be closing discussions as we go through the semester, but if you miss a week, you should have a week or so to catch up (for reduced points). This is really hard though, so try not to get behind. Also, once we have moved on to a new topic many students do not go back and read past weeks’ postings, so late postings really do not contribute to the learning community in the same way.
Examinations (180 points): There will be an exam every week throughout the course that should be completed between Wed. at 5:00 PM through Fri. at 5:00 PM. Each exam is worth 30 points each (see calendar for exam dates) and will include approximately 30 – 50 multiple-choice questions. The final exam is NOT cumulative.

The exams will be open book/note, but will be timed. Therefore, you will not be able to look up every answer. **Waiting to review the chapters until you take the exam will NOT be beneficial to your success in this course!** I HIGHLY recommend that you study for every exam, just as you would for face-to-face courses.

Assignments:

Health Behavior Change Project (100 points): Students will complete a project detailing the planning and implementing of a behavioral change program targeted to a specific health behavior. Students will design a program for change, document their progress, and hypothesize about possible problems with the plan’s implementation. Students will receive a separate handout with further detail on this project. This project will be due in phases (always on a Thurs.), with the final portion due the last week of class. I will not accept the final part of this project (Phase 3) **after the last day of class.**

Grading and Assessment:

Grading: Grades are earned rather than given. It is not my job to assume responsibility for any individual student’s grade. Rather, my job is to facilitate your mastery of the material to help you earn your grade. My level of investment should not exceed yours. Toward the end of each semester, several students often approach me to say they needed a higher grade than they were projected to receive based on their grades to date. I can do very little to help students late in the semester. Further, my experience suggests that students who approach me (for the first time) toward the end of the semester often expect my level of investment to be much greater than theirs. They believe I share significant responsibility for their performance. I make a serious effort to help students throughout the semester, but I won’t allow myself to assume responsibility for an individual’s performance or to do more than my share to help an individual. Please don’t come to me in the last week and tell me what grade you need to receive. If you do, I’m likely to look at your participation, performance on assignments, and exam scores and talk with you about what grade you’ve earned.

Computing Overall Grades: Grading for this course will be based out of 350 points (see distribution below). Final grades will be computed based on your accumulated points as a percentage of 350 points. Please note: **I do NOT adjust final grades under any circumstances.** I only assign the grade that a student earns. My policy on rounding grades is such: If you score above a half percentage point (i.e., .50) below the next grade level (e.g., 89.5%), I will round your grade to a 90% or A-. I do not round if a student scores below this half percentage point (e.g., if your final score is between 89.0 – 89.49, you will receive a B+). Please DO NOT email me at the end of the semester to ask that I change your grade.

Two reasons motivate this policy. First, it is unfair to increase one person's final score by any amount without changing all semester scores equivalently. A decision to bump one person's grade is effectively a decision to shift the entire grade distribution. Second, I have designed this course so that the homework assignments and participation provide an opportunity for you to elevate your grade considerably. If you take them seriously you can expect to raise your semester average.

**Grade Distribution: 350 points total**

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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.9</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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Grading Policy: To ensure that students make greater efforts to revise their assignments, I will deduct points automatically for spelling and/or obvious grammatical errors. For all assignments in this class, I will deduct 10% of points from the final grade for every THREE spelling and/or obvious grammatical errors. Use Spellcheck, but do not rely on it solely to find errors;
for example, Spellcheck will not identify errors such as ‘defiantly’ instead of ‘definitely,’ ‘loose’ instead of ‘lose,’ or ‘there’ instead of ‘their.’

Assignments that are turned in late will lose 10% of the total points for each day that the assignment is late. Late assignments will not be accepted one week after the designated due date. All missed assignments must be submitted before our last week.

Grade Checks Throughout the Course: If you are ever unsure of your grade status and uncertain about the calculation procedure, you should contact me by email. Grades will be updated on blackboard every week. If you are having difficulty in this course or any other, you should examine your grade in advance of the individual course withdrawal deadline.

Disability Access:
Students who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services, voice/TTY (970) 351-2289, or fax (970) 351-4166, or visit www.unco.edu/dss as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. After registering with Disability Services, please submit any testing forms to me one week prior to exams. You do not need to share with me specific details about your disability unless you choose to do so. I will respect your privacy.

College Diversity Statement:
The College of Education and Behavioral Sciences (CEBS) supports an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, appreciated and recognized as a source of strength. We expect that students, faculty, administrators, and staff within CEBS will respect differences and demonstrate diligence in understanding how other peoples’ perspectives, behaviors, and worldviews may be different from their own.

Furthermore, as stated by UNC, “The University will not engage in unlawful discrimination in…educational services against any person because of race, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, or veteran status. It is the University’s policy to prohibit discrimination in…educational services on the basis of sexual orientation or political affiliation.” (See http://www.unco.edu/hr/AAEO_TitleIX.htm). Please visit the CEBS Diversity and Equity Committee website for more information on our commitment to diversity (http://www.unco.edu/cebs/diversity).

Academic Honesty:
Academic honesty encompasses a range of issues that are all based on the premise that cheating and stealing are unacceptable. You already know that cheating is unethical, but just what do I mean by stealing? In academic settings (where students and faculty work), ideas expressed in writing have the status of “intellectual property.” Likewise, the actual prose (e.g., the wording) a person uses in a written document “belongs” to that person. According to our rules of scholarship, to pass someone else’s ideas as your own or to excerpt their specific words without citation is, in a sense, stealing. In academic settings, it will always be considered plagiarism to cut and paste a piece out of any published document (be it a journal article, text, or website) or to fail to attribute ideas to their original sources. Information is vastly more accessible than ever before in history, but for the purposes of scholarship (which includes everything you will do for this course) the rules of ownership of any given piece of information remain unchanged. I have developed a tough approach to cheating. Please don’t do anything that might be the least bit suggestive of cheating or stealing. If you are ever uncertain of the policies of the University, you may refer to the Student Handbook, available online through the Dean of Students Office (http://www.unco.edu/dos) or contact me. My own policy regarding academic honesty is very straightforward: If I believe that your behavior (with respect to any graded event: homework, quiz, exam, etc.) is intentionally dishonest, I will fail you in the class and fully document the event with the Dean of Students. Note two points about my policy regarding cheating. First, I will consider carefully whether or not you knowingly cheated (the reason for my very clear explicit description above). Second, if I think you knowingly cheated then I will apply my cheating policy (an F for the course). I don’t care whether you cheat on something very consequential like a final exam or something relatively less consequential like an online quiz.

Below is the general University policy:
The University of Northern Colorado’s Student Code of Conduct (See http://www.unco.edu/dos/communityStandards/student_code_conduct/index.html) and Honor Code strictly prohibit any form of academic misconduct. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and knowingly or recklessly encouraging or making possible any act of plagiarism, cheating, or fabrication. Academic misconduct is an unacceptable activity in scholarship and is in conflict with academic and professional ethics and morals. All incidents of
alleged plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will be investigated and violations of academic integrity will result in a consequence that may be as severe as an F in the class and a recommendation for expulsion. For more information on plagiarism and appropriate paraphrasing, please see:
http://www.unco.edu/dos/academicIntegrity/students/definingPlagiarism.html

**Course Calendar**
The schedule for readings and assignments is posted under the Course Schedule tab in blackboard.