

# HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY (Psych 450)

Tuesdays and Thursdays: 3.30 p.m. - 4.45 p.m. MAC 113

## SPRING 2008

Instructor:	Dr. Regan A. R. Gurung		
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Office Hours:	Tues/Thurs: 1.30-3.30 p.m.; Mon/Wed 10.00 a.m. - 12.00 p.m. Daily by appointment		
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## The Course

This course examines how the areas of health, illness and medicine can be studied from a psychological perspective. Whereas the short length of the course prevents me from spending as much time on a topic as I would like, I am open to spending more time on a topic based on suggestions from the class. In general I am more interested in your thinking about and understanding the information than in the strict memorization of facts. Tests will reflect this philosophy.

## Primary Learning Outcomes

1. Introduce you to the main topics and issues in the area of health psychology,
2. Provide you with an understanding of how psychology influences stress, coping, health behaviors, and recovery from illness.
3. Train you to:
  - a. Understand and critically evaluate published research in psychology and recognize its implications
  - b. Access the professional resources in psychology (e.g., PsychInfo).

## The Text

*Health Psychology: A Cultural Approach (Gurung, 2006)*. Class will be devoted more to introducing and summarizing topics fully dealt with in the text and clarifying difficult areas, rather than repeating the material in the chapters. More importantly, I will bring in current topics from the field and give you as much hands on experience with the subject matter as possible. You are responsible for all the material in the assigned readings even if not covered in lectures. Please bring your books to class as I will refer to the figures and tables in it frequently.

## Groups

I believe that learning is best achieved if students actively participate in class instead of sitting back and listening to lectures. To facilitate active learning I will conduct group activities. Groups of 4 students will be created by random assignment. Each group will work on classroom quizzes (both graded and ungraded) as a whole. You will also be given discussion topics and group activities from time to time. Separate groups will also be formed to make short class presentations. Each person's participation will be monitored.

## Grading and Requirements

There will be three exams, a number of group activities, a presentation, and one paper:

- I. **Exams** will be a combination of multiple choice and short answers. Study guides and sample questions will be handed out a week prior to each exam.
- II. **Group activities** will cover material for both that day and the previous class. Please read the material for the day before coming to class. In addition, for each reading assignment, try and write down any questions you have about it *as you read it*. I may ask you to read out comments or questions that you had on the readings in class so I can get a sense of what you are getting from it. Your ratings of group presentations and commentary on each presentation will also be graded (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory) as a group activity. Each group will also be asked to hand in **Health in the News** articles (more on this in class).
- III. For the **Group Presentations**, you will be required to choose a research topic and critique it according to guidelines I will provide in class.
- IV. **BEHAVIOR CHANGE**: We all have behaviors that we would like to do more of, and some that we want to do less of. This assignment will allow you to take what you learn in this class and make a direct change to your life. You will write a **Plan** and a **Final Report** that documents your procedure and success with changing a behavior of your choosing (e.g. exercising, eating too much chocolate, smoking, excessive drinking, etc.).

Final papers should not exceed 7 double spaced pages (should be spell-checked, grammatically sound, in a 12 point font, and have 1 inch margins). You are strongly recommended to sign up with the campus writing center to get your paper checked and critiqued. Plan papers are due on **January 31st**. Final papers are due on **May 8th**. No exceptions. Complete and specific details regarding each assignment will be covered in class and separate handouts.

*Grades will be assigned in the following manner:*



<u><b>Exam 1</b></u> -	20%	<u><b>Beh. Change Papers</b></u>	15%
<u><b>Exam 2</b></u> -	20%	<u><b>Group Presentation</b></u>	15%
<u><b>Exam 3</b></u> -	20%	<u><b>Group Activities/Participation</b></u>	10%

**A**     >=    **93**  
**A/B**   >=    **88**  
**B**     >=    **83**  
**B/C**   >=    **78**

**C**     >=    **68**  
**D**     >=    **63**  
**F**     <<<   **63**

**NO make-up exams will be given.** Because exam dates are specified in well in advance and scheduled during class times you will be expected to be able to take all of them. Exceptions for catastrophic cases will be reviewed individually.

### Approximate Schedule of Classes

Class Meeting	Date	Topic	Read Chapter
1	Jan. 22	What is health psychology all about?	1
2	Jan. 24	Main Research Methods	1
3	Jan. 29	Stress	4
4	Jan. 31	Stress	<b>PLAN PAPERS DUE</b> 4
5	Feb. 5	Stress	4
6	Feb. 7	Mind-Body Connections	4
7	Feb. 12	Coping	5
8	Feb. 14	Coping	<b>TOPICS DUE</b> 5
9	Feb. 19	Coping	5
10	Feb. 21	<b>Exam 1</b>	
11	Feb. 26	Models of Change	6
12	Feb. 28	Models of Change - Empirical evidence	6
13	Mar. 4	Models of Change - Ongoing research example	6
14	Mar. 6	Interventions	7
15	Mar. 11	Smoking	7
16	Mar. 13	Smoking	7
	 	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
17	Mar. 25	Eating	
18	Mar. 27	Exercise	
19	Apr. 1	Exercise	
20	Apr. 3	<b>EXAM TWO</b>	
21	Apr. 8	<i>Group Presentations</i>	-
22	Apr. 10	-----	-
23	Apr. 15	<i>Group Presentations</i>	-
24	Apr. 17	<i>Group Presentations</i>	-
25	Apr. 22	Pain	9
26	Apr. 24	Pain	9
27	Apr. 29	Chronic Illnesses	10
28	May 1	Chronic Illnesses	10
29	May 5	Cancer	12
30	May 8	Terminal Illnesses	<b>FINAL PAPERS DUE</b> 13
	May 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>EXAM THREE</b>	1.00 p.m. to 3.00