



Stress & Coping Seminar (PSYCH 337)
Spring 2023 Course Syllabus
Tu/Th 10:00 – 11:30am, 416 Sharpless Hall

Instructor: Shu-wen Wang, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychology
Pronouns: she/her/hers
Feel free to call me: Shu-wen, Dr. Wang, or Prof. Wang

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Office: 410 Sharpless Hall

Student Hours: Tues 11:30-12:30 and by appointment (email me)

Course Description and Objectives

Stressors and their subjective experience – stress – are a part of everyday life, whether minor or major, acute or chronic. *How* one copes with stress has substantial influence on one’s physical, emotional, cognitive, and interpersonal functioning. This seminar course is designed to provide in-depth study of the field of stress and coping, through brief lectures, discussion of readings, student presentations and contributions, and the practice of (and self-reflective analysis of) stress management exercises.

This seminar course will survey theory, research, and intervention across a range of topics, including: the neurobiology of stress (e.g., the HPA axis, the immune system), disease (e.g., cardiovascular disease, cancer) and mental illness (e.g., depression, anxiety), ecological stressors (e.g., social and community factors), common life stressors (e.g., work, interpersonal conflict), and diversity-related stressors (e.g., racism, culture-related). Moderating factors influencing stress and coping such as dispositional factors (i.e., personality), gender, and use of social support will be covered. Students will also learn and practice evidence-based stress management techniques.

By the end of the course, students are expected to:

- 1) Understand how stress responses influence physiology, disease, and mental illness.
- 2) Think critically about the nature and function of stress and the stress-response.
- 3) Understand the various sources of stress.
- 4) Understand factors that can moderate the stress response.
- 5) Learn stress management practices and how to design and implement a stress management plan.

Pre-requisites

Psyc 100 and one of the following: HC Psyc 209, 215, 224, 242, 245.

Course Readings

- 1) Textbook – Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: Stress, Disease, and Coping. 3rd Edition (2004) by Robert M. Sapolsky. On reserve in the Science Library.
- 2) Additional required readings are available via the course website (Moodle).
- 3) Consult the APA Publication Manual for guidance on proper reference citation and general guidance on scientific writing. On reserve in the Science Library.

Slides

Slides will be posted to Moodle for your reference AFTER the class lecture, along with any other supporting class material (e.g., links to multimedia material).

Grading Scale

Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A / 4.0	94-100	C+ / 2.3	77-79.99
A- / 3.7	90-93.99	C / 2.0	73-76.99
B+ / 3.3	87-89.99	C- / 1.7	70-72.99
B / 3.0	83-86.99	D+ / 1.3	67-69.99
B- / 2.7	80-82.99	D / 1.0	60-66.99
		F / 0.0	59.99 and below

Course Requirements

Grades are determined based on the following course requirements:

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| 1. Weekly Reaction Posts on Moodle | 10% |
| 2. Article Presentation | 10% |
| 3. Stress and Coping Report | 25% |
| 4. Student Topic Group Presentation | 20% |
| 5. Research Proposal | 25% |
| 6. Attendance and Participation | 10% |

Total = 100%

- 1) **Reaction Posts on Moodle (10%):** By 9pm Mon on the weeks marked ^{RP}, you will post a brief reaction (4-5 sentences/1 paragraph) to that week's readings on Moodle Forum. You should aim for thoughtfulness and contribution rather than length. Reactions can be a range of things, but for example, may include putting forth your own hypotheses with rationale, voicing a contradictory argument, commenting on a general theme drawn from multiple readings, or finding a way to apply what you are reading to a real-world situation.
- 2) **Article Presentation (10%):** On Thursday class meetings for the weeks marked ^{RP} above, each student will be responsible for giving a brief oral presentation with slides (12-15 min) and leading discussion on an empirical journal article that they select. Articles must correspond to that day's topic and be approved by me; please send articles to me as a PDF (not HTML) by Monday 5pm before your date. More information will be provided.
- 3) **Stress and Coping Report (25%):** This assignment is a 10-12 page paper on a personal stress and coping situation, your analysis of the issues using theory and research, and your development of a plan to better cope with the situation. More information will be provided.
- 4) **Student Topic Group Presentation (20%):** The last week of the course is reserved for Student Topic group presentations. The topics are chosen by the class and presented by groups of 3-4 students. With my help, groups will research the topic, assign a reading, prepare a 20-25 min presentation, and lead discussion. More information will be provided.
- 5) **Research Proposal (25%):** You will write a ~12 page research proposal on a topic of your choice related to the seminar. You will conduct a literature review, develop your hypotheses and a study design that would allow you to test those hypotheses, describe how you would conduct the study, and discuss your anticipated results that would support your hypotheses. You will also provide and receive feedback from your peers during this iterative writing process meant to support your developmental process as a thinker and writer. The iterative process will take place over the last several weeks of the semester, with the final paper due during Finals period. More information will be provided.
- 6) **Attendance and Participation (10%):** This course is designed as a seminar and is largely based on discussion and engagement. Your attendance is expected at every class meeting, and your contribution and energy is critical to the success of the class.

Course Schedule

Week (Dates)	Topic ^{RP} Indicates a reaction post is due Article Presentations are on Thurs	Reading Should be done for Tues class (‘Ch.’ = Sapolsky chapters)
Wk 1 – 1/17	Course Introduction What is Stress? What is Coping?	Moodle
Wk 2 – 1/24	Theoretical approaches ^{RP}	Ch1 p. 1-18, Moodle
Wk 3 – 1/31	Neurobiology of stress ^{RP} <i>Discuss Stress & Coping Report</i>	Ch2 p. 19-36, Ch3 p. 37-56, Ch4 p. 57-61, Ch8 p. 144-160
Wk 4 – 2/7	Stress reduction and intervention ^{RP}	Ch18 p. 384-418, Moodle
Wk 5 – 2/14	Stress, disease, and mental health ^{RP}	Ch8 p.160-85, Ch13 p.252-70, Ch14 p.271-308
Wk 6 – 2/21	Daily and chronic stressors ^{RP}	Moodle
Stress & Coping Report Due on Moodle Monday 2/27 12 noon		
Wk 7 – 2/28	Trauma ^{RP} <i>Discuss Research Proposal</i>	Moodle
Wk 8 – 3/6	Spring Break – No Class	
Wk 9 – 3/14	Diversity, racism, marginalization ^{RP}	Moodle
Wk 10 – 3/21	Personality and individual differences ^{RP}	Ch15 p.309-334; Moodle
Wk 11 – 3/28	Gender ^{RP} <i>Discuss and form presentation groups</i>	Moodle
Research Proposal Part A Due on Moodle Friday 3/30 5pm		
Wk 12 – 4/4	<u>No Traditional Class this week</u> <i>Peer Review</i> <i>Work on group presentations</i>	
Wk 13 – 4/11	Relationships and social support ^{RP}	Moodle
Wk 14 – 4/18	<i>Research Workshop and consults</i> <i>Work on group presentations</i>	
Wk 15 – 4/25	<i>Group Presentations</i>	
FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL Friday May 5 th by 5pm (Seniors) Friday May 12 th by 12noon (non-Seniors)		

Class Policies

- 1) **Academic Integrity:** You are expected to generate your own unique, and unless otherwise noted, independent work. Avoid plagiarism, that is, using another person's work, words, or ideas without properly crediting them. Obviously, do not cheat on exams by providing or benefiting from assistance. Follow the Haverford College Honor Code and consult the APA Publication Manual for proper citation practice.
- 2) **Technology Etiquette:** Please turn off or silence your phones. No texting permitted. I advise against using laptops for note-taking as they provide distractions and may detract from your ability to encode information. However, if you have a need for laptop use, please restrict your use to class activities. I assume we are all here to learn. Violations of this policy are rude to me and your peers, and will result in your being asked to leave.
- 3) **Emails:** I will try to respond to emails within 24 hours. The more specific and clear your question, the better I'll be able to address it. For any question that requires an extensive response, I may ask you to meet with me instead.
- 4) **Student Hours and Scheduling Appointments:** I highly encourage you to see me in student hours and/or to email to schedule appointments. These are ideal times to ask me questions you have or to discuss your thoughts and ideas.
- 5) **Attendance and missed/late assignments:**
 - Your attendance is expected at every class (barring serious illness or personal emergency).
 - If you miss class for any reason, you must email me within 24 hours of the missed class.
 - If you have a legitimate reason for missing class, you will not be penalized for your course participation. However, your remaining course participation will count more towards your final grade.
 - If you have a legitimate reason for missing class and cannot complete a written assignment, we can discuss an extension.
 - If you have a legitimate reason for missing class and cannot give a presentation, I will move your presentation to another class meeting.
 - Missing class or an assignment (paper, presentation) without a legitimate excuse will result in a mark of 0.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES

Support, Access, and Disability

I am committed to partnering with you on your academic and intellectual journey. I also recognize that your ability to thrive academically can be impacted by your personal well-being and that stressors may impact you over the course of the semester. If the stressors are academic, I welcome the opportunity to discuss and address those stressors with you in order to find solutions together. If you are experiencing challenges or questions related to emotional health, finances, physical health, relationships, learning strategies or differences, or other potential stressors, I hope you will consider reaching out to the many resources available on campus. These resources include CAPS (free and unlimited counseling is available), the Office of Academic Resources, Health Services, Professional Health Advocate, Religious and Spiritual Life, the Office of Race and Ethnicity Education, the GRASE Center, and the Dean's Office. Additional information can be found at <https://www.haverford.edu/deans-office-student-life/offices-resources>

Additionally, Haverford College is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body and providing equal access to students with a disability. If you have (or think you have) a learning difference or disability – including mental health, medical, or physical impairment – please contact the Office of Access and Disability Services (ADS) at hc-ads@haverford.edu. The Director will confidentially discuss the process to establish reasonable accommodations. It is never too late to request accommodations – our bodies and circumstances are continuously changing.

Students who have already been approved to receive academic accommodations and want to use their accommodations in this course should share their accommodation letter and make arrangements to meet with me as soon as possible to discuss how their accommodations will be implemented in this course. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice in order to successfully implement.

If, at any point in the semester, a disability or personal circumstances affect your learning in this course, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I want to be sure you are aware of the full range of resources and options available to you.

It is a state law in Pennsylvania that individuals must be given advance notice that they may be recorded. Therefore, any student who has a disability-related need to audio record this class must first be approved for this accommodation from the Director of Access and Disability Services and then must speak to me. Other class members need to be aware that this class may be recorded.

Psychology Peer Mentoring Program

Student leaders in the psychology major run a peer mentoring program for students who are interested in exploring psychology at Haverford College as pre-majors and/or navigating the psychology major or minor. Peer mentors offer friendly support and advice in two formats – weekly drop-in hours for all in the Psychology Lounge (Sharpless 4th floor) and paired mentoring for committed psychology majors and minors. Keep an eye out for announcements regarding accessing the peer mentoring program.

Office of Academic Resources

The Office of Academic Resources (OAR) is positioned to help you navigate Haverford from customs to commencement. Our services are free and unlimited. Our office is located on the first floor of Stokes and you're welcome anytime to study, relax, caffeinate, and connect with peers and/or a kind staff committed to your success and wellbeing. We offer an array of services, workshops, themed seasonal study breaks, and other events throughout the academic year, but our two main support structures are:

- **Academic Coaching:** Work with a professional coach to set goals and develop a plan for success (however you define it). We facilitate conversations to explore 'how' to do college, from balancing time management goals, managing large, or competing, projects, developing discipline-specific study strategies, such as methods to engage and balance readings, and preparing for an exam, along with much more! Trust the process.
- **Peer Tutoring:** Work individually with a peer on gaining content and/or conceptual level mastery and practice in over 40 courses in 17 STEM & Language departments.

Please visit haverford.edu/oar to learn more about us and/or schedule an appointment. We look forward to supporting you.

Title IX

Haverford College is committed to fostering a safe and inclusive living and learning environment where all can feel secure and free from harassment. All forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic violence, and dating violence are violations of Haverford's policies, whether they occur on or off campus. Haverford faculty are committed to helping to create a safe learning environment for all students and for the College community as a whole. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination, harassment, or violence, know that help and support are available. Staff members are trained to support students in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more.

The College strongly encourages all students to report any incidents of sexual misconduct. Please be aware that all Haverford employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors, clergy, and healthcare providers) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the Bi-College Title IX Coordinator: <https://www.haverford.edu/users/ktaylor4>

Information about the College's Sexual Misconduct policy, reporting options, and a list of campus and local resources can be found on the College's website: <https://www.haverford.edu/sexual-misconduct>