STRESS AND COPING
PSY 795, FALL 2009
12:25 – 3:10pm Monday Poe 214

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This graduate seminar is designed to review the historical basis and current research on stress and coping. Our concern will generally be psychosocial stress (daily stressors, life events, etc) instead of physical or environmental stress. The emphasis is on current empirical findings and methodology, as opposed to more popular treatments in this area. Students are expected to critically read all of the assigned papers, lead and actively participate in discussions, and write a research proposal on a particular aspect of stress and coping.

REQUIRED READINGS:
Readings will be available via the course website on WebVista (http://vista.ncsu.edu).

EVALUATION:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weightage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reaction papers</td>
<td>Due each week</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading discussion</td>
<td>Date determined first day of class</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research proposal paper</td>
<td>Due December 14 at noon</td>
<td>40% (includes presentation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion participation</td>
<td>Throughout semester</td>
<td>15%</td>
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Overall course grades will conform to the following as designated by the university: A+ (97-100%), A (93-96%), A- (90-92%), B+ (87-89%), B (83-86%), B- (80-82%), C+ (77-79%), C (73-76%), C- (70-72%), D+ (67-69%), D (63-66%), D- (60-62%), F (anything below 60%).

Reaction papers are brief (approximately 2 pages) weekly assignments that you will write in preparation for each weekly meeting, after you have read the chapters and articles for the upcoming week. These papers will help you integrate the current readings with previous readings, and will also allow you to point out issues which you would like to address in the discussion of the readings. Critical thinking is an important component of the reaction papers. No article or theory is perfect – it will be your job to point out areas which were not considered (which should be), issues with samples or methods, and any other aspect of the reading which you feel is important to critically evaluate. All reaction papers will be due at the beginning of the class meeting. Late papers will be accepted with a 10% per day deduction in points.

Leading a discussion entails briefly summarizing as well as integrating the articles and proposing at least four points of discussion. Bringing in concepts from other courses or references is perfectly appropriate, especially if they help draw distinctions and clarify concepts. Each student will lead one class meeting. Selection of who leads a given discussion will be determined during the first class meeting.
The research proposal paper will be a 15-20 page paper on stress and coping. The major goal of the paper will be to integrate and synthesize your knowledge of the current state of the field based on the readings from this course, and then critically evaluate what important area(s) remains to be explored. To accomplish this, you will write a literature review which focuses on the relevant readings from this course (you may also bring in other sources) and sets the stage for your research proposal of a novel study idea. The remaining portion of the paper will be a description of your proposed study (sample, measures, procedure), with rationales for each decision included. Each student will give a brief (15-20 minute) presentation on his or her research proposal which will take place during the last class meeting. A more detailed description of the requirements will be distributed later.

Discussion participation includes: (a) being in class every week; (b) being well-prepared by having carefully read all the assigned readings; and (c) contributing actively to critical discussions in class about the readings.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

In the event of an excused absence that is accepted by the instructor (see REG02.20.3 for definitions of an excused absence), the student will have one week after returning to class to make up the missed work. Such make-up work shall be at a comparable level of difficulty with the original assignment.

INCOMPLETE GRADES:

An incomplete grade may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor as an interim grade for a course in which the student has: (1) completed a major portion of the course with a passing grade, (2) been unable to complete course requirements prior to the end of the term because of extenuating circumstances, and (3) obtained agreement from the instructor and arranged for resolution of the incomplete grade.

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. Please register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation (REG02.20.1).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students will adhere to the University's Code of Student Conduct (http://www2.ncsu.edu/prr/student_services/student_conduct/POL445.00.1.htm). Consistent with the provisions of this Code, academic dishonesty is defined as cheating, plagiarism, and aiding and abetting others to cheat or plagiarize. It is understood that the student's signature on any exam or assignment means that the student neither gave nor received unauthorized aid. Students who are accused of violations of the Code will be referred to the Coordinator, Office of Student Conduct.
Schedule of Readings/Topics

Note: Schedule subject to change/update

August 24, Course Overview and Introduction to the Study of Stress


August 31, Types of Stress


September 7, NO CLASS: LABOR DAY

September 14, Individual Differences in Stress Exposure, Reporting, and Appraisal


September 21, Models of Coping (continued on next page)


September 28, Developmental Issues


October 5, Methodological Issues


October 12, Coping as a Moderator (continued on next page)


October 19, Cognitive Responses and Brain Issues


October 26, Health and Well-Being Outcomes


November 2, Individual Differences in Reactivity: Sex (continued on next page)


**November 9, Individual Differences in Reactivity: SES**


**November 16, Individual Differences in Reactivity: Personality**


**November 23, NO CLASS: GSA CONFERENCE**

**November 30, Presentations and wrapping up**

**December 7, Research proposal paper due at noon**