



OTRP *online*
office of teaching resources in PSYCHOLOGY

The Robert Gordon University



SS3016 Health Psychology

Academic Year 2012-13 (First Semester)

Instructor: Dr. Francis Quinn

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Prerequisites: Successful completion of the two preceding years of the degree programme at this university, or two years' study of psychology elsewhere equivalent in level.

Classes and Times:

Our class meets each **Thursday** from **2pm to 4pm** in room **H506** in the **FHSC Building**. Classes are not traditional lectures: each workshop-style class lasts two hours and features a mix of lecture-style presentation of material and various activities (e.g. small-group discussion, hypothetical scenarios, video material, etc.). I'm expecting everyone to contribute to discussions and other activities during class, in small groups and in the class as a whole. The mix of activities will vary each class depending on the topics to be covered.

Course Description:

Health psychology is “*the scientific study of psychological and behavioural processes in health, illness and healthcare*” (Johnston, 1994). The aim of this course is to understand that there are relationships between mental processes, bodily processes, behaviour and health, and the nature of these relationships and how they have been studied scientifically. They can be in both directions, and can be direct or operate via behaviours which protect or damage health. We'll draw on numerous theories and scientific research testing them.

The course has two parts, each lasting six weeks. In **Part A, *Psychology in Illness and Healthcare***, you will develop an understanding of how psychological factors affect how likely people are to become ill (Weeks 3-4), and how they adjust to and cope with being ill (Weeks 1 and 5-6). We will also cover psychological processes in healthcare settings and healthcare staff, such as adaptation to being in hospital and how to promote better outcomes from treatment (Weeks 1-2). In **Part B, *Health Behaviour***, you will develop a psychological understanding of the behaviours that protect or damage people's health (Weeks 6-12). This will include using and evaluating psychological theories to explain why people act in ways that harm or protect their health (e.g. smoking, taking exercise), and how we can use this understanding to promote change in behaviour.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course you will be expected to be able to:

1. Explain the relationship between stress and health, and critically evaluate stress modification strategies including pain as a specific example (*Part A*)
2. Explain the influence of key psychosocial factors relating to the onset, treatment and outcome of a range of the major modern illnesses (*Part A*)
3. Analyse the major current models explaining health behaviour in terms of beliefs, attitudes, intentions, readiness to change and circumstances (*Part B*).

Assessment:

This course is assessed by a **2-hour written exam** which will take place in January, after the final class. The exam has two parts (corresponding to Part A and B of the course), each part having three essay-style questions. You need to answer one question from each part. You'll be able to choose topics to focus on from a revision list, requiring you to prepare about a third of the material. This list will be made available after the final class. In line with university policy the exam is graded anonymously – so please do not put your name anywhere on the paper except in the space provided which will be sealed for marking. The strip will only be unsealed and names revealed once the grade is finalised and no further changes can then be made.

Grading system: The grading system is the same as used throughout the university and which by now you will be familiar with. Each essay-style answer will be assigned a letter grade from **A to F** (please note that grades E and F indicate a fail). In addition, if justified I may modify your grade with a + or -; however, please note that the university records only the letter grade. To find the grade for the exam as a whole, each letter grade will be coded as a number (A = 6, B = 5, etc.) and the mean of the two answers calculated. Your final grade recorded by the university and on your transcript will be a single letter from A to F.

Reading Assignments:

You need to complete a reading assignment after each class. The assignment is structured as **Core Reading** (which everyone must do before the next class) and **Optional Reading** (for areas of your interest, or topics you've chosen to prepare

for the exam). Reading assignments could be in our main textbook (Ogden) or occasionally Morrison & Bennett (available as library e-book) or chapters from others that I photocopy and hand out in class. Some weeks, it will include a carefully-chosen journal article available on Moodle as a PDF. Contact me if you will miss class so I can keep a copy of handouts for you.

Main Textbook:

Ogden, J. (2012). *Health Psychology: A Textbook*. (5th ed.). Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

We'll be using Ogden's 2012 textbook above most weeks. DO NOT USE OLDER EDITIONS – they are nowhere near as good and not worth it. The library has the 2012 edition as an e-book (and five paper copies) but you might find it useful to buy a copy – £20-25 online.

Secondary Textbooks:

Morrison, V. & Bennett, P. (2012). *An Introduction to Health Psychology* (3rd edition). London, UK: Prentice Hall.

Some weeks we'll also use the above textbook by Morrison and Bennett as core reading, and optional reading other weeks. It is available from the library as an e-book and a few paper copies.

Sarafino, E. P. (2008 or 2011). *Health Psychology: Biopsychosocial Interactions*. (6th or 7th edition). New York: Wiley.

Chapters from Sarafino (above) will often be given as optional reading. When you prepare topics for your exam, for Part A (especially if for stress or pain) you'll want to use a more detailed source for those focused topics – the Sarafino textbook is the best. It also has useful chapters on other topics throughout the course (paper copies in library):

Albery, I. & Munafo, M. (2008). *Key Concepts in Health Psychology*. London: Sage.

The above study guide by Albery and Munafo is a useful study resource (especially on the theories we cover), available from the library as e-book or two paper copies.

French, D., Vedhara, K. Kaptein, A. & Weinman, J. (Eds, 2010). *Health Psychology* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Wiley.

Taylor, S. (2011). *Health Psychology* (8th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

We'll use selected chapters from these occasionally, usually as digitised reading on Moodle or as optional reading (available in library).

Expectations and Resources

I want everyone who takes this course to benefit from it, not only academically but at a personal level as well – because all of us and those around us experience changes in health, and all of us act in ways that can threaten or protect it, and try to change our behaviours every so often. To get the best from this course, please take note of the following points.

Virtual Learning Environment: This course will make extensive use of the university's virtual learning environment (Moodle), and many resources will be posted there electronically, designed to benefit and broaden your learning.

Please visit the course Moodle page regularly. Resources there include:

- PowerPoint slides for each class, one to two days beforehand (in line with university policy)
- Papers and articles in PDF format (as core or optional reading)
- Past exam papers
- Links to health psychology websites and organisations in the UK, Europe and North America
- A feed of tweets from health psychologists and organisations who use Twitter as a means of communication
- Additional articles not related to any particular class but that will broaden your understanding of health psychology as an applied science and area of professional practice.

Classroom Etiquette: I hope to create an environment that is effective for learning as well as friendly, and that gives everyone an equal chance to benefit. Please do not engage in activities that annoy or hinder the learning of others in your class, such as speaking while I'm talking, loud chewing, or using a mobile phone to text or access the internet. Equally, please contribute during small-group work, discussions and other activities. It is not fair if some are doing all the work while you sit there in silence not contributing.

Attendance: Every class is compulsory and a register is always taken. While the university currently applies no penalty for non-attendance, statistical analysis of grades on this course last year showed a significant negative correlation of over -.6 between number of classes missed and final grade attained. I want you to get a good grade in this course and attending every class will assist you to do this. I know that sometimes it is inevitable to miss class due to illness or other unavoidable circumstances, so please let me know in advance by e-mail if you will miss class and I will let you know what you need to do to catch up.

Special Accommodations: I want everyone to get the most out of this course regardless of disability. Special needs are assessed by the university's Disability and Dyslexia Office and for reasons of confidentiality they do not inform staff about anyone's needs except on a need-to-know basis (e.g. white sticker affixed to exams to take allowance for difficulties with spelling and grammar). I am happy to accommodate any additional note-taker or other special arrangements supplied by the Disability and Dyslexia Office. You may also make an audio recording of times in class when I'm speaking (remember the two hour classes

are not a 60-minute lecture). This audio recording must be for your own personal use and NOT shared with anyone else. Special needs in exams are met by the department and you should speak to the Disability and Dyslexia Office about these.

How to do well in this course: I suggest the following strategies for students who wish to succeed on this course and obtain a high grade (A or B):

- Attend all or nearly all classes
- Contribute to the discussions and other class activities
- Do all core reading and at least one item of optional reading each week
- As you go through your everyday life and think about your own behaviour, health, and that of others, consider how the concepts and theories we cover can be applied to these situations.
- Dedicate adequate time to revision for the exam and do not revise fewer topics than indicated on the revision guidance.
- Think critically about what you hear in class or read – don't just take a theory or research finding at face value. Always think – “*what is the evidence for this, and how strong is that evidence?*”

Overview of Course Content and Dates

Week	Date	Topics
<i>Part A: Psychology in illness and healthcare</i>		
1	Thursday 27 th Sep	Introduction to health psychology Psychology in healthcare: In the Hospital
2	Thursday 4 th Oct	Psychology in healthcare: Communication
3	Thursday 11 th Oct	Stress and Health
4	Thursday 18 th Oct	Stress and Health
5	Monday 29 th Oct	Coping with illness
6	Thursday 1 st Nov	Pain
<i>Part B: Health Behaviour</i>		
7	Thursday 8 th Nov	Psychology of Health Behaviour
8	Thursday 15 th Nov	Motivation and Beliefs
9	Thursday 22 nd Nov	Translating Motivation into Action
10	Thursday 29 th Nov	Eating and Dietary Behaviour

11	Thursday 6 th Dec	Smoking and Cessation
12	Thursday 13 th Dec	Interventions to Change Behaviour

Detailed Schedule of Classes

Optional reading from a range of sources will be suggested each week in addition to core reading assignments which are listed below. All sources are available through the university library or will be posted on Moodle.

Week 1: Introduction to Health Psychology, and Psychology in Healthcare: In the Hospital

- Basic foundations of health psychology
 - Origins
 - Biomedical and Biopsychosocial models
 - Importance and role of theory
- Psychology in the Hospital
 - Preparation for surgery/medical procedures
 - Adjustment to being in hospital
 - When illness is terminal: Death and dying

Core Reading: Chapter 1 in either of Ogden, Morrison & Bennett, or Sarafino, PLUS Sarafino Chapter 10 (“In the Hospital” – chapter available as digitised reading on Moodle). Optional but recommended is Ogden (Chapter 2).

Week 2: Psychology in Healthcare Settings: Communication

- Good and bad communication
- Giving bad news
- Maximising adherence to treatment
- Doctor-doctor communication (clinical handovers)

Core Reading: Morrison & Bennett (Chapter 10) PLUS Shelley Taylor’s *Health Psychology* (Chapter 9 “Patient-Provider Relations” – chapter available as digitised reading on Moodle)

Week 3: Stress and Health (Part 1)

- Early theories of stress
- Transactional model of stress
- Effects on the body and health

Core Reading: Ogden (Chapters 11 and 12)

Week 4: Stress and Health (Part 2)

- Type A behaviour pattern

- Moderators of stress
- Coping and managing stress

Core Reading: Ogden (Chapter 12) PLUS Sarafino (Chapter 5 “Coping with Stress” – handout or library copy)

Week 5: Coping with Illness

- Crisis theory
- Leventhal’s Common-Sense Self-Regulation Model (CS-SRM)
- Adapting to illness: Taylor’s (1983) Cognitive Adaptation Theory
- Promoting good adaptation

Core Reading: Ogden (Chapter 9). Optional is French et al. (Chapter 12) and Morrison & Bennett (Chapter 15).

Week 6: Pain

- Introduction to pain and psychology
- Psychological factors affecting pain
- Gate Control Theory
- Managing acute and chronic pain, and resulting disability

Core Reading: Ogden (Chapter 13) or Morrison & Bennett (Chapter 16). Optional but strongly recommended is Sarafino (Chapters 10 and 11).

Week 7: Psychology of Health Behaviour

- About health behaviour
- Health behaviour and psychology
- Theories of health behaviour
- Transtheoretical Model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983)

Core Reading: Ogden (Chapters 3 and 7) PLUS the following paper:
West, R. (2005). Time for a change: putting the Transtheoretical (Stages of Change) Model to rest. *Addiction*, 100, 1036–1039.

Week 8: Motivation and Beliefs

- Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory (SCT)
- Ajzen’s (1991) theory of planned behaviour (TPB)

Core Reading: Morrison & Bennett (Chapter 5)

Week 9: Translating Motivation into Action

- Intention-Behaviour Gap
 - Willpower: Baumeister’s “*ego depletion*”
 - Implementation Intentions
 - Dual-process models

- Acting without motivation
 - Automaticity: Habits
 - Reinforcement
 - Environmental Prompts

Core Reading: Gollwitzer, P. (1999). Implementation Intentions: Strong effects of simple plans. *American Psychologist*, 54, 493-503.

Week 10: Eating and Dietary Behaviour

- Food choices
 - Developmental approaches to eating
 - Cognitive approaches
 - Self-regulation and eating
- Dieting
 - Weight concern
 - Body image and dieting
 - Restrained eating

Core Reading: Ogden (Chapter 5) PLUS article “*Bite, chew, savor*” from *APA Monitor on Psychology* magazine (Nov 2012 issue) – link on Moodle.

Optionally, the following book may also be useful (e-book at library):

Ogden, J. (2010). *Psychology of Eating: From Healthy to Disordered Behaviour* (2nd ed.). London: Wiley-Blackwell.

Week 11: Smoking and Cessation

- Who smokes?
- Measuring how much people smoke
- Approaches to addiction
- Psychology at each phase of addiction

Core Reading: Ogden (Chapter 4) PLUS French et al. (2010) chapter on smoking by Shahab and West (available as digitised reading on Moodle)

Week 12: Interventions to change health behaviour

- Theory and behaviour change
- Behaviour change techniques
 - Michie et al.’s taxonomy
- Delivering the behaviour change techniques: Interventions
 - Levels of intervention: individual, group, population
 - Modes of delivery

Core Reading: Ogden (Chapter 8), optional but strongly recommended is Morrison & Bennett (Chapters 6 and 7).