

PSYED 1089

PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS IN REAL WORLD CONTEXTS

Section 1080

Spring 2020

Tuesdays 4:00pm – 6:40pm

142 Cathedral of Learning

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Office Hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is an introduction to psychological interventions designed to solve real world problems, including increasing academic achievement, improving mental health, and reducing risky behavior. By the end of the course, you should be able to: (1) describe how different research designs and measurement approaches influence the conclusions that can be made about an intervention's effectiveness; (2) apply psychological theory to understand social problems and their solutions; and (3) act as a critical consumer of the empirical literature in multiple areas of psychological intervention. The overall goal of the course is to add to your existing skills in research and service provision with youth and families.

COURSE FORMAT

Course meetings will be a combination of lecture and seminar-style learning. Seminar-style includes whole and small group discussions, individual and small group activities, and individual reflection on course content and student learning. Additionally, the course will incorporate online discussions through Courseweb (courseweb.pitt.edu).

Pitt's Courseweb interface (courseweb.pitt.edu) will be used for course announcements, content material postings, student submission of materials, and providing supplemental materials.

Students are expected to check Courseweb several times a week.

REQUIRED READING

All readings (journal articles, handbook chapters, magazine articles, etc.) are provided on Courseweb.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation and Attendance — Students are expected to attend class and participate in class discussions. And while there will be designated discussion leaders for some classes, everyone is expected to read the required material prior to each class. Please come to class prepared to

engage in a thoughtful and scholarly discussion of the readings. There may be additional take-home assignments throughout the semester that will count toward participation.

Discussion Seeds — Throughout the semester, students will prepare brief written responses to thought-questions on topics covered in class. Discussion seeds should be about 250 words (one double-spaced page) and show depth of engagement with the questions. Your responses should include critiques, personal connections, societal implications, and links to class lectures and readings, events in the world, and even popular culture. These responses will serve as a jumpstart to class discussions. ***Discussion Seeds must be submitted to Courseweb by 5pm on the Monday prior to class so that discussion leaders have time to compile them into a presentation. Late responses will not receive credit.*** Here is the grading rubric for the discussion seeds:

- 0 points: late submission / no submission
- 1 point: response is too short (<200 words); response does not engage substantively with the question(s); response does not answer all parts of the question(s)
- 2 points: response is appropriate length (≥250 words) and shows depth of engagement with the question(s); response fully answers each of the parts of the question

Leading Class Discussion — Working individually or in small groups, students will be discussion leaders during the semester. Students will be responsible for collecting and organizing discussion seeds into a class presentation. Students are encouraged to share additional insight from other readings, current events, personal experiences, or information gathered from outside experiences (research and practice). Plan for your discussions to be **30 minutes**. Be as creative as possible!

Midterm Exam — There will be one exam on February 12th. It will cover material from weeks 1 through 5. The exam will be based on the readings, lectures, and in-class activities.

Final Research Paper — Each student will write a 1,500-word research proposal describing an intervention study designed to address a problem confronting children, adolescents, young adults, or families. More details will be provided throughout the semester, but the final paper will involve three different assignments:

- *Part 1: Final Paper Plan* — In one, single-spaced page, students will discuss their plans for the final paper. This document should include brief descriptions of: (1) a real world problem you'd like to fix; (2) a psychological process you think contributes to the problem; (3) an intervention that can influence the psychological process; and (4) an outcome you hope to achieve in your study. This exercise can be a helpful way for you to start thinking about the literature/studies you will need to review for your annotated bibliography.
- *Part 2: Annotated Bibliography* — An annotated bibliography is an organized list of citations to books, journal articles, handbook chapters, and other documents. You will need to research, read, and write annotations for a **minimum of 6** sources. For this project, you should primarily use scholarly research sources (i.e., journal articles, book chapters, books, legal documents); other sources (e.g., Wikipedia, TED Talks) do not count toward

the minimum. Students will be given a template for how to review each of the sources. Your goal is to find and summarize articles pertaining to your final paper topic.

- *Part 3: Final Paper* — The final paper will involve putting all the above parts together into a 1,500-word research proposal.

Final Paper Presentation — Your final paper will be accompanied by a 15-minute presentation during the last two weeks of class. Your presentation should cover the main points of your paper. View this as an opportunity to teach your classmates about an important topic in psychological intervention research.

COURSE GRADING

There are a total of 100 points for this class.

Assignment	Points
Discussion Seeds (5 of 6)	10 (2 points each)
Lead Class Discussion	10
Midterm Exam	25
Final Paper Plan	5
Annotated Bibliography	15
Final Presentation	15
Final Paper	20
Total	100

Grades will be calculated as follows:

A+	97-100 points	C	74-76 points
A	94-96 points	C-	70-73 points
A-	90-93 points	D+	67-69 points
B+	87-89 points	D	64-66 points
B	84-86 points	D-	60-63 points
B-	80-83 points	F	< 60 points
C+	77-79 points		

Total points will be rounded to nearest whole. So, 0.01 to 0.49 will be rounded down, and 0.50 to 0.99 will be rounded up.

THE FINE PRINT

Grades and Assignments

In class, you will receive more explicit instructions for completing each assignment. Please ask if you have questions regarding how you will be evaluated in this course. I am happy to discuss your learning goals and progress toward them at any time, though the earlier in the semester the better. Please note, however, that I do not discuss grades over email, due to the sensitive nature of grades and laws about student rights and privacy. If you would like to speak to me about such

matters, we can talk in person. If you feel there is a specific, technical error in the grading, I will review that particular concern. However, grades, in general, are non-negotiable. I am, however, happy to discuss ways in which you may enhance your learning and performance in this course.

Technology in Class

I feel ambivalent about students using laptops in class. On the one hand, they can be helpful tools in your learning. On the other hand, social media, news, and shopping are only a click away, and they can hinder learning and prevent engaging class discussions. I expect you to manage your attention productively in class. This means limiting off-task activities. But it also means that when “Google-able” topics come up in class discussion, I encourage you to search and share.

As for cell phones, please silence them during class and only use them in an emergency. There are breaks during each class where you will have the opportunity to use your phone if you’d like.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic honesty. Any student engaged in cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty would be subject to disciplinary action. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity <http://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html>. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the assignment will be imposed for any assignments that violate these obligations, with possible additional consequences, including failure of the course for the semester.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability requiring testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify the course instructor and Disability Resources and Services (DRS) no later than the 2nd week of the term. You will need to provide documentation from DRS of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To contact Disability Resources and Services, call 412-648-7890 (Voice or TTD) or e-mail drsrecep@pitt.edu to schedule an appointment. The DRS office is located in 140 William Pitt Union.

Statement on Classroom Recording

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion, and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student’s own private use.

Additional Student Resources

- *Technology/Computer Help Desk*: 412-624-HELP [4357] (<http://technology.pitt.edu/>)
- *Student Health Services*: 412-383-1800 (<http://www.studhlth.pitt.edu/>)
- *Counseling Center*: 412-648-7930 (<http://www.counseling.pitt.edu/>)
- *The Writing Center*: 412-624-6556 (<http://www.writingcenter.pitt.edu/>)
- *Disability Resources and Services*: 412-648-7890 (<http://www.drs.pitt.edu/>)
- *Office of International Services*: 412-624-7120 (<http://www.ois.pitt.edu/>)

COURSE CALENDAR

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
Wk 1, Jan 8	Introduction: Small Edits, Lasting Change	
Wk 2, Jan 15	Yeah, But Does It Work (Part I)? Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Randomized Experiments	
Wk 3, Jan 22	Yeah, But Does It Work (Part II)? Measurement Schmeasurement	
Wk 4, Jan 29	Principles of Psychological Intervention (Part I): Understanding Psychological Processes	
Wk 5, Feb 5	Principles of Psychological Intervention (Part II): Using Psychologically “Wise” Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Paper Plan Due
Wk 6, Feb 12	<i>Midterm Exam (covers material from wks 1-5)</i>	
Wk 7, Feb 19	Reducing Teenage Pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Seed #1 Due (by 5PM on 2/17)
Wk 8, Feb 26	Reducing Alcohol and Drug Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Seed #2 Due (by 5PM on 2/24)
Wk 9, Mar 4	Reducing Teenage Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Seed #3 Due (by 5PM on 3/2) • Annotated Bibliography Due
Wk 10, Mar 11	<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>	
Wk 11, Mar 18	Increasing Academic Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Seed #4 Due (by 5PM on 3/16)
Wk 12, Mar 25	Increasing Healthy Eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Seed #5 Due (by 5PM on 3/23)
Wk 13, Apr 1	Increasing Well-Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Seed #6 Due (by 5PM on 3/30)
Wk 14, Apr 8	Class Presentations Part 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual meetings about final paper
Wk 15, Apr 15	Class Presentations Part 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual meetings about final paper
FINAL PAPERS DUE WEDNESDAY APRIL 22 BY 5PM		

DETAILED SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY READINGS

Week 2 Jan 15: Yeah, But Does It Work (Part I)? Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Randomized Experiments

Wilson, T. D. (2011). *Redirect: The surprising new science of psychological change*. New York, NY: Little Brown/Hachette Book Group. Chapter 2.

Gallo, A. (2016). *A refresher on randomized controlled experiments*. <https://hbr.org/2016/03/a-refresher-on-randomized-controlled-experiments>

Week 3 Jan 22: Yeah, But Does It Work (Part II)? Measurement Schmeasurement

Duckworth, A. L., & Yeager, D. S. (2015). Measurement matters: Assessing personal qualities other than cognitive ability for educational purposes. *Educational Researcher*, 44, 237-251.

Flake, J. K., & Fried, E. I. (2019, Preprint). Measurement schmeasurement: Questionable measurement practices and how to avoid them. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/hs7wm>

Boo, K. (2006, February 6). Swamp Nurse. *The New Yorker*, 81(46), 54-65.

Week 4 Jan 29: Principles of Psychological Intervention (Part I): Understanding Psychological Processes

Walton, G. M., & Wilson, T. D. (2018). Wise interventions: Psychological remedies for social and personal problems. *Psychological Review*, 125, 617-655.

Walton, G. M. (2014). The new science of wise psychological interventions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 23, 73-82.

Week 5 Feb 5: Principles of Psychological Intervention (Part II): Using Psychologically “Wise” Practices

Yeager, D. S., Dahl, R. E., & Dweck, C. S. (2018). Why interventions to influence adolescent behavior often fail but could succeed. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 13, 101-122.

Walton, G. M., Logel, C., Peach, J. M., Spencer, S. J., & Zanna, M. P. (2015). Two brief interventions to mitigate a “chilly climate” transform women’s experience, relationships, and achievement in engineering. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 107, 1-18.

Week 6 Feb 12: Midterm Exam

Week 7 Feb 19: Reducing Teenage Pregnancies

Trenholm, C., Devaney, B., Fortson, K., Clark, M., Quay, L., & Wheeler, J. (2008). Impacts of abstinence education on teen sexual activity, risk of pregnancy, and risk of sexually transmitted diseases. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 27, 255-276.

Allen, J. P., Philliber, S., Herrling, S., & Kuperminc, G. P. (1997). Preventing teen pregnancy and academic failure: Experimental evaluation of a developmentally based approach. *Child Development*, 68, 729-742.

Week 8 Feb 26: Reducing Drug and Alcohol Abuse

West, S. L., & O'Neal, K. K. (2004). Project D.A.R.E. outcome effectiveness revisited. *American Journal of Public Health*, 94, 1027-1029.

Berger, J., & Rand, L. (2008). Shifting signals to help health: Using identity signaling to reduce risky health behaviors. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35, 509-518.

Week 9 Mar 4: Reducing Teenage Violence

Petrosino, A., Turpin-Petrosino, C., & Buehler, J. (2003). Scared straight and other juvenile awareness programs for preventing juvenile delinquency: A systematic review of the randomized experimental evidence. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 589, 41-62.

Dodge, K. A., & Godwin, J. (2013). Social-information-processing patterns mediate the impact of preventive intervention on adolescent antisocial behavior. *Psychological Science*, 24, 456-465.

Week 10 Mar 11: Spring Break

Week 11 Mar 18: Increasing Academic Achievement

Fryer, R. G. (2011). Financial incentives and student achievement: Evidence from randomized trials. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 126, 1755-1798.

Yeager, D. S., Hanselman, P., Walton, G. M., Murray, J. S., Crosnoe, R., Muller, C., Tipton, E., Schneider, B., Hulleman, C. S., Hinojosa, C. P., Paunesku, D., Romero, C., Flint, K., Roberts, A., Trott, J., Iachan, R., Buontempo, J., Yang, S. M., Carvalho, C. M., Hahn, P. R., Gopalan, M., Mhatre, P., Ferguson, R., Duckworth, A. L., & Dweck, C. S. (2019). A national experiment reveals where a growth mindset improves achievement. *Nature*, 573, 364-369.

Week 12 Mar 25: Increasing Healthy Eating

Bryan, C. J., Yeager, D. S., & Hinojosa, C. P. (2019). A values-alignment intervention protects adolescents from the effects of food marketing. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 3, 596-603.

Turnwald, B. P., Bertoldo, J. D., Perry, M. A., Policastro, P., Timmons, M., Bosso, C., Connors, P., Valgenti, R. T., Pine, L., Challamel, G., Gardner, C. D., & Crum, A. J. (2019). Increasing

vegetable intake by emphasizing tasty and enjoyable attributes: A randomized controlled multisite intervention for taste-focused labeling. *Psychological Science*, Advance online publication.

Robinson, T. N. (2010). Chapter 25 - Stealth interventions for obesity prevention and control: Motivating behavior change. In L. Dubé, A. Bechara, A. Dagher, A. Drewnowski, J. Lebel, P. James, & R. Y. Yada (Eds.), *Obesity prevention* (pp. 319-327). Academic Press.

Week 13 April 1: Increasing Well-Being

Strahan, E. J., Lafrance, A., Wilson, A. E., Ethier, N., Spencer, S. J., & Zanna, M. P. (2008). Victoria's dirty secret: How sociocultural norms influence adolescent girls and women. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *34*, 288-301.

Smith, E. N., Romero, C., Donovan, B., Herter, R., Paunesku, D., Cohen, G. L., Dweck, C. S., & Gross, J. J. (2018). Emotion theories and adolescent well-being: Results of an online intervention. *Emotion*, *18*, 781-788.

Schleider, J. L., Burnette, J. L., Widman, L., Hoyt, C., & Prinstein, M. J. (2019). Randomized trial of a single-session growth mind-set intervention for rural adolescents' internalizing and externalizing problems. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, Advance online publication.