

# PSYED 1089

## PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS IN REAL WORLD CONTEXTS

University of Pittsburgh  
School of Education  
Department of Health and Human Development  
Applied Developmental Psychology Program  
Spring 2021

Class Schedule: Wed 5:00pm – 7:40pm

Class Location: Online/Zoom

Instructor: Brian Galla, PhD

Email: [gallabri@pitt.edu](mailto:gallabri@pitt.edu) (I will respond to all messages within 48 hours)

Office Hours: by appointment

### DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course is an introduction to psychological interventions designed to solve real world problems. The focus is on interventions that are universally-administered to adolescents in real world contexts and which have grounding in social psychological theories. By the end of the course, you should be able to: (1) apply psychological theory to understand social problems and their solutions; (2) describe how different research designs and measurement approaches influence the conclusions that can be made about an intervention's effectiveness; and (3) act as a critical consumer of the empirical literature on psychological intervention. The overall goal of the course is to add to your existing skills in research and service provision with youth and families.

### FORMAT

The course has a flipped format. The instructor will upload lecture videos and lab activities to Canvas and students will watch the videos and complete the lab activities prior to each class. Students will also post weekly written reflections about the assigned readings to the Canvas Discussion Board. Class time will be used to review the lab activities and discuss written reflections, in addition to other activities (e.g., discuss exams and other assignments).

Canvas ([canvas.pitt.edu](https://canvas.pitt.edu)) will be used for announcements, exams, and Discussion Board postings. All materials (lecture videos, weekly readings, lab activities) will be provided on Canvas. There is no text to buy. Students are expected to check Canvas several times a week.

### GRADING

**Attendance (15%)** — Students are expected to attend every class and participate in discussions. *Students are also expected to enable Zoom video throughout the duration of class.* The instructor will take attendance each class. Absences will be excused only with written permission of the instructor.

**Written Reflections (10%)** — Students will post weekly written reflections to questions about course content. *Reflections must be submitted to Canvas Discussion Board by 5PM on Tuesday* before class so that the instructor can review and curate the conversation.

**Exam 1 (30%)** — The first exam will cover material from classes 1 to 6.

**Exam 2 (30%)** — The second exam will cover material from classes 8 to 13.

**Intervention Report (10%)** — Students will work in small groups to review an intervention study described on [www.wiseinterventions.org](http://www.wiseinterventions.org).

**Presentation (5%)** — Students will present findings from their group intervention report in a 5-minute rapid fire format.

**Grading Scale:**

The final grade will be calculated by dividing the number of points earned by the number of points possible, weighted by each section.

A+	≥	97%	C+	=	77-79.9%
A	=	93-96.9%	C	=	73-76.9%
A-	=	90-92.9%	C-	=	70-72.9%
B+	=	87-89.9%	D+	=	67-69.9%
B	=	83-86.9%	D	=	63-66.9%
B-	=	80-82.9%	D-	=	60-62.9%
			F	<	60%

**THE FINE PRINT**

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.

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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 or e-mail [drsrecep@pitt.edu](mailto:drsrecep@pitt.edu) to schedule an appointment. The DRS office is located in William Pitt Union. The website is here: <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/disability-access/disability-resources-and-services>

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom discussions 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.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

OL=Online Lecture (number reflects the class week)

LA=Lab Activity

WR=Writing Reflection

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
Wk 1, Jan 20	Introduction: Small Edits, Lasting Changes	
Wk 2, Jan 27	Principles of Psychological Intervention (Part I): Understanding Psychological Processes	OL2 / LA2 / WR2
Wk 3, Feb 3	Principles of Psychological Intervention (Part II): Using Psychologically “Wise” Techniques	OL3 / LA3 / WR3
Wk 4, Feb 10	Why Interventions to Influence Adolescent Behavior Often Fail but Could Succeed	OL4 / LA4 / WR4
Wk 5, Feb 17	Yeah, But Does It Work (Part I)? Measurement Schmeasurement	OL5 / LA5 / WR5
Wk 6, Feb 24	Yeah, But Does It Work (Part II)? Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Randomized Experiments	OL6 / LA6 Exam Review
Wk 7, Mar 3	Exam 1	
Wk 8, Mar 10	Harnessing Status and Respect to Boost Health Behaviors: Values Alignment Intervention	OL8 / LA8 / WR8
Wk 9, Mar 17	Harnessing Status and Respect to Boost Achievement: Advice Giving Intervention	OL9 / LA9 / WR9
Wk 10, Mar 24	<i>No Class – Self-Care Day</i>	Explore <a href="http://www.wiseinterventions.org">www.wiseinterventions.org</a> and Pick a Study to Report
Wk 11, Mar 31	Creating Respectful Environments: Empathic Discipline Intervention	OL11 / LA11  Work on Intervention Report in Class
Wk 12, Apr 7	Blunting Threats to Status and Respect: Values Affirmation Intervention	OL12 / LA12  Intervention Report First Draft
Wk 13, Apr 14	Wrapping Up: Seed and Soil and Other Caveats	OL13 / LA13  Meetings with Instructor about Lab Report
Wk 14, Apr 21	Class Presentations	Intervention Report Final Version  Exam Review
Wk 15, Apr 28	Exam 2	

## WEEKLY READINGS

### **Week 2 Jan 27: 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*(5), 617-655.

Witherspoon, E. B., Vincent-Ruz, P., & Schunn, C. D. (2019). When making the grade isn't enough: The gendered nature of premed science course attrition. *Educational Researcher*, *48*(4), 193-204.

### **Week 3 Feb 3: Principles of Psychological Intervention (Part II): Using Psychologically "Wise" Techniques**

Binning, K. R., Kaufmann, N., McGreevy, E. M., Fotuhi, O., Chen, S., Marshman, E., Kalender, Z. Y., Limeri, L., Betancur, L., & Singh, C. (2020). Changing social contexts to foster equity in college science courses: An ecological-belonging intervention. *Psychological Science*, *31*(9), 1059-1070.

### **Week 4 Feb 10: Why Interventions to Influence Adolescent Behavior Often Fail but Could Succeed**

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*(1), 101-122.

### **Week 5 Feb 17: 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.

### **Week 6 Feb 24: 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*(4), 237-251.

### **Week 8 Mar 10: Harnessing Status and Respect to Boost Health Behaviors: Values Alignment Intervention**

Galla, B. M., Choukas-Bradley, S., Fiore, H. M., & Esposito, M. V. (in press). Values-alignment messaging boosts adolescents' motivation to control social media use. *Child Development*.

**Week 9 Mar 17: Harnessing Status and Respect to Boost Achievement: Advice Giving Intervention**

Eskreis-Winkler, L., Milkman, K. L., Gromet, D. M., & Duckworth, A. L. (2019). A large-scale field experiment shows giving advice improves academic outcomes for the advisor. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 116*(30), 14808–14810.

**Week 11 Mar 31: Creating Respectful Environments: Empathic Discipline Intervention**

Okonofua, J. A., Paunesku, D., & Walton, G. M. (2016). Brief intervention to encourage empathic discipline cuts suspension rates in half among adolescents. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 113*(19), 5221-5226.

**Week 12 Apr 7: Blunting Threats to Status and Respect: Values Affirmation Intervention**

Cohen, G. L., Garcia, J., Apfel, N., & Master, A. (2006). Reducing the racial achievement gap: A social-psychological intervention. *Science, 313*(5791), 1307-1310.

**Week 13 Apr 14: Wrapping Up: Seed and Soil**

Walton, G. M., & Yeager, D. S. (2020). Seed and soil: Psychological affordances in contexts help to explain where wise interventions succeed or fail. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 29*(3), 219-226.