

HHD 1014: Psychological Interventions in Real World Contexts
University of Pittsburgh
School of Education
Department of Health and Human Development
Applied Developmental Psychology Program
Spring 2024

Class Schedule: Thursday 1:00pm – 3:30pm
Class Location: 5201 Wesley W. Posvar Hall
Instructor: Brian Galla, PhD
Email: 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 developmental and social psychological theories. By the end of the course, students 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 articles to Canvas and students will watch the videos and read the articles prior to each class. Students will also post written reflections on assigned topics to the Canvas Discussion Board. Class time will be used to do group lab activities, discuss written reflections, and other things (e.g., work on final project).

Canvas (canvas.pitt.edu) will be used for announcements and Discussion Board postings. All materials (lecture videos, PowerPoint slides, articles, assignments, lab activities, etc.) will be provided on Canvas. There is no text to buy. Students are expected to check Canvas several times a week.

GRADING

Attendance (10%) — Students are expected to attend every class and participate in discussions. The instructor will take attendance during each class. Absences will be excused only with prior permission from the instructor. (Showing up to class late or leaving early—without prior permission—will result in half attendance points.)

Lab Activities (15%) — Students will complete weekly lab activities in class to get a deeper understanding of the readings and lectures. ***Completed lab activities must be approved by the instructor at the end of each class to receive full credit.***

- **Note:** I will not grade your answers on the lab activities. You get full credit simply for completing the lab. The purpose of the lab activities is to help students engage with and explore the weekly course material. They're not intended to be evaluations, but they will serve as excellent resources for exam prep. We will review answers to each question on the lab activities during class.

Writing Reflections (10%) — Students will post weekly written reflections to questions about course content. ***Reflections must be submitted to Canvas Discussion Board by 5PM on Wednesday*** (the day

before class) so that the instructor can review and curate the conversation. Instructions for completing writing reflections are provided on Canvas.

Exam 1 (25%) — The first exam will cover material from classes 1 to 6.

Exam 2 (25%) — The second exam will cover material from classes 8 to 14.

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

Presentation (5%) — Students will deliver 10-minute presentations on the findings from their group intervention report.

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+	=	77-79.99%
A	=	94-96.99%	C	=	74-76.99%
A-	=	90-93.99%	C-	=	70-73.99%
B+	=	87-89.99%	D+	=	67-69.99%
B	=	84-86.99%	D	=	64-66.99%
B-	=	80-83.99%	D-	=	60-63.99%
			F	<	60%

THE FINE PRINT

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). 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. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam.

To learn more about Academic Integrity, visit the [Academic Integrity Guide](#) for an overview of the topic. For hands- on practice, complete the [Academic Integrity Modules](#).

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and [Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu, (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

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.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

**The following course schedule/readings may change at the discretion of the instructor.*

OL=Online Lecture; LA=Lab Activity; WR=Writing Reflection (*number refers to the class week)

Date	Topic	Assignments
Wk 1, Jan 11	Introduction: Small Edits, Lasting Changes ¹	
Wk 2, Jan 18	Principles of Psychological Intervention (Part I): Understanding Psychological Processes	OL2 / LA2 / WR2
Wk 3, Jan 25	Principles of Psychological Intervention (Part II): Using Psychologically “Wise” Techniques	OL3 / LA3 / WR3
Wk 4, Feb 1	Why Interventions to Influence Adolescent Behavior Often Fail but Could Succeed	OL4 / LA4 / WR4
Wk 5, Feb 8	Yeah, But Does It Work (Part I)? Measurement Schmeasurement	OL5 / LA5 / WR5
Wk 6, Feb 15	Yeah, But Does It Work (Part II)? Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Randomized Experiments	OL6 / LA6 Exam Review
Wk 7, Feb 22	Exam 1	
Wk 8, Feb 29	Harnessing Status and Respect to Boost Health Behaviors: Values Alignment Intervention	OL8 / LA8 / WR8
Wk 9, Mar 7	Harnessing Status and Respect to Boost Achievement: Advice Giving Intervention	OL9 / LA9 / WR9 Explore www.wiseinterventions.org and Pick a Study to Report
Wk 10, Mar 14	No Class – Spring Break	
Wk 11, Mar 21	Making Interactions with Adults more Respectful: Empathic Discipline Intervention	OL11 / LA11 Work on Intervention Report in Class
Wk 12, Mar 28	Lessening the Effect of Threats to Status and Respect: Values Affirmation Intervention	OL12 / LA12 Work on Intervention Report in Class Intervention Report First Draft Due by Saturday March 30 at 11:59PM
Wk 13, Apr 4	Seed and Soil: How Contexts Shape Effects of Psychological Interventions	OL13 / LA13 Work on Intervention Report Revisions and Presentation in Class
Wk 14, Apr 11	Class Presentations	Exam Review
Wk 15, Apr 18	Exam 2	Intervention Report Final Version Due

¹ This idea is taken from chapter 1 of Timothy Wilson’s 2011 book, “Redirect: The surprising new science of psychological change.” We will be reading chapters 1 and 2 of this book in week 6.

WEEKLY READINGS

Wk 2, Jan 18: 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.

Optional reading: For a more accessible summary of "wise" interventions, see Walton, G. M. (2014). The new science of wise psychological interventions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 23(1), 73-82.

Optional viewing: Also consider watching this lecture by Greg Walton where he provides a good overview on wise interventions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phu1yH42jn0>

Wk 3, Jan 25: Principles of Psychological Intervention (Part II): Using Psychologically "Wise" Techniques

*Continue to review Walton and Wilson (2018, *Psychological Review*) from Wk2

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.

Wk 4, Feb 1: Why Interventions to Influence Adolescent Behavior Often Fail but Could Succeed

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.

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.

Optional reading: For a more accessible summary of these arguments, see Yeager, D. S. (2017). Social and emotional learning programs for adolescents. *The Future of Children*, 27(1), 73-94.

Wk 5, Feb 8: Yeah, But Does It Work (Part I)? 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.

Flake, J. K., & Fried, E. I. (2020). Measurement schmeasurement: Questionable measurement practices and how to avoid them. *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science*, 3(4), 456-465.

Wk 6, Feb 15: Yeah, But Does It Work (Part II)? 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. Chapters 1 and 2.

Wk 8, Feb 29: Harnessing Status and Respect to Boost Health Behaviors: Values Alignment Intervention

Galla, B. M., Choukas-Bradley, S., Fiore, H. M., & Esposito, M. V. (2021). Values-alignment messaging boosts adolescents' motivation to control social media use. *Child Development, 92*(5), 1717-1734.

West, S. L., & O'Neal, K. K. (2004). Project D.A.R.E. outcome effectiveness revisited. *American Journal of Public Health, 94*(6), 1027-1029.

Wk 9, Mar 7: 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.

Fryer, R. G. (2011). Financial incentives and student achievement: Evidence from randomized trials. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 126*(4), 1755-1798.

Wk 11, Mar 21: Making Interactions with Adults more Respectful: 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.

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*(1), 41-62.

Wk 12, Mar 28: Lessening the Effect of 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.

Wk 13, Apr 4: Seed and Soil: How Contexts Shape Effects of Psychological Interventions

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, 30*(11), 1603-1615.

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.