

## SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

**Discipline: Psychology**

**Spring 2009**

**PSYC 314Z: Stress: Work, Technology, and Life**

**Upper Division**

**Faculty Name: John Mueller**

**Required Pre-requisites:** Course is limited to those who are psychology majors or those who have taken a prior Psychology course at the 200-level (sophomore-level) or above.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will examine the different ways of conceptualizing stress and related concepts, such as anxiety, arousal, tension, burnout, and so forth, and how physical and psychological health is affected. The coverage will focus on workplace or job-related stress, but also extend to general life stresses. The emphasis will be on theoretical issues, mechanisms, and assessment issues, instead of focusing on treatment per se. Consistent with the migrations theme, handling stress will be considered in terms of our legacy of automatic physiological and emotional reactions to physical danger, in the context of the more subtle stressors in today's world, and our using our cognitive resources for stress management.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The student will become familiar with the concepts and theories of the Psychology of Stress, and learn to evaluate the research findings in stress management. The student will understand personal, family, social, and work-related stress management methods, and general stress reduction techniques, including relaxation, anxiety management, meditation, biofeedback, time management, nutrition, and exercise, as well as cognitive coping techniques.

## TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

The anticipated schedule of topics, arranged by phase of voyage, presuming two classes between ports of call, with chapters in the **RICE** text indicated as **R#**. (Some rescheduling may be required as port opportunities arise, or as cross-course conflicts become apparent.)

Date	Leave	STRESS: Activities, Readings (Rice)	Destination
19 Jan	Nassau	1. Overview and orientation, with pretest 2. Concepts, theories, models (R1)	Cadiz
31 Jan	Cadiz	1. Research designs and interpretation (R2) 2. Attitudes, beliefs, expectations (R3)	Naples
07 Feb	Naples	1. Personality and stress (R4) 2. Physiology of stress (R5)	Istanbul
14 Feb	Istanbul	1. Family issues and stress (R6) 2. Meditation and biofeedback (R13)	Alexandria
21 Feb	Alexandria	1. Review, flex, and integrate 2. Exam (on above)	Chennai
08 Mar	Chennai	1. Environment, pollution, disasters (R9) 2. Social issues I - cultural plus (R8)	Bangkok
18 Mar	Bangkok	1. Job stress and burnout (R7 & supplement) 2. Social issues II - life changes (R8)	Ho Chi Minh
26 Mar	Ho Chi Minh	1. Student stress I: Time plus (R14) 2. Student stress II: Nutrition plus (R15)	Hong Kong
02 Apr	Hong Kong	1. Coping (R10) 2. Muscle relaxation (R11)	Yokohama
09 Apr	Yokohama	1. Imagery techniques (R12) 2. Humor as stress relief	Honolulu
18 Apr	Honolulu	1. Review, flex, and integrate 2. Exam: second half (here? below?)	Puerto Quetzal
30 Apr	Puerto Quetzal	1. Relaxation (Rice appendix) 2. Reflection	Miami

*Note: There is not enough time in lecture to cover everything discussed in the book; classes will be used to highlight important topics and go into more depth on difficult concepts, as well as having discussions. Classes will also cover some material not covered directly in the book. The exams will have questions from all course material, which includes the assigned textbook, and all class activities. You are responsible for all class content and announcements whether you are present or not. It is important that you complete reading assignments before coming to class because class activities assume you are already familiar with the material.*

## **FIELD COMPONENT**

Twenty percent of the contact hours for each course is provided by field work. The study of Stress covers several sources and types of stressors, the type of effects for each, and different ways of coping with each source. For example, in addition to physical and health stressors, there are environmental stressors, social and cultural stressors, workplace stressors, family, and more. Such stress sources seem likely to vary around the world, and it seems especially appropriate for students to examine these relative to their equivalents in North America. For example, recent tsunamis near Bangkok seem a good fit with environmental disasters, student stress differences in Japan, and economic pressures across cultures. Stress coping strategies would also seem an option, such as the Yoga meditation facility at Chennai. My plan is to identify two such possibilities for the students, and then have them do one, as a short paper (5-6 pages), worth 20%.

## **METHODS OF EVALUATION**

30% Exam 1: Rice chapters 1-6, plus 13, as in the table above. Mixed format: short essay (with choice, e.g., pick 2 of 3), compare and contrast, define, probably some true/false and/or multiple choice and/or completion, etc.

30% Exam 2: Remaining chapters in Rice (not comprehensive), similar format to first exam.

20% - Field Activity: Students will select one field exercise from two options, and write a short paper (5-6 pages) worth 20%, tentatively due April 18 (departure from Honolulu).

20% Media analysis: Short paper (5-6 pages) comparing an everyday "news report" re stress research to the text (or journal), as to whether the popular report is an accurate representation or not. A variant of this would make it a media report published in one of the ports on the trip. The tentative due date for this would be April 9 (departure from Yokohama).

*Letter grades will correspond to the SEA Registrar's standards for percent achievement. See grading note below at end. Participation per se is not graded, but attendance is expected.*

## **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

AUTHOR: RICE, Philip L.

TITLE: Stress and Health

PUBLISHER: Brooks/Cole-Wadsworth

ISBN #: 9780534265021

DATE/EDITION: 1999 (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)

COST: \$100 (about)

**Publisher web page:** <<http://tinyurl.com/54osh6>>

**Student companion web page:** <<http://tinyurl.com/4mkgnv>>

## GRADING

Borderline grades would not be rounded up. I prefer to work with a mastery grading scheme, where there is no curve; that is, there is no upper limit on the number of As, Bs, etc., there do not have to be any Cs, Ds, or Fs.

Percent	Letter	Percent	Letter	Percent	Letter	Percent	Letter
96-100	A	80-84	B	67-71	C+	54-58	D+
90-95	A-	76-79	B-	63-66	C	50-53	D
85-89	B+	72-75	C+	59-62	C-	49-0	F