

Occupational Health Psychology

PSY 31211-R (22916)

Instructor: Prof. Irvin Schonfeld

Phone: X7164

Course Meets: Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 to 12:15.

Office hours: Tuesday 2-3 and by appointment

Office: NAC 7/217A

Email: exppsyccny@gmail.com

Room: NAC 7/119

Required textbook

Schonfeld, I. S., & Chang, C. (2017). *Occupational Health Psychology: Work, Stress, and Health*. New York: Springer Publishing Company. ISBN: 978-0-8261-9967-6

You can get the book at the CCNY Online Bookstore,

<http://ccny.textbookx.com/institutional/index.php?action=browse#books/1511670/>

or directly from the publisher,

<http://www.springerpub.com/occupational-health-psychology.html>

Required resource

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association: Sixth Edition*. Washington, DC: Author.

Please purchase a stick drive (if you don't already have one) that you can plug into a USB port. The drive will help you download documents from PsycInfo and Medline here at the College, and take the documents home to store on your PC.

I also assume that you like to read, and that you will do the assigned reading.

Everyone should note that there is a series of assignments and quizzes that are due week by week. Every student should get a head start on those assignments and know when they are coming due.

Overview

The focal concerns of occupational health psychology (OHP) that are covered in this course include (a) research methods in OHP, (b) the relation of working conditions to mental and physical health, (c) the occurrence of physical and psychological aggression in the workplace, and (d) improving the health of workers.

I cannot help but to cover some areas and leave out others. It is, however, my hope that students in this course will find OHP interesting enough to pursue the subject further.

Objectives

1. To acquire technical skills and sharpen critical thinking required for OHP research.
2. To become conversant with the OHP literature.
3. To understand how OHP can improve the psychological and physical well-being of people who work.

4. To review research on a few key topics in OHP.

I will do some lecturing. However, I don't think the course will be as interesting if I do all the speaking. I would like the students to share their thoughts, and share what they learned from the reading. I would like every student to have an opportunity to contribute to the class. In order for my plan to succeed, I organized a set of assignments for many class meetings.

A word of advice. If the readings contain unfamiliar terms use a dictionary to obtain the definition of the term.

Four components of the course and the course grade

Components	Tasks	%	
1	Brief paper; must be on time. Lateness or late registration does not count.		Bonus of 2 points added to your average
2	A six or seven quizzes to ensure that students complete the readings and listen in class I reserve the right to give a quiz when I observe that members of the class make it clear to me that they did not read the assignment. If you miss a quiz, you have to complete a make-up in my office. The make-up quiz can be written or oral.	30	
3	Class participation = Writing of discussion questions. The discussion questions are due before the in question class is supposed to meet. To get credit the questions have to be submitted on time. Not writing the question amounts to a grade of zero.	20	
4	Leading a discussion; writing a short paper	10	
5	Research paper	40	

Grade	Average		Grade	Average
A+	≥ 97		C+	79
A	91-96		C	71-78
A-	90		C-	70
B+	89		D	60-69
B	81-88		F	< 60
B-	80			

The course involves writing. **Bearing in mind that this is an upper level class**, please make sure that assignments are written clearly, grammatically, and without spelling errors. Spelling, grammar, organization, and clarity of expression count in your grade when you submit a writing assignment.

If I think that (a) your writing needs improvement and (b) you need to spend time at

the Writing Center, then spending time at the Writing Center is a course requirement.

Being assigned to the Writing Center is not a punishment. It is there to help you better express yourself. If I ask you to attend the Writing Center, you must submit to me certificates from the writing tutor that you attended at least four times. The penalty for not attending, if asked, is having 3 points subtracted from your course average. The reward for attending is having 3 points added to your course average. If I ask you to attend, you should start early in the semester, and not wait until the term is ending, which is when the Writing Center gets booked up.

All written assignments must be submitted to me on paper **and** submitted to Safe Assign on Blackboard. Bear in mind that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism involves submitting a written assignment that comes from someone else (e.g., copied from another source, someone else wrote for you, you got it from the Internet, etc.). Please don't do it. The consequences are bad, and include a grade of 'F' or 'D' at my discretion.

Attendance Policy and Late Assignments.

Everyone is responsible for reading each chapter in the textbook and listening to the lectures. You must read the assignments **BEFORE** (and not the night before) the assignment is due, and you are expected to be in class. If a student misses a class, then he or she must provide a summary and a response to what was required that class (it is helpful to have the telephone number and email address of two or three classmates). If the absent student missed a class where we discussed a reading (for example, a chapter), a summary of the chapter of two to three pages (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman font) is due within 48 hours after the missed class. If the absent student missed a discussion of one or more articles, the student must complete a two- to three-page summary of the article(s) missed.

If a student missed a quiz, he or she must take a make-up quiz in my office. Be there 20 minutes before the next class.

Don't come late to class or to a make-up quiz.

Bear in mind that we won't have a midterm or final. The idea is to keep up-to-date as the course progresses.

Component 1

You will write one **double-spaced** page about any one of the following topics: (a) the worst job you ever had, (b) a bad job (if not the worst) you once had, (c) a bad job someone you know (friend, relative, acquaintance) had, or (d) a job you liked very much. This brief paper will be your opportunity to describe your own experience or the experience of someone you know (without revealing who that person is). Of course, you don't have to get personal. It is your only opportunity to write about yourself.

Component 2

We won't have a midterm or final exam. We will have six of seven quizzes based on the readings and what you learned in class from the student presentations and my lectures.

Each quiz will require your writing a two- to four-sentence paragraph in response to each question. Each quiz will take place during the first ten minutes of class. **Please don't come late, and miss the quiz.** Otherwise, you will have to complete a make-up exam, which will be more difficult. The make-up exam could be a written or oral, and will take place in my office 20 minutes before the start of class. Unfortunately, if you miss the quiz and the make-up exam, you get a zero for the quiz.

Component 3

For each class, everyone will submit two discussion questions bearing on the chapter about to be discussed. Email the questions to the discussion leaders and me. The questions are due on the Sunday night (6 PM) before our Tuesday class. The purpose of the questions is to stimulate discussion. The questions should also demonstrate that you read the chapter, and not try to get through the upcoming session by "faking it." Write the discussion questions by yourself. The assignment is not an effort at cooperative learning.

Send the questions to me and to the discussion leader(s) for that class. A list of discussion leaders will be sent to you and the dates they are to lead. **The topics about which students will write questions are in red, and match the subject matter of the chapter that should be read for the class.**

Bear in mind that it may not be possible to cover every question. But I may use your questions on the quizzes.

Component 4

- a. A small number of students will be responsible for leading a discussion about the assigned chapter that everyone in the class should have read for the class in question.
- b. The students will orchestrate a discussion of the chapter with many of the questions everyone in the class wrote.
- c. Each of the discussion leaders will use PsycInfo or Medline to identify, read, and summarize one article **published in the last five years** that presents empirical findings that bear on the topic covered in the chapter. Each discussion leader/presenter will identify his or her own article. **Identify, read, and present on an article other than an article covered in the chapter.**
- d. Each discussion leader will write a three-page synthesis of the chapter and the article on which he or she decided to present. The synthesis has to be double-spaced and grammatically written in clear English.

In this course, for any written submission, the quality of the writing counts in the grading.

You can briefly meet with me two weeks before the class to allow us to discuss your ideas for the upcoming assignment. Show me the article you selected. If I think the article is too technical, I would recommend that you find another article.

I will organize the discussions on Chapters 1 and 2.

If you cut class on the day you are to present about the article or have a quiz, I will deduct points (unless you have a doctor's note).

Component 5

The five-page **original** research paper summarizes research on any of these topics below. These topics are available to students who arrive on time and attend class the first day. I will select a topic for those who miss the first class (for any reason) or come late. I do that to ensure that there is balance in the coverage.

1. Psychosocial working conditions and heart disease
2. Psychosocial working conditions and stroke
3. Psychosocial work factors and cigarette smoking
4. Psychosocial work factors and weight gain, obesity
5. Psychosocial work factors and leisure time physical activity
6. Psychosocial work factors and alcohol abuse
7. Psychosocial work factors that increase or reduce accident risk (e.g., safety climate)
8. Psychosocial work factors and alcohol use, dependence, and abuse
9. Work-family interface (e.g., work-to-home or home-to-work conflict or spillover)
10. Workplace interventions to reduce workplace stress and/or improve health
11. Stress in teachers
12. Stress in nurses
13. Stress in police officers
14. Stress in firefighters
15. Stress in the self-employed
16. Stress in construction workers
17. Stress in agricultural workers
18. Psychosocial work factors and musculoskeletal problems (e.g., back, shoulder, arm)
19. Violence in the workplace
20. Intervention research the aim of which is to determine if altering psychosocial workplace factors brings about (a) improvements in physical or mental health, morale, and safety as well as (b) economic benefits.

This paper is **not** a personal reflection. The paper has to be based on published research. Bear that in mind when writing. Component 1 provides you with an opportunity to write a personal reflection.

Guidelines for the research paper:

1. The paper must be **five** pages excluding the reference list, the cover page, and tables and figures (if needed).
2. The paper's margins are to be **one inch** left, right, top, and bottom, and the type is to be **12-point**.
3. The paper's title followed by your name, email address, and phone number should be on the first page.
4. Every paper must be **double-spaced**.
5. Every page should be **numbered**.
6. The paper's **format** should be consistent with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.
7. The draft and the paper must be **well written** (clarity, grammar, spelling, fluency, etc.).
8. The draft of the paper is due on class 20. Bring 3 copies of your draft to class. We are going to conduct an exercise involving student-on-student reviewing of the drafts. The drafts don't have to be the full five pages but should not be fewer than three pages. Include the title page and the references in the draft.
9. Final versions of the papers are **due** class 25 (Nov. 29) along with a self-addressed stamped envelope (\$1.50 in stamps). No exceptions.

Be sure to budget your time. Don't let a deadline overtake you. Start work early.

Access to Articles Needed for the Five-Page Research Paper

You are going to need to use the library for the research paper you are going to write for this course. One class meeting will be held in the library for the purpose of giving you greater familiarity with library resources. All the articles you choose for the paper should have been published within the last five years. Please don't read someone else's (or my) summary of an article. Please don't just read the abstract, and pretend you read the article.

To access the library's databases, please make sure that you have a CCNY ID badge with a **barcode** on back. If you don't have a bar code on the reverse side of your student ID, go the circulation desk of the library, and ask for one. You can't use our library's resources or the resources of any other CUNY library without a bar code. If you already have a barcode on the back of your ID card but never before used the library, ask the librarian at the circulation desk enter the barcode into the library's computer system.

Once you have the barcode, keep it in a file on your home computer. The advantage of keeping the barcode in a file on your computer is that any time you need to access the database from home, you can just copy and paste the barcode number when the database requests it--this saves you the effort of retyping a tediously long number. You can thus access from home the library's databases (PsycInfo and Medline) as well as the articles you need to write your paper. If the library does not have a publication you need, Interlibrary Loan can get it for you. But you must act promptly with Interlibrary Loan because sometimes the turnaround time is a week.

I also encourage to form study groups. Study groups can be helpful in reviewing the chapters.

Group 1 Surnames begin with the letters A – C

Group 2 D – L These group assignments could change depending on late registration

Group 3 N – Z and course withdrawals.

This calendar is subject to minor changes at instructor's discretion.

Class	Date (Tues/Thurs)	Topic	Chapter Reading Assignment Due Those Classes	Discussion Leaders
1	Aug 29	An Intro to OHP	Ch. 1	Schonfeld
2	Aug 31			
3	Sep 5	Research Methods	Chs. 1 & 2	Schonfeld
4	Sep 7			
5	Sep 12	Library Resources Report to the Library		Prof. Gibbon
6	Sep 14	Quiz on Chaps 1, 2, & library	Ch. 3	Group 1
7	Sep 19	Theoretical Models; Mental Health		
8	Sep 26	Theoretical Models; Mental Health	Ch. 3	
9	Sep 28			
10	Oct 3	Quiz Chap 3	Ch. 4	Group 2
11	Oct 5	Workplace factors & CVD		
12	Oct 10	Quiz Chap 4	Ch. 5	Group 3
13	Oct 12	Violence & aggression		
14	Oct 17	Climate & Leadership	Ch. 6	Group 1
15	Oct 19			
16	Oct 24	Specific occupations	Ch. 7	Group 2
17	Oct 26			
18	Oct 31	Quiz Chaps 5, 6, 7	Ch. 8	Group 3
19	Nov 2	Safety		
20	Nov 7	Draft Work and Family Conflict	Ch. 9	Group 1
21	Nov 9			
22	Nov 14	Quiz Chaps 8, 9	Ch. 10	Group 2
23	Nov 16	Interventions		
No class the week of Nov 21				
24	Nov 28	Quiz Chaps 10, 11	Ch. 11	Group 3
25	Nov 30	Future of OHP		
26	Dec 5	Final paper due on Dec. 5. Late papers not accepted		
27	Dec 7	Student presentations during Dec. 5, 7, and 12		
28	Dec 12	Student presentations during Dec. 5, 7, and 12		

For help with APA style, consult the Purdue website below.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>