Psychology 331: Psychology of Adjustment  
Fall 2000

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Office Hours: Tuesday 3:30-4:30 and by appointment

Class Hours: Tuesday/Thursday, 2 - 3:15


Lectures: Many lectures will cover material not in the books. You are responsible for this material. Therefore, if you miss a lecture for any reason, it is your responsibility to get the notes from your classmate(s).

Quizzes: There will be a series of 7 quizzes throughout the semester, consisting of multiple-choice and short-answer questions about the lectures and readings. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest quiz score, so your 6 highest quizzes will count toward your grade. If you have an unexcused absence and miss a quiz, you may use that as your drop. These quizzes are not comprehensive.

Make-up quizzes will be given only for University-excused absences. The University allows the following excused absences: 1) serious illness; 2) illness or death of family member; 3) University-related trips; 4) major religious holidays. Documentation (e.g., a letter from a doctor) will be required. Otherwise, you will receive a score of zero for a missed exam. If you can reasonably anticipate your absence (e.g., for a religious holiday), I will expect you to schedule a make-up exam at least 1 week before the scheduled exam date.

Project: You will all be doing a project related to the topics in the course. In October, I will assign you to teams. Your team will be meeting throughout the semester to design and carry out a “program” to improve your collective adjustment. You will present your program and its results to the class during the last 2 weeks of the semester. In addition, each person will write a report, which is due at the beginning of the final exam period (12/12, 8 am). There will be no final exam. Details about this assignment will be provided for the first team meeting (10/17).

Other University rules: Cheating on any quiz (e.g., the use of “cheat sheets”, copying, or working together) will minimally result in an E for the course. With regard to plagiarism, “When students submit work purport to be their own but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording, or anything else from another source without appropriate acknowledgment, the students are guilty of plagiarism.” These rules apply to all written assignments. Plagiarism will minimally result in an E for the course.
Attendance: You are required to attend class to take the quizzes. You are also required to attend the entire class period for team meetings (10/17, 11/9, and 11/21) and presentations (11/28, 11/30, 12/5, 12/7). Attendance is not required on regular lecture days, though it is highly recommended, as not all lecture material will be found in the readings. If you miss class on a regular lecture day, it is your responsibility to obtain the information that was provided on that day by getting notes from your classmate(s).

Grades: Points and grades will be assigned as follows. I reserve the right to lower these grade cut-offs; I will not raise them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 highest-scoring quizzes</td>
<td>120 points (6 points extra credit possible)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team presentation</td>
<td>13 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project paper</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>7 points</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>160 points</strong></td>
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A     144-160 points  
B     128-143 points  
C     112-127 points  
D     96-111 points   
E     0-95 points      

Class schedule | Readings
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August 24 - September 5 | Burns Ch. 2 (pp. 19-27) and Ch. 7 (149-153)
Emotions and emotional problems |  
September 7: Quiz 1 |  
|  
September 7 - September 14 | Burns Ch. 3 (pp. 28-49) and Ch. 7 (154-165)
Cognitive theory and therapy |  
September 19: Quiz 2 | Burns Ch. 1 (pp. 9-18), Ch. 4 (53-80), Ch. 7 (165-197), Ch. 10 (261-270)  
|  
September 19 - September 26 | Burns Ch. 5 (pp. 81-131)
Behavior, stress, and coping |  
September 28: Quiz 3 |  
|  
September 28 - October 5 | Myers About This Book and Ch. 1 (pp. 15-30)
The nature of happiness | Myers Ch. 2 (pp. 30-46), Ch. 4 (68-86)  
October 10: Quiz 4 | Myers Ch. 3 (pp. 47-67), Ch. 6 (105-126)  
|  
**October 17: FIRST TEAM MEETINGS**

October 10 - October 19 | Myers Ch. 8 (pp. 142-154), Ch. 9 (155-176)
More factors affecting happiness | Myers Ch. 9 (pp. 177-204)  
October 24: Quiz 5 | Myers Ch. 7 (pp. 125-141)  
October 24 - October 31 | Seligman Ch. 1-3 (pp. 3-53)
Your task: Your assignment as a group is to develop a one-week program to improve some aspect of your collective adjustment. This program might take one of the following forms, or it might be something different. The only requirements are that you apply a principle from this course, that it be something you can do every day for a week, and that it be a new program for everyone in the group (e.g., if someone in the group is already practicing relaxation, you should select something else).

Examples:

- changing distorted cognitions
- practicing breathing and relaxation
- fostering meaning/faith
- spending time in flow

- increasing pleasure/mastery activities
- improving social network/relationships
- changing explanatory style
- regular, aerobic exercise

When you devise your program, be specific. What exactly are you going to do? How often? For how long? Note that some people may do slightly different things within the same program. For example, not everyone would have to do the same type of aerobic exercise, but everyone should decide on how long and how often everyone will exercise.

Step 1: How can you best improve your adjustment? A good rule of thumb is that it’s easiest to improve on something that needs improvement! Something that’s already going well is harder to improve. As a first step, then, your group might want to assess where you collectively need the most improvement. Here are some suggestions for exercises that could help you do that:
Write a description of your typical weekday and weekend. What’s there? What’s missing?
Write about a common situation that makes you feel the happiest, and then one that makes you feel the unhappiest. How could you expand the impact of the former and prevent the impact of the latter?
Take the optimism test in Learned Optimism (p. 33 ff.). Are you a pessimist or optimist?
Take the mood questionnaire (attached). Could you use more positive mood, less negative mood, both?
Take the dysfunctional cognitions/moods tests in Feeling Good (depression, p. 20; anger, p. 150; attitudes, p. 272). What cognitions and moods are problems for you?

Talk as a group about the results of these exercises. Do one or two right now to get the conversation started.

**Step 2:** Assess how you’re doing now. The only way you know if you’ve improved is to measure your adjustment before and after your program. Pick a measure of the thing you want to improve (e.g., activity log, exercise log, mood questionnaire, cognitive test) and take it before you start your program (your “baseline” measure).

**Step 3:** Implement your program. Keep a log of what you do and when you do it, and measure your improvement during and/or after your program (your “outcome” measure).

**Step 4:** Present the results of your program to the class. You will have 15 minutes which should be equally shared by all members of your group. You may structure your presentation any way you wish, but your presentation should clearly communicate:

1. A description of your program and why you chose it.
2. What was it like to do your program? Easier or harder than you thought? More or less fun?
3. The effects of the program on your group’s adjustment (e.g., mean questionnaire scores before and after). Did it work? Why or why not?
4. Discuss whether you would recommend this program to others. If not, why not?

**Step 5:** Write your individual paper. Your paper should be 750-1250 words long and contain the following (please use these subheadings in your paper):

1. A rationale for the program with referral to scientific knowledge.
2. The design of the program.
3. The effect of the program on the group and on you individually.
4. A discussion of the effects of the program and how it compared with other types of program from the class. Would you choose to repeat your program or select something else? Why?
5. Your intentions for the future. Will you continue in this program? Why or why not?

It will be graded on:
the clarity, correctness, and logic of communication (including spelling and grammar)
(if you have trouble with these things, you may wish to consult the Writing Center for help - their phone number is 7-1356)
thoughtfulness about the program and insight into what constitutes adjustment and the process of improving adjustment
complete content, adequate length, correct structure
(e.g., you have included all the elements listed above)