

Trauma and Resilience Across the Human Lifespan

PSY 380

Grand Valley State University

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EC 311

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- A. How to succeed in PSY 380
- B. Course content & Learning objectives
- C. Learning Communities and R.E.S.P.E.C.T.
- D. Grading procedures
- E. Some useful information & Course schedule
- F. (N)Etiquette
- G. Useful Resources

A. How to succeed in PSY 380

Mindset required for course participation and success in PSY 380:

1. Willingness to learn new and challenging material
 - a. If you already knew everything about trauma, resilience and human development you wouldn't be taking this class.
 - b. Learning requires changing our minds. Be curious. Expect to learn new and sometimes surprising things. We all have assumptions about why people behave the ways that they do. Expect to have many of your assumptions challenged by scientific data about human development.
2. Willingness to practice to attain mastery of material
 - a. Learning requires time and practice.
 - b. If you are signed up for this class then you must want to learn about the scientific study of trauma, resilience and human development.
 - c. I am an expert on that topic. I will guide your learning. However, I can't do the learning for you just like you (unfortunately) can't do my sit-ups for me.
 - d. So, what is the key for success?...**Do the work!**
 - e. All assignments and activities are designed to help you acquire and practice the pertinent knowledge and skills. See below for descriptions of the materials and behaviors that will help you to complete the course work.

Materials required for course participation and success in PSY 380:

1. Access to the **textbook:** 
 - a. Adverse Childhood Experiences: Using Evidence to Advance Research, Practice, Policy, and Prevention 1st Edition

by Gordon J. G. Asmundson (Author), Tracie O. Afifi (Author) 2020
ISBN-13: 978-0128160657
ISBN-10: 0128160659

- b. Either a physical or electronic copy is fine. Just make sure it is in a format that you will be comfortable reading
 - i. GVSU Save program makes one available through the BB site
2. Access to **technology**, including:
 - a. a desktop or laptop computer (This course cannot be completed with only a phone or tablet.)
 - b. Access to software: (instructions for how to get free access to all software listed here can be found in the resources section)
 - i. BlackBoard
 - ii. Microsoft office (excel, word, powerpoint)
 - iii. Google suite (e.g., google docs)

Behaviors/skills required for course participation and success in PSY 380:

Really, there is only one: **Engage!** What do I mean by that?

1. **Engage** with the other humans in the class:
 - a. Talk to the people around you before and after class
 - b. Use group sessions to interact with other folks in the class in respectful (see respect section) and helpful ways.
2. **Engage** with the course materials
 - a. Attend every class session.
 - i. Attendance promotes engagement and is associated with success.
 - ii. There are many group activities in this class and course absences affect both you AND your group members. So please commit to attending all class sessions.
 - iii. If absence is unavoidable, it is your responsibility to get notes from another student and to catch up on any missed materials.
 - b. Take the time to read the textbook and supplemental readings and watch assigned videos.
 - i. I chose them for a reason. I promise not to give you busy work.
 - ii. *You are responsible for reading the materials assigned for each week by the start of class time on Tuesday.* Not all of the reading will be explicitly discussed during class time, however, these readings have been chosen to prepare you for class and to give you the background information necessary to participate in discussions and activities planned for the class. You are responsible for the material contained in the readings regardless of whether or not it is specifically covered during class time.
 - c. Expect to spend between 6-8 hours a week outside of class meeting time working on this class.
 - i. Some weeks the time required might be shorter or longer, depending on your interest and speed, but I have tried to pace it all consistently.

- ii. Time alone isn't enough though. Learning requires S.W.E.E.T.:
 - Sleep (8 hours really matters!)
 - Water
 - Exercise
 - Eating
 - Time

Taking care of your physical needs allows for healthy engagement in the complex material we will be studying. Please be mindful of your physical needs. Prioritize sleep (that's why it is first on the list) because it has strong effects on memory and cognitive function. If at any time in the semester you are struggling to meet basic physical needs (e.g. access to nutritious food, shelter, a safe place to sleep) please contact me ASAP and I will help connect you to available supports so that you can be healthy and safe and able to engage with this course.

B. Course Content and Learning Objectives

Course Description

This course will focus on the scientific study of experiences of trauma and development of resilience across the human lifespan.

Course Objectives

General course goals (Modeled on 2015, APA trauma competencies for scientific knowledge).

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the epidemiology of trauma exposure and outcomes
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the interaction of social, psychological and biological factors involved in individual experiences of trauma and resilience.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of how social, historical, and cultural contexts affect the experience of and research about trauma and resilience.
4. Identify, comprehend and think critically about scientific research findings in the areas of trauma and resilience.
5. Communicate accurate, scientific information about trauma and resilience to others.

Note about course content

While the course focuses on the scientific study of and critical thinking about trauma and resilience, the content of this course includes learning about and discussing issues that can draw intense reactions. It is important to realize that students in the class or their close friends or family members have likely been exposed to traumatic events in their lives. It is essential that all interactions and communications in the course are conducted in a respectful and empathetic manner. Connecting and integrating personal experiences with course material is an important part of the learning process; however, no student is required to disclose personal experiences of trauma. This class may be triggering for those with histories of trauma who have not yet had a chance to process those experiences in a therapeutic context, so please consider this carefully when deciding to remain in the class. Note that this class is not designed as a self-help group nor as a substitute for psychotherapy, which is highly recommended for those with trauma in their background.

Any personal information that is disclosed in class should be treated as confidential, however I cannot guarantee confidentiality. Therefore, please be thoughtful about sharing personal information during class discussions. If you find yourself troubled by material (for example, if you are ruminating outside of class about class content or your own history, or experiencing feelings of anxiety or depression that seem triggered by class content) or are in need of support or counseling during the class, please contact the GVSU Counseling center [Our Services - University Counseling Center - Grand Valley State University \(gvsu.edu\)](http://www.gvsu.edu/counseling) directly or meet with me to get a connection to appropriate support services.

C. Learning Communities and R.E.S.P.E.C.T. (can you hear the singing?)

We will be working together to create a meaningful learning community this semester. People learn best when they feel safe and respected. So, I want to set some respect ground-rules/expectations for how we (prof. and students) will demonstrate respect for the learning community during this course:

1. **Academic Honesty.** Academic honesty and integrity are expected from all students (and professors) at all times.
 - a. Academic dishonesty is defined as an attempt to obtain or to help another student obtain a grade higher than what is honestly earned – this includes getting information about exams or assignments from students in an earlier or previous section of the course. Do not assume that any assignment for this course is a group assignment unless I specifically tell you that it is. Anything you turn in to me, whether a written assignment or an exam, needs to be your own, individual work. It is your responsibility to properly cite all sources in your written work and to avoid plagiarism.
 - b. An occurrence of academic dishonesty will result, minimally, in failure of the course and a recommendation for University judicial action. It is every student's responsibility to avoid even the appearance of cheating.
 - c. For more information about academic honesty please see the GVSU student code because this course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at <http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>.
2. **Respectful Communication.** Communicating with other members of the learning community is good!
 - a. We will maintain a respectful atmosphere during all class activities for all students (and professors) regardless of age, gender, favorite type of music, ethnicity, sexual orientation, learning ability, or driving skills. By that I mean (a) respectfully attending to the contributions that others make in the class and (b) consciously examining your own contributions to ensure that they are respectful to others around you.
 - b. If you experience a lack of respect at any point during this class, please contact me, and I will work with you to address the problem. Students who are consistently disrespectful towards the classroom community will be dropped from the course.
3. **Communicating with Prof D.** Being responsive is respectful. I try to respond to student questions as quickly as possible during business hours (and often other times too, but don't count on me being awake at 2 a.m. to answer a last-minute question 😊).
 - a. Questions about the course or assignments
 - i. The fastest way to get a question about the course or assignment answered will be to post to the course ANSWER board in BB.

- ii. Using the ANSWER board allows other members of the class to learn from your question and possibly to answer your question sooner than I would be able to.
- b. Questions specific to your own, personal circumstances
 - i. Send me an email – dueker@gsu.edu, or schedule an appointment
 - ii. I have lots of filters on my email account to try to weed out spam. Student emails are less likely to get lost in those filters if they have your name and course number listed in the topic line of the email.
 - iii. I don't purposely ignore anyone so if you haven't heard back from me within 1 business day, (48 hours on weekends) then assume I didn't get the message. Please check to be sure that you included all of the correct information in the topic line and email me again or talk to me before or after class.

D. Grading Procedures

I expect that everyone will make a genuine effort to participate in the course, engage with the material and complete their work in a timely fashion. That is how learning happens. This is an in-person class and attendance is important. Be at class. Be on time. Coming in late is rude to the classroom community. Failure to attend class will negatively affect your grade as some missed in-class and group assignments cannot be made up.

Sometimes, life is messy though:

- Driving in snow can be dangerous.
- People get sick and/or quarantined.
- We are sometimes overwhelmed by work and family obligations.
- There is still COVID around.
- Computers and internet access can sometimes not work.

All of this is real. So, I have planned for “*grace*” throughout the course and in the grading (see the *italicized/purple* grace sections throughout the syllabus for specifics). This *grace* is designed to help you weather the bumps and minor surprises that are part of everyone’s lives without getting derailed from your learning in this class. Your safety/health and your family's health should always be your priority. Please reach out as soon as possible if you have circumstances needing significant accommodation beyond what these *grace* policies allow and I will work with you to determine how to move forward.

Credit for this course will be based on student performance in these areas:

	% final grade
Individual assignments	15
Research Summits	35
Exam 1& Final Exam activity	15
Podcast Project	35
Total	100.00%

Individual Assignments

Individual assignments designed to promote understanding and application of course concepts will be given throughout the semester. These might include reflections on assigned readings or videos, web and

library searches etc. Assignments are crafted to help students master specific content at specific points in the course so it is important to complete them on time to get the maximum learning benefit.

- Descriptions of all assignments will be presented in class and sometimes (if complicated) posted on BB.
- Assignments must be completed by the specified deadline and may not be accepted after a deadline has passed.
- *Grace: Your lowest individual assignment grade will be dropped from final grade calculations.*

Research Summits

- Research summits are activities with both individual and group components. Students will be identifying, summarizing and presenting empirical articles individually and then collaborating with other students to create evidence-based topical summaries for presentation to the entire class. Group work is a component of this assignment. Missed group activities cannot be made up because the group experience cannot be recreated.
- *Grace: One alternate assignment can be completed to earn points for ONE missed group activity.*

Exams

Exams help to improve student long-term retention and understanding of course materials. The exams will cover all materials (e.g., readings, lectures, videos and presentations) covered in each segment of the class.

Podcast Project

Community service is an integral part of the mission of every university. It not only benefits the community, but it allows students to strengthen their learning by creating connections between course content and the contexts of their everyday lives. The members of this class will work to create podcast episodes around trauma and resilience, with exemplary episodes potentially eligible for posting/streaming in conjunction with a community partner organization.

Grading Scale

	A	93-100	A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D+	67-69	D	63-66	F	62 or lower

* I reserve the right to adjust this scale downward if I see the need. I follow scientific rounding rules.

E. Useful things to know

1. Submitting course materials:

- All course assignments and materials must be submitted either in person or through BB (instructions will vary by assignment).
- E-mailed assignments will **not** be accepted.
- Pay attention to the instructions for submitting materials to BB. Be sure to upload files in readable format. Attach a file when asked or copy and paste text when asked.
- You are required to keep an electronic copy of all work that you individually submit to me.

- When you submit an assignment to BB you should get a receipt. If you don't have a receipt, it didn't work.
2. Distractions in class. Electronic messaging devices should be deactivated during class time so that you and your fellow students can focus on the material with a minimum of distractions. Computer use in the classroom is prohibited for the same reason unless specifically allowed by the professor. Quiet food is fine. If others can smell or hear your food then it is distracting for others so either bring enough to share or wait.
 3. If you need special accommodations for accessing any of the materials for this class (e.g. testing) please let me know and I will work with you and Disability Support Resources (DSR) to set up the necessary accommodations to support your learning. Before I can discuss accommodations, you must present a memo to me from DSR, indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested reasonable accommodations. If you have not already done so, please contact the Disability Support Resources office (4015 JHZ) by calling 331-2490 or email to dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu. Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received a copy of the DSR issued memo. All discussions will remain confidential.
 4. Any changes or updates to assignments/grading/schedule or other course materials will be announced in class and/or posted as announcements in the course BB site.
 5. The course schedule follows.
Tentative schedule of topics: This can and will change based on the pace and interests of the class itself, but this will give you some idea of where we are headed! (Exam dates are final unless you are notified otherwise). I reserve the right to change this schedule. I will announce such changes in class and all students are responsible for such information.

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Important Dates</u>
9-Jan	Introductions, Course expectations & Skills review	
16-Jan	Definitions & History of trauma	
23-Jan	Contexts of child and adult trauma	
30-Jan	Project Focus	
6-Feb	Mechanisms of Trauma and the body: epigenetics & neuroscience	
13-Feb	Trauma Sequela	
20-Feb	Definitions of resilience	Take home Exam 1
27-Feb	Project focus	
5-Mar	None	Spring Break! Yippee!
12-Mar	Project Focus	
19-Mar	Fostering Resilience at the personal and Interpersonal Levels	
26-Mar	Project focus	
2-Apr	Trauma prevention	
9-Apr	Policy, Trauma & Resilience	
16-Apr	Wrap-up	Podcast Premier Party
	Tuesday, April 23 6-8	Final Exam Period

F. (N)Etiquette

Etiquette and Netiquette are basically the same thing. They are both about interacting respectfully with each other.

(N)Etiquette Guide Mashup (wisdom culled from many sources!)

1. Listen before you speak. Read before you start typing.
 - a. Attend carefully to the contributions of other people in the course.
2. Do a quick **T.H.I.N.K.** test before you say or post anything:
 - i. **T.** Is it **true**/accurate?
 - ii. **H.** Is it **helpful**?
 - iii. **I.** Is it **intelligible**?
 - iv. **N.** Is it **necessary**?
 - v. **K.** Is it **kind**?
 - b. If the answer to any of these is NO, then **think** carefully about how you can change your response to better fit the situation.
3. Discussion is about ideas not identities
 - a. Discussing ideas is fun. Be sure to do it in a scholarly and respectful manner. For example, credit (cite) other people's ideas using either a scientific citation (if it is a scholarly article) or if you are referring to something that another person posted or said earlier, quote a few key pieces of their response so that other folks understand what you are referring to.
 - b. Feel free to disagree with ideas in a scholarly way. Acknowledge the valid points in your classmate's argument and present your own. Don't badmouth, mock or attack other people.
4. Think about what you will say before you say it. Read what you typed before you post it.
 - a. It is always a good idea to write anything you are considering posting to the course site in a word processing program first. That way you can easily check for typos & save a record of your work.
 - b. Avoid the use of YELLING (or using all capital letters) and sarcasm (because it always backfires).
 - c. If posting to the course BB site, remember that written communication doesn't have any nonverbal cues to it, so consider judicious use of emoticons to help clarify your intent.
 - d. If you wouldn't say it in person then don't post it online.
5. Respect the privacy of the class learning community.
 - a. This isn't a public space. Don't share any classmate's information with anyone else either in person or online.
 - b. Don't spam classmates with no-course related messages or advertising.
6. "Please" and "Thank you" are wonderful phrases in all contexts.
7. Give folks grace.
 - a. If you are offended by something someone said, did or typed consider that you might have misunderstood their intentions and decide what to do next.
 - i. You can decide to engage them and ask what they actually meant.
 - ii. You can decide to check in with Prof D about it.
 - iii. You can decide to let it go.

G. Useful GVSU Resources.

All GVSU resources are free and available to ALL students so don't hesitate to reach out and ask for help!

Help with **technology**: Check with the GVSU IT Helpdesk

<https://www.gvsu.edu/it/>

[\(616\) 331-2101](tel:(616)331-2101)

[\(855\) 435-7488](tel:(855)435-7488) (Toll-free)

helpdesk@gvsu.edu

Help with **writing**: Check out the GVSU Writing Center

<https://www.gvsu.edu/wc/undergraduate-student-support-65.htm>

Help with **stress** management: Check out the GVSU Counseling Center

Free, confidential, individual and group appointments (virtual and IRL) available to all students.

<https://www.gvsu.edu/counsel/>

Help with **Financial Difficulties**

GVSU remains committed to supporting you through the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and is here to help you in times of financial need, including assisting with accessing technology requirements. Financial hardship funds are available to help student's meet their basic needs, and help cover educational costs (such as housing, food, textbooks and technology) that a student could not otherwise pay out of pocket. Please visit the GVSU Special Circumstance & Financial Hardship Requests web page for more information.

<https://www.gvsu.edu/financialaid/financial-hardship-requests-226.htm>

Helpful GVSU **policies** (e.g. anti-harassment policy) can found here:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/policies/>

Helpful **librarians** and consultants!

<https://www.gvsu.edu/library/> - Just click on the "Ask a question" button.

Library Space and Services

You can find out more about our library spaces, how to check out books and access articles, and other library services this semester by checking out [this page about visiting the library](#) and [this page about our online services](#). The GVSU University Libraries has 3 campus locations where you may access library materials: Mary Idema Pew Library Learning & Information Commons (Allendale campus), Steelcase Library (Grand Rapids campus), and Frey Library (Grand Rapids, Center for Health Sciences).

Liaison Librarian: Each department has a designated librarian to support your research needs. Samantha Minnis is our liaison librarian for Psychology. Her email is minniss@gvsu.edu and she is available for online consultations via Google Meet, Zoom, or email. You can also check out the [Psychology Subject Guide](#), which is a great place to start your library research.

Knowledge Market

Our highly trained student consultants work one-on-one or in small groups to help with your library research, digital skills, writing, or oral presentations. We now offer both in-person and online peer consultations during open hours. We also created a [Resource Market](#), an online database of browsable resources, which is available 24/7. For information about the **Knowledge Market** or to make a virtual appointment, visit www.gvsu.edu/library/km.

This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at <https://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>