

**Health Psychology**  
 PSY 367, Fall, 2025  
 Grand Valley State University

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**Course description**

Welcome to Health Psychology! Health Psychology is the application of psychological principles and research to the enhancement of health and the prevention and treatment of illness. This course will introduce you to Health Psychology and its fundamental concepts, major theories, and empirical research. We will examine health from the biopsychosocial perspective, including the roles of biological, psychological, and social factors. Following this course, you will have a comprehensive understanding of Health Psychology and how this field can be applied to change behavior, treat illness and other health problems, and promote health and well-being.

**Required text**

Taylor, S. E., & Stanton, A. L. (2021). *Health Psychology* (11<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw Hill LLC. *Online access via Blackboard course website via GVSU SAVE.*

**Course evaluation procedures**

The total points for this class will be 440. You will be evaluated on 3 exams (each worth 100 points), 16 class exercises (each worth 5 points; 80 points total), and 3 collaborative participation exercises (each worth 20 points; 60 points total).

This course will use the following grading scale.

A	93-100%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	62-66%
B-	80-82%	F	61% or lower
C+	77-79%		

**Exams**

*Exams:* There are 3 required Exams. They are non-cumulative, covering lecture information, 2-3 chapters, and additional readings as noted in the Course Schedule. Exam questions will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer essays. Exams take place during class and the dates are listed in the Course Schedule.

*Final exam:* The Final exam is **optional** and can be used to replace one exam score from the semester; *note that it cannot be used to replace an unexcused missed exam.* The Final exam will be cumulative, covering information from the entire semester. The date and time of the Final is listed below in the Course Schedule.

*Make-up policy:* You are required to take the 3 exams on the specified dates. If you do not appear for an exam, and you have not been given permission by me to delay it, you will receive a zero, unless you bring documentation (such as a doctor's note) to excuse your absence. In most cases, a make-up needs to be taken within one week of a scheduled exam.

### **Class exercises**

There will be 16 class exercises, each worth 5 points. Most exercises will be completed during class, but occasionally they will be assigned as homework and submitted online. The exercises vary from comprehension questions on podcasts we listen to or films we watch to self-reflection or small group discussion about class topics. The purpose of these exercises is to enhance learning and promote the application of concepts. These exercises are not listed in the Course Schedule as they occur based on factors such as student comprehension and timing.

*\*\* Please note that if you miss a class exercise, you will not be able to make it up (unless you have an excused absence; please meet with me if you have extended absences). However, I will allow one missed exercise/freebie for all students. Therefore, if you miss one exercise, you can still obtain a perfect score. If you miss two exercises, you will lose points for one exercise, if you miss three, you will lose points for two, etc. The freebie accounts for all reasons for missing so please do not ask about make-ups. You also do not need to let me know when you missed an exercise as the freebie will simply be added at the end of the semester to replace any exercise that you missed.*

### **Collaborative participation**

There will be 3 collaborative participation exercises. These exercises will take place during class, and you will be given advance notice (one week) as to when they will occur. For each exercise, you will collaborate with group members, that I assign, to solve a problem related to Health Psychology. You will apply theory and research learned in class as well as your own ideas. The purpose of these exercises is to engage you in collaborating with others, integrating different perspectives, and problem-solving, which align with the General Education goals of this course.

### **Useful things to know**

*Reading:* For most weeks, you will read chapters from the online text, but for some weeks, you will read additional articles that I have selected. All assigned readings are presented in the Course schedule below. It is your responsibility to check the schedule for these readings each week. If there is an article (i.e., non-chapter reading) for the week, you can find it on Blackboard in the folder “Additional readings”. Note that only some readings will be covered in class, but exams will require you to demonstrate that you have read and understood all readings.

*Attendance:* I do not take attendance, but it is to your advantage to come to class regularly. In class, I often lecture on material that is not covered in your readings. We complete class exercises and, as noted, there are no make-ups for these. We listen to podcasts, watch films, and have discussions that expand class topics. You can expect exams to cover anything that we do in class. *If you miss a class, you should ask a classmate for the notes.*

*Blackboard website:* You need to be able to access the Blackboard website for this class. Please contact the IT help desk if you have issues. *The primary text for the class is accessed via the*

*Blackboard website.* Lecture notes will be posted in weekly folders, and Additional readings will be posted in a separate folder. I will also post announcements, assignments, and grades on Blackboard. *Please check your grades on the website OFTEN.* Contact me if you think an error has been made. *You have one week after a grade is posted to dispute it.*

### **Students with special needs or concerns**

If you have special needs because of a learning, physical, or other disability, please contact Disability Support Resources (DSR) at (616) 331-2490 or [dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu](mailto:dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu). It is the student's responsibility to request assistance from DSR. If you have a disability and think you will need any assistance, please make me aware.

### **Symptomatic illness**

Please do not come to class if you are ill. Instead, notify me as soon as possible via email. If you have a known COVID exposure and are asymptomatic, please wear a mask.

### **Other information**

*This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at <http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/> Excused absence policy can be found:*

<http://catalog.gvsu.edu/content.php?catoid=48&navoid=2406&hl=%22attendance%22&returnto=search>

## **Weekly Course Schedule \***

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
<b>Week 1:</b> Aug 25 - 29	Introduction to Health Psychology; Historical roots and conceptualization	Taylor and Stanton (T&S), 1; T&S, 15
<b>Week 2:</b> Sep 1 - 5	<b>Labor day recess - No class Monday;</b> Research methods in Health Psychology	Straub, 2007
<b>Week 3:</b> Sep 8 - 12	Health behaviors: Habits and outcomes; Independence and instability	T&S, 4; T&S, 5
<b>Week 4:</b> Sep 15 - 19	Theories of behavior change	T&S, 3; Stroebe, 2011
<b>Week 5:</b> Sep 22 - 26	Theories continued; Wrap up; <b>Friday Sep 26, TEST 1</b>	Beck, 2011; Prochaska et al., 1992

<b>Week 6:</b> Sep 29– Oct 3	Introduction to stress and health research	T&S, 2 (pps. 15-20); T&S, 6
<b>Week 7:</b> Oct 6 - 10	Chronic stress and illness: Historical and contemporary models	T&S, 14; Dougall & Baum, 2012
<b>Week 8:</b> Oct 13 - 17	Sources of chronic stress with focus on caregiver burden and occupational stress	Cohen et al., 1998; Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 1995
<b>Week 9:</b> Oct 20 - 24	<b>Fall break - No class on Monday;</b> Chronic illness: Prevalence and impact	T&S, 11; T&S, 12 (pps. 257-261)
<b>Week 10:</b> Oct 27 -31	Wrap up; <b>Wednesday Oct 29, TEST 2</b>	T&S, 13
<b>Week 11:</b> Nov 3 - 7	Coping styles and types	T&S, 7; Frydenberg, 2004
<b>Week 12:</b> Nov 10 -14	Personality and health with focus on Five-factor model (FFM)	Murray & Booth, 2015; Smith et al., 2012 (pps. 375-387); Strickhouser et al., 2017
<b>Week 13:</b> Nov 17 -21	Optimism and other traits' associations with health	Shepperd et al., 2017; Fredrickson, 2011
<b>Week 14:</b> Nov 24 -28	Social support: Types, sources and health outcomes; <b>Thanksgiving recess - No class on Wed-Fri</b>	Reblin & Uchino, 2008
<b>Week 15:</b> Dec 1 - 5	Additional psychosocial influences on health; <b>Friday Dec 5, TEST 3</b>	Johnson & Acabchuk, 2018; Ruiz et al., 2012

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\* I may adapt this schedule as needed.

### **Final exam schedule:**

#### **If you are in the:**

9am class, the Final exam is Wednesday, December 10, 8:00 am - 9:50 am

10am class, the Final exam is Monday, December 8, 10:00 am - 11:50 am

11am class, the Final exam is Wednesday, December 10, 10:00 am - 11:50 am



### **PSY 367 Health Psychology Issues - Health**

This course is part of GVSU's General Education Program. The goal of the program is to prepare you for intelligent participation in public dialogues that consider the issues of humane living and responsible action in local, national, and global communities.

PSY 367 is designed to help you learn:

1. How the course relates to health.
2. How complementary and competing perspectives covered in the course contribute to the ongoing discussion about health.
3. Collaboration, which is the process of working together and sharing the workload equitably to progress toward shared objectives, learned through structured activities that occur over a significant period of time. People with a general education work collaboratively with others on both small and large projects. Effective collaborators are interdependent, interactive, accountable, and reflective. That is, they work interdependently within a group, interact productively with group members, demonstrate accountability for their own contributions to the work of the group, and reflect on the success of the group, including their own contributions and the contributions of others.
4. Integration, which is the process of synthesizing and applying existing knowledge, past experiences, and other perspectives to new, complex situations. People with a general education correlate and synthesize facts, basic concepts, and disparate knowledge for application within and beyond the campus, to make sense of a variety of data and experiences, to address issues in a more effective way than can be accomplished from only one field of study or perspective, and reflect on their own learning.
5. Problem solving, which is the process of designing and evaluating strategies to answer open-ended questions or achieve desired goals. People with a general education define and solve problems by seeking and identifying relevant contextual information, formulating strategies, and proposing and evaluating potential solutions.

This course satisfies one or more of the General Education course requirements. The overall goal of the General Education program is designed to increase your knowledge and skills in the following areas:

#### **Knowledge Goals:**

1. The major areas of human investigation and accomplishment — the arts, the humanities, the mathematical sciences, the natural sciences, and the social sciences.
2. An understanding of one's own culture and the culture of others.
3. An understanding of how academic study connects to issues in the world.

#### **Skills Goals:**

1. Collaboration is the process of working together and sharing the workload equitably to progress toward shared objectives, learned through structured activities that occur over a significant period of time.
2. Critical and creative thinking uses systematic reasoning to examine and evaluate ideas, leading to new ways of thinking or doing.
3. Ethical reasoning is a decision-making process based on defining systems of value.
4. Information literacy is the process of locating, evaluating, and using multiple forms of information.
5. Integration is the process of synthesizing and applying existing knowledge, past experiences, and other perspectives to new, complex situations.
6. Oral communication is the practice of effectively communicating verbally with a public audience across a variety of contexts.
7. Problem solving is the process of designing and evaluating strategies to answer open-ended questions or achieve desired goals.

8. Quantitative literacy is a competency and comfort in working with numbers.
9. Written communication is the practice of creating and refining messages that educated readers will value.

Ensuring that undergraduate students receive a broad general education has been a primary goal of colleges and universities since their inception. In this era of increasing specialization and growing demand for professional expertise, it is vital that we continue to emphasize the value of general learning.

GVSU maintains that a complete education involves more than preparation for a particular career. A career occurs in the context of a life, and a sound general education helps one “make a life” as well as “make a living.” The university is committed to assuring that all undergraduate students, regardless of academic major, receive a broad education rooted in the arts and sciences.

Teaching in the liberal tradition is at the heart of Grand Valley's identity, and this focus is critical in our General Education Program. Liberal education transcends the acquisition of information; it goes beyond the factual to ask important evaluative and philosophical questions. Liberal learning holds the fundamental principles and suppositions of a body of knowledge up to inquiry, question, and discussion. It helps a person recognize the assumptions under which he or she operates and encourages the examination and questioning of those assumptions. Liberal learning begins in the General Education Program and continues through the more specialized studies comprising each student's major and minor areas of study.

*Grand Valley State University educates students to shape their lives, their professions, and their societies.*