

**PSY 3206: Health Psychology**  
Fall 2009 M W 4:00pm – 5:15pm  
Pillsbury Hall Rm 110

**Instructor:**

Maryhope Howland  
[Howl0029@umn.edu](mailto:Howl0029@umn.edu)  
N325 Elliott Hall  
Office hours: W 3-4pm and by appt.

**TA:**

Rena Rasch  
[rasc0042@umn.edu](mailto:rasc0042@umn.edu)  
Elliott Hall Room N494  
Office hours: Monday 5:15-6:15

**Text:** There is no textbook for this class. You will not be paying \$100+ to bore yourself.

**Readings:** Course readings are online on moodle. They are free and not at all boring.

**Course Overview:** This course is designed to give you a broad overview of the field of health psychology. Health psychology is a young and exciting field of study that examines the bi-directional relationship between psychology and health. We will try to answer such questions as: Are certain personality types more likely to get sick, or to get certain illnesses? What does stress do to your health? What psychological and social factors cause people to behave in unhealthy ways? What helps people adjust to illness? Does having a lot of friends affect your health? What can psychologists do to help cure illness? Who is healthier, men or women? Are there ethnic variations in health? How can we help people who are in pain without getting them addicted to pain-killers? Does it matter how your doctor talks to you? Does being bereaved make you ill? Does dieting work? Can a sugar pill cure back pain?

**Grading:** Grades will be based on three midterms and a homework assignment. Each midterm is worth 30% of your final grade and the homework assignment is worth 10% of your final grade. The written assignment will be due at the beginning of class on Monday November 23. (It will be described in class on Monday October 26 – and it is already posted on the course web page, so even though this is the day after Thanksgiving break you have the entire semester to do it). **The written assignment will include an optional extra credit portion. That is the only extra credit available in this class.** There is no final exam for this course.

**Policies/Fine Print:** You will find that your instructor is very nice and runs a democratic classroom. You may peg her as a pushover. Do this at your peril. It is your responsibility to make sure you are in class for the exams, to hear about the homework assignment, and to turn in the assignment. Not being in class the day the homework is assigned does not grant you extra time to complete it, nor does missing class the day it is due. No late homework assignments will be accepted. An assignment turned in after the due date (and time) will receive a zero. Complaints about the grading of particular items on the exams must be submitted *in writing* on paper (not email), within 7 days of the date exam scores became available. If you do not show up for the exams without setting up an alternative exam date IN ADVANCE and with the approval of the instructor you will receive zeros on them. There are no exceptions. Final grades will be computed by a fair and reasonable curve. The instructor does not have to explain, defend, or even show you the curve.

## Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading Number
Wednesday Sep 9	Introduction/Methods	1, 2, 3
Monday Sep 14	Biopsychosocial Model	4, 5
Wednesday Sep 16	Stress History	6
Monday Sep 21	Stress and Health	7, 8
Wednesday Sep 23	Coping and Social Support	9, 10, 11
Monday Sep 28	Psychoneuroimmunology	12, 13, 14
Wednesday Sep 30	Bereavement	15, 16, 17
Monday Oct 5	Close Relationships and Health	18, 19
Wednesday Oct 7	Adjustment to Illness	20, 21
Monday Oct 12	<b>Midterm 1</b>	
Wednesday Oct 14	Health Behavior Change 1: History	22, 23
Monday Oct 19	Health Communications	24
Wednesday Oct 21	Health Behavior Change 2: Models	25, 26
Monday Oct 26	Health Interventions	27
Wednesday Oct 28	Age, Gender, and Health	28, 29
Monday Nov 2	Culture and Health	30
Wednesday Nov 4	Personality and Health	31, 32
Monday Nov 9	<b>Midterm 2</b>	
Wednesday Nov 11	Pain	33, 34
Monday Nov 16	Placebos	35, 36, 37
Wednesday Nov 18	Faith Healing, Video, Guest	38
Monday Nov 23	Eating (Guest Lecturer)	39, 40
Wednesday Nov 25	<b>NO CLASS (HOMEWORK DUE by 4pm)</b>	<b>EMAIL ASSIGNMENT</b>
Monday Nov 30	Diet and Exercise (Guest Lecturer)	41, 42, 43
Wednesday Dec 2	Medical System (Film)	44, 45, 46
Monday Dec 7	Doctor-Patient Communication	47, 48
Wednesday Dec 9	Medical Professionals Panel	49, 50
Monday Dec 14	Happiness	51, 52
Wednesday Dec 16	<b>Midterm 3</b>	

## List of Readings

1. Gladwell, M. (1999). Is the Belgian Coca-Cola hysteria the real thing? The New Yorker, July 12.
2. Allen, A. (2000). The cancer study bombshell that wasn't. Salon.com, July 14.
3. Kolata, G. (2008). Searching for clarity: A primer on medical studies. The New York Times, September 30.
4. Gladwell, M. (2001). The scourge you know. The New Yorker, October 29.
5. Gawande, A. (2008). The Itch. The New Yorker, June 30.
6. Carmichael, M. (2009). Who Says Stress Is Bad For You? Newsweek, February 23.
7. O'Connor, A. (2004). Cracking under the pressure? It's just the opposite, for some. New York Times, September 10.
8. Sapolsky, R. (1999). Stress and your brain: War, rape, sexual abuse, and other severe trauma – even a car accident – could make part of your brain disappear. Discover Magazine, March.
9. Barbor, C. (2001). The science of meditation. Psychology Today, May/June.
10. Hoskins, S.G. (2008). The kindness, and Xanax, of strangers. The New York Times, December.
11. Patel, S. (2008). Why loneliness is bad for you. Discover Magazine, January.
12. Kolata, G. (2005). Is there a link between stress and cancer? New York Times, November 29.
13. Raeburn, P. (2006). A case for double-edged optimism: ...From good stress to lethal optimism, the new rules of the immunity game. Psychology Today, May/June.
14. Lenzer, J. (2007). The body can beat terminal cancer – sometimes. Discover Magazine, September.
15. Torres, A.R. (2002). Loving a ghost. Salon.com, Feb 14.
16. Torres, A.R. (2002). What if. Salon.com, May 17.

17. Torres, A.R. (2002). Found and lost. [Salon.com](#), July 10.
18. Webber, R. (2008). In sickness and in health. Before you say “I do,” scrutinize your lover’s drinking habits. Or eating patterns. Your choice of romantic partner helps determine how healthy – or how sick – you’ll be. [Psychology Today](#), December.
19. Parker-Pope, T. (2009). Divorce it seems can make you ill. [New York Times](#), August 4.
20. Harmon, A. (2007). Facing life with a lethal gene. [New York Times](#), March 18.
21. Jennings, D. (2009). Notes to soothe the savage cells. [New York Times](#), January 11.
22. Abbott, A. (2005). What ever happened to safe sex? [Salon.com](#), February 25.
23. Schaffer, A. (2007). No more virginal: Spend \$1 billion on abstinence education. Get nothing. [Slate.com](#), April 20.
24. Editors. (2006). When Don’t Smoke Means Do. [New York Times](#), November 27.
25. Lentini, L. & Mouzon, D. (2007). 20 things you didn’t know about hygiene. [Discover Magazine](#), September.
26. Dubner, S., & Levitt, S. (2006). Selling Soap. [New York Times Magazine](#), September 24.
27. Cohen, M. (2007). Sex nets: The puzzling rise and fall and rise of HIV and AIDS in Africa. [Slate.com](#), May 15.
28. Legato, M. (2006). The Weaker Sex. [New York Times](#), June 17.
29. Gawande, A. (2007). The way we age now. [The New Yorker](#), April 30.
30. Stein, R. (2006). Race may be factor in lung cancer. [Washington Post](#), January 26.
31. Sapolsky, R. (1997). On the Role of Upholstery in Cardiovascular Psychology. [Discover](#), November.
32. Friedman, R. (2007). Yet another worry for those who believe the glass is half-empty. [New York Times](#), January 9.
33. Thernstrom, M. (2001). Pain, the disease. [The New York Times](#), December 16.
34. Thernstrom, M. (2006). My pain, my brain. [The New York Times](#), May 14.
35. Cromley, J. (2007). Think yourself thinner? [Los Angeles Times](#), February 19.

36. Burton, R. (2008). Why placebo is not a dirty word. [Salon.com](#), August 1.
37. Harris, G. (2008). Half of doctors routinely prescribe placebos. [The New York Times](#), October 23.
- 37.5 (NEWLY ADDED READING): Silberman, S. (2009). Placebos are getting more effective. Drugmakers are desperate to know why. *Wired Magazine*, August 24.
38. Bowen, J. (1999). Faith healing. [Salon.com](#), November 3.
39. Speisel, S. (2006). Why we're fatter: Five reasons you never thought of. [Slate.com](#), July 13.
40. Speisel, S. (2007). Beware of diet: What if counting calories makes you fatter in the long run? [Slate.com](#), July 4.
41. Kolata, G. (2006). For a world of woes, we blame cookie monsters. [New York Times](#), October 29.
42. Yoffe, E. (2008). Spandex fantasy: I have a lifetime's worth of flab. Can I turn it into muscle in four months? [Slate.com](#), August 13.
43. Lash, R. (2008). Further proof: Exercising is more important than dieting. [Slate.com](#), January 14.
44. Gawande, A. (2009). The cost conundrum. [The New Yorker](#), June 1.
45. Goolsbee, A. (2007). Michael Moore and the Beige Bomber: He's got the indictment of health care right, but not the fix. [Slate.com](#), July 1.
46. Gladwell, M. (2005). The moral-hazard myth: The bad idea behind our failed health-care system. [The New Yorker](#), August 29.
47. Gawande, A. (1999). Whose body is it anyway? What doctors should do when patients make bad decisions. [The New Yorker](#), October 4.
48. Brody, J. (2007). Tough question to answer, tough answer to hear. [New York Times](#), March 6.
49. Gawande, A. (2007). The checklist. [The New Yorker](#). December 10.
50. Szalavitz, M. (2009). Study: A simple surgery checklist saves lives. *Time.com*, January 14.

51. Weiner, S. (2008). The how of happiness. Good Housekeeping. December 3.
52. Lyumbormisky, S. (2008). Happiness and religion, happiness as religion. Psychology Today, June 24