

Course Syllabus

Title:	Introduction to Disaster Psychology - PSYC 456: Section 015
Term:	Fall 2006 Tuesdays and Thursdays: 9:30 am - 10:45 am
Location:	South Dakota Union, Room #404
Credit Hours:	3
Instructor:	Jon Elhai, Ph.D. (605) 677-6575 (office) jelhai@usd.edu (e-mail)
Office Hours:	Thursdays: 11am-12pm South Dakota Union – Office 114 Or, call/e-mail to make an appointment.
Required Text:	Freedy, J.R., & Hobfoll, S.E. (Eds). (1995). <i>Traumatic stress: From theory to practice</i> . New York: Plenum Press.

Additional 7 articles downloadable from the following website (requires you to enter your USD username and password):

<http://usd.edu/dmhi/je/pages/courses/IntroToDisasterPsyc/IntroToDisasterPsycReadings.html>

Course Description:

This course provides a broad introduction to the field, examining theory, research and practice in disaster psychology within the American Red Cross, and in other venues. This course will be taught as an advanced seminar. It is intended primarily for students minoring in disaster response and psychology majors preparing for entry into a doctoral program. **Prerequisite: PSYC 255.**

Specifically, students will learn about traumatic events and posttraumatic stress disorder, with a focus on the assessment and treatment of victims of natural and technological disasters.

Course Outcomes:

1. Students should understand the nature of traumatic events and their effects on victims.
2. Students should understand the history of trauma in psychiatry and disaster mental health.
3. Students should understand the community prevention of traumatic events and disasters.
4. Students should understand how victims of trauma and disaster are assessed.
5. Students should understand the biological interventions used in trauma/disaster victims.
6. Students should understand the effects of stress and trauma on physical health.
7. Students should understand the risk factors for negative mental health outcomes that are involved with trauma and disasters.
8. Students should understand the potential mental health outcomes in disaster victims.
9. Students should understand the potential mental health outcomes of accident victims.
10. Students should understand the nature and mental health effects of torture victims and refugees.
11. Students should understand the essentials of treatment for disaster victims.
12. Students should understand the essentials of treatment for accident victims.
13. Students should understand the essentials of treatment for torture victims.

South Dakota System Board of Regents General Education Requirement - GOAL #3:

Students will understand the organization, potential, and diversity of the human community through study of the social sciences.

Student Learning Outcomes: As a result of taking courses meeting this goal, students will:

1. Identify and explain basic concepts, terminology and theories of the selected social science disciplines from different spatial, temporal, cultural and/or institutional contexts.
 - a. Assessment 1: Demonstrate the acquired knowledge of key concepts in trauma and disaster psychology across time and sociocultural contexts, evaluated by midterm and final exam grades.
 - b. Assessment 2: Demonstrate advanced understanding of a trauma or disaster psychology research area's basic concepts, evaluated by the research paper grades.
2. Apply selected social science concepts and theories to contemporary issues
 - a. Assessment 1: Link trauma/disaster psychology concepts to relevant contemporary clinical problems, evidenced by class participation grades.
 - b. Assessment 2: Document the clinical importance of the trauma/disaster psychology research area's basic concepts, evaluated by research paper grades.
3. Identify and explain the social or aesthetic values of different cultures.
 - a. Assessment 1: Provide the cultural relevance of research findings in trauma/disaster psychology, evaluated by class participation grades.
4. The impact of diverse philosophical, ethical or religious views
 - a. Assessment 1: Provide a balanced (i.e., diverse) view of trauma/disaster psychology research findings, evaluated by class participation grades.
 - b. Assessment 2: Provide a balanced (i.e., diverse) view of trauma/disaster psychology research findings, evaluated by research paper grades.

Course Policies and Procedures

1. **Attendance/Participation:** It is the responsibility of each student to attend all classes, take all exams, and turn in all assignments on time. Student attendance/participation is worth 10% of the final grade. Students who stop attending class will be in jeopardy of involuntary withdrawal from the class roll by the instructor. No excused absences will be allowed for any reason; however, you are allowed to miss up to two classes without penalty.

Please do not arrive late to class.

2. **Exams:** There will be a midterm exam and a final exam (non-cumulative), each consisting of multiple choice questions. Exam material will be taken from lectures, textbook, and article readings. Each exam is worth 30% of your final grade (for a total of 60% of your grade). **No makeup exams will be given.** If an exam must be missed due to extremely extenuating circumstances, let the instructor know as soon as possible.

3. **Research Paper:**

- Write a 10+ page (not including cover page, abstract, or references) research paper (worth 30% of your final grade) on an area of disaster psychology, traumatic stress, or PTSD that interests you. Include at least 10 references of your own finding (that is, in addition to those provided to you for class readings). References may come from mental health, psychology and psychiatry journals or books (a good place to start is by searching PsycInfo at the library). No more than 1 (non-PsycInfo) internet reference may be used. Do not waste space by generally discussing the PTSD diagnosis or other topics extensively covered in class. Use quotes *extremely* sparingly. **Topics must be approved by the instructor beforehand (by November 2).** Papers must be typed with a 12 pt. font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins, and are due by **December 7**. Papers may be submitted early for corrective feedback. **Late papers will not be assigned regular grades** (unless you turned in the first draft early for corrective feedback) – rather, for each business day late the paper is turned in past the deadline, 10 percentage points will be deducted. APA format is required for references (Please consult with the APA's

Publication Manual-4th of 5th Editions, or with the instructor if you are not familiar with APA style. Also, see the course readings on the above-mentioned website).

● You **MUST** complete a web-based tutorial on plagiarism as part of your research paper, by **November 2**. Failure to complete the tutorial by that date will result in obtaining 0% on the research paper. To complete the tutorial, visit the following website:

<http://usd.edu/dmhi/je/pages/links/plagiarism.htm>

5. Grading:

Grade Composition		Grading scale	
Midterm Exam	30%	A	90-100
Final Exam	30%	B	80-89
Research Paper	30%	C	70-79
<u>Class Attendance/Participation</u>	<u>10%</u>	D	60-69
Total	100%	F	59 and below

4. Extra Credit: A maximum of 5 percentage points can be added to your final course grade, by doing the following activities.

Experiments

- Participate in research experiments to further research in the field of psychology. To find studies in which to participate, visit the following USD Sona Systems website during the first week of class and register for a username and password: <http://www.usd.edu/psyc/xcresearch.cfm> Every 10 minutes of experiment participation will earn one-quarter of a percentage point toward your final grade (note that on USD Sona Systems, each 10 minutes of participation is equivalent to 1 USD Sona Systems “credit”).

Papers

- Write at least a 1-2 page review and critique of a psychology journal article. Acceptable journal articles must: a) be published *this year*; and b) be published by the American Psychological Association (APA). For a list of journals published by APA, see the following website: www.apa.org/journals (Note that the ID Weeks Library only carries some of these journals, so you will need to ensure that the library has the journal you want). Papers must be typed with a 12 pt. font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins, and are due by **December 7**. Papers may be submitted early for corrective feedback. **Late papers will not be accepted.** Each 1-2 page paper will earn a maximum of 1.5 percentage points toward your final grade.

5. Academic Dishonesty: The College of Arts and Sciences considers plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty inimical to the objectives of higher education. The College supports the imposition of penalties on students who engage in academic dishonesty, as defined in the “Conduct” section of the University of South Dakota Student Handbook. No credit can be given for a dishonest assignment. At the discretion of the instructor, a student caught engaging in any form of academic dishonesty may be: a) Given a zero for that assignment, b) Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit, c) Assigned a reduced grade for the course, d) Dropped from the course, e) Failed in the course.

However, this instructor most typically fails the student on the assignment and/or course.

6. Class Cancellations: Occasionally, the instructor may be called without advanced warning to travel on a disaster response. In this event, if a substitute instructor cannot be arranged to teach a given lecture, the class will be e-mailed as soon as possible to let you know that class will be cancelled that day.

Additionally, in case of a snow or ice storm, please use your best judgment about whether to attend class. The instructor lives out of town, and will cancel class by e-mail as soon as possible if necessary. However, if you don't feel safe driving to class, don't risk it.

7. Additional Ground Rules: 1) Please turn off cell phones/pagers during class. 2) Please do **not** arrive late to class. 3) Lecture notes will **not** be provided to students by the instructor, even after an excused absence. 4) Grade disputes must be submitted in writing in order to be considered. 5) Grievances about the course and/or instructor should be brought up with the instructor first in order to resolve the matter, prior to discussing the matter with the department/university's administration.

Note: This syllabus may be appended by the instructor if necessary. Students are responsible for any changes made.

Any student who feels s/he may need academic accommodations or access accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability should contact and register with Disability Services during the first week of class. Disability Services is the official office to assist students through the process of disability verification and coordination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Students currently registered with Disability Services must obtain a new accommodation memo each semester.

Schedule of Classes and Readings (The assigned chapter should be read **before** each class)

Date	Required Reading	Lecture Topic
Tu 8/29	None	Introduction
Th 8/31	Book Chapter 1	Traumatic Stress Overview (Trauma)
Tu 9/5	Book Chapter 1	Traumatic Stress Overview (PTSD)
Th 9/7	NO CLASS (DMHI CONFERENCE)	
Tu 9/12	Article #1; Article #2	History of Trauma and Disaster MH
Th 9/14	Article #1; Article #2	History of Trauma and Disaster MH
Tu 9/19	Book Chapter 3	Community Prevention of Trauma
Th 9/21	Book Chapter 3	Community Prevention of Trauma (tape 2)
Tu 9/26	Book Chapter 4	Assessment & Biological Interventions
Th 9/28	Article #3	Stress, Health, and PTSD Risk Factors
Tu 10/3	None	Review for Exam I
Th 10/5	MIDTERM EXAM	
Tu 10/10	Book Chapter 7; Articles #4; Article #5	Mental Health Impact of Disasters
Th 10/12	Book Chapter 7; Articles #4; Article #5	Mental Health Impact of Disasters
Tu 10/17	NO CLASS (INSTRUCTOR PRESENTING WORKSHOP)	
Th 10/19	NO CLASS (INSTRUCTOR PRESENTING WORKSHOP)	
Tu 10/24	Book Chapter 7; Article #4; Article #5	Mental Health Impact of Disasters (tape 1)
Th 10/26	Book Chapter 7; Article #4; Article #5	MH Impact of Disasters (tape 3)
Th 10/31	Book Chapter 8	MH Impact of Accidental Injury
*Th 11/2	Book Chapter 8	MH Impact of Accidental Injury (tape 4)
Tu 11/7	NO CLASS (ISTSS CONFERENCE)	
Th 11/9	Book Chapter 9	Refugee Status and Torture
Tu 11/14	Book Chapter 9	Refugee Status and Torture (tape 5)
Th 11/16	NO CLASS (AABT CONFERENCE)	
Tu 11/21	Book Chapter 12; Article #6	Helping Victims of Disasters
Th 11/23	NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)	
Tu 11/28	Book Chapter 12; Article #6	Helping Victims of Disasters
Th 11/30	Book Chapter 13; Article #7	Helping Victims of Accid. Injury
Tu 12/5	Book Chapter 13; Article #7	Helping Vics. of Accid. Injury (tape 6)
**Th 12/7	Book Chapter 14	Treatment of Torture Survivors/Final Review

***MON 12/11 (8:30-9:30am)

FINAL EXAM

* Last day to submit research paper topic

** Last day to submit complete research paper; last day to complete plagiarism tutorial

*** Note: the actual final exam time is 7:30-9:30am. However, our exam will start at 8:30am, and will last for only 1 hour