Course title: Psychology of Health and Illness
Course code: (GI) PSYC 3002 BRGE
Programs offering course: Global Architecture and Design, Berlin Open Campus Block
Open Campus Track: Global and Community Health
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Spring Block III 2021

Course Description

Health psychology focuses on the relationship between behavior, health, and illness while trying to identify the predictors of health-compromising and health-enhancing factors. Through a dual focus on healthcare and psychology, students will examine illness identities in the national context. Special emphasis will be placed on cultural differences related to body image, quality of life, self-help, religious beliefs, alternative medicine, and rituals related to dying and death. Through an examination of the relevant literature, guest lectures and site visits, the course addresses philosophical questions about the perceptions and definitions of what it means to be ‘healthy’ or ‘unhealthy’ within the national context.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Evaluate the relationship between behavior, health and illness
- Examine the developments in behavioral patterns in relation to health over time and in various cultures, and in various ethnic and socio-economic groups in national society.
- Critically analyze the regional and national ways of targeting unhealthy lifestyle (diet, smoking, drugs etc): insight in the role of preventative medicine
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of psychological interventions for health promotion
- Appraise the non-rational, emotional side of coping with health and disease and the demand for alternatives for rational Western medicine: (religious) rituals, complementary medicine and self-help.

Course Prerequisites

Students should have completed a semester course in health studies, psychology, sociology, or medical anthropology.

Methods of Instruction

Among other techniques, the methodology used throughout this course will include: teacher presentations with student-teacher dialogue and discussion; active discussion in which students will be expected to prepare presentations to present to the group.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Presentation 15%
2. Midterm Exam 25%
3. Health Promotion Campaign 15%
4. Final Paper 25%
5. Participation 20%
TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

Presentation
Students must conduct a 15-minute presentation in groups on one of the themes discussed. It should show a good understanding of a selected topic and the ability to put it in perspective. The topic should be presented in a concise yet comprehensive manner. They may use audio-visual media such as a video or film if it adds value and is incorporated seamlessly.

Midterm Exam

All students will be required to take an essay based exam in order to measure their development midway through the course. Students will answer five short questions on topics covered, totaling 400 words per answer.

Health Promotion Campaign

Students will design and develop a health promotion campaign highlighting the national context and health challenges. The project must be delivered as a Poster Session, with students demonstrating the key challenges facing the host country, and what messages and mediums of communication will be most effective.

Final Paper

A 2500-word final paper is required. This paper must be an in-depth analysis of one of the topics discussed in class. All papers are research papers and must therefore have proper annotation.

Participation

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Attendance

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent.

Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to any required field placement. Students may not miss placement/work hours at an internship or service learning site unless approved in advance by the Academic Director and placement supervisor. All students must complete all of the requisite 100 minimum work hours on site at the internship or service learning placement to be eligible for academic credit.

Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Absences for classes will lead to the following penalties:
Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class:  1.0  Introduction to Class

What is the field of health psychology? How to define health and disease or illness? Health and disease as social constructs. A bio-psychosocial approach.

Constructions of healthiness as morally superior to unhealthiness will be critically analysed and explored. This will be followed by an exercise where students consider their own preconceived notions of health and illness, their own positions in relation to health discourse and their experiences of health both personally and through their perceptions and experiences of others’ health. Important questions to consider will include thinking about whether health important and why. Also considering and debating why it is important to stay healthy; what that means; what it says about a person if they are healthy or ill and also how individuals feel about others who are healthy and about those who are ill.

Readings:


Week 2

Class:  2.0  Construction of Health in the Cultural Context

The students will learn about health, behavior and illness from a cultural perspective. International, cultural and historical comparisons of behavioral patterns concerning health and illness will be discussed and compared with those in the host country.

Readings:

TBD

Class:  3.0  Mental Health

This class will explore what role gender, race and geography play in contributing to the statistics of mental illness in the host country.

Reading:

Week 3
Class: 4.0 Health Promotion in the Healthcare System

The basic structure of the host country’s healthcare system will be shown, with an emphasis on preventative health care. Messages from the local government in communicating health care to the citizens is discussed. Ways to change unhealthy behavior and stimulate healthy behavior is also debated with reference to current health data.

Readings:


Class: 5.0 The Lalonde Model

The model of Lalonde for health promotion will be explained, as will be the role of the media in promoting health.

Site visit: Visit to local health organization

Readings:


Due Date for Submission of Mid Term Exam

Week 4
Class: 6.0 Alternative Medicine, Self-Help, and Religion

This week deals with complementary methods of handling health issues. The flaws of the Western evidence based, rational use of medicine are explored. Patient autonomy, tailor-made-medicine and self-help will be addressed.

Readings:


Due Date for Submission of Health Promotion Campaign Assessment

Class: 7.0 Alternative Medicine, Self-Help, and Religion II

This class will focus on the concept of self-help and the role of individual responsibility discourses in the experience of illness; the role of religion understanding and coping with disease.

Site Visit: Local health research facility

Readings:


Week 5
Class: 8.0 Death and Dying

This class will focus on individual and institutional approaches to managing and coping with illness and death. Death and palliative care-instructions of aging and dying and approaches to facilitating effective end of life care. Rituals and traditions providing comfort and support in end of life situations, in historical and contemporary sickbeds.
Readings:

Due Date for Submission of the Presentation Assessment

Class: 9.0 Ritual and Palliative Care

Students will learn about rituals and traditions providing comfort and support in end of life situations, in historical and contemporary sickbeds.

Site Visit: local health organization

Readings:

Week 6
Class: 10.0 Looking Forward: A Critical Health Psychology Practice

Discussions in this class will center around how students can apply the skills and knowledge they have engaged with over the last few weeks to practical situations or interventions for the future for their own country of origin.

Readings:


Class: 11.0 Final Review

Prior to submitting the final essay, students will review the content of the course. Students will brainstorm in groups to great a SWOT analysis asnf then groups will present most significant learning points to the wider cohort.

Due Date for Submission of the Final Paper Assessment

Course Materials
Readings


**Online Resources**