Psychological Fitness (PSYC 461) Section 005. Fall 2011. 3:00 - 4:15 pm TR in Innovation 136

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Phone: 703-993-1368  Office Hours: 1:45 - 2:45 Tuesdays & Thursdays
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Welcome! This course will introduce you to the theory and practice of psychological health promotion. You will have the opportunity to practice multiple psychological exercises to enhance your psychological health. There is no textbook for this course. We will read and discuss the journal articles listed for each class date. I expect you to attend class regularly and to complete all reading assignments before each class. I will use class time for lectures, discussions, videos, and class demonstrations of psychological exercises.

*Last day to add: September 16  *Last day to drop: September 30

Requirements.

One Exam. Your exam is worth 100 points. The exam is 80% multiple choice (40 questions worth 2 points each) and 20% short answer questions (4 questions worth from 4 to 6 points each) based on classroom activities and the readings. The exam is cumulative. Two exams will be offered. If you take both exams, you will receive credit for your higher score. One exam will occur during the semester on Tuesday, Nov. 15 and another exam will occur during the final exam period on Thursday, Dec. 15.

Two Movie Reviews. Your movie reviews are each worth 50 points (100 points total). I will assign you to a group of three students who will watch a movie focused on character strengths. You will discuss it, and then your group will write an approximately 5 page paper to describe: 1) the character strengths that apply to one of the main characters; 2) the theoretical causes of the character strengths for that character; 3) cultural considerations; 4) personal weaknesses or psychological disorders of the character; and 5) the points of agreement and disagreement in your group discussions. I will provide the list of movies. The review are due on Thursday, Sept. 15 and Thursday, Oct. 6.

Psychological Exercise Project. This project is worth 100 points and you will write a report in the form of a single-participant scientific study that one might find in an issue of Clinical Case Studies. The report should include Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion sections with a minimum of three references from psychology journals. Your report can range from 7 to 10 pages. This report is due on Tuesday, Oct. 25. I will provide you standardized measures to assess yourself twice. In between, you will choose at least 5 psychological exercises that you will implement to help maintain or improve your psychological fitness.

Creative Project. This project is worth 100 points. You have a lot of options to carry out this project, but you must submit a one page proposal for the professor to approve by Tuesday, Nov. 1. The project must focus on some aspect of psychological fitness and could include a TED lecture http://www.ted.com, instructional video, a website, a guide, an application for a smartphone, developing a series of new psychological exercises, a traditional research paper (7 to 12 pages and minimum of 10 references), or other ideas. The Creative Project is due by Thursday, Dec. 8.

Missed Exam. You can make-up a missed exam if you have a note from a physician that you could not attend the exam. The professor will consider other reasons for missing an exam and will decide whether or not to allow the student to make-up the exam. Make-up exams may have a different format from the original exam.
Extra Credit. You can earn up to 8 points of extra credit that is added onto your point total for the class. There are two ways to earn these points. First, you can participate as a volunteer for four hours in psychology department research (2 points per hour). Alternatively, you can write a psychology journal article summary and critique on a content area covered by your book that is four typed pages (2 points per page).

Honor Code: The Honor Code of George Mason University deals specifically with cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Students should be familiar with the code and connected policies, set out at http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies. This course will be conducted in accordance with those policies.

Academic Accomodations. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Grading. I will base your final grade on your point total as defined below.

A+ = 388 - 400 (97% or more)  A = 372 - 387 (93 – 96%)  A- = 360 - 371 (90 - 92%)
B+ = 348 - 359 (87 - 89%)  B = 332 - 347 (83 - 86%)  B- = 320 - 331 (80 - 82%)
C+ = 308 - 319 (77 - 79%)  C = 292 - 307 (73 - 76%)  C- = 280 - 291 (70 - 72%)
D = 240 - 279 (60 - 69%)  F = 000 - 239 (below 60%).

Course Topics, Assignments, and Exam Dates.

9/1 * Complete measures for time 1 for Psychological Exercise Project *


9/15 ** Movie Review 1 Due **


10/11 * No Class *

10/13 * Complete Measures for Time 2 for Psychological Fitness Project *


11/15 ** EXAM 1 **


11/24 * No Class *


12/8 ** Creative Project Due **  Review

12/15 ** EXAM 2 ** (1:30 – 4:15)