Psychology 7536: Social Psychology of Health Promotion  
Fall 2001

**Instructor:** Dr. Angela Bryan, IBS #1, Room 117  
Office hours: Tuesday 9-11am or by appt.  

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**Course description:** In this course, we will conduct an overview of the field of Health Psychology primarily from a social psychological perspective. The focus will be on non-clinical public health concerns and on prevention-related health behaviors. Social psychology has provided models of behavior that are applicable to the question of why people might undertake health protective behaviors or adhere to treatment-related regimens. These models address how beliefs, expectancies, and social influences affect health behavior. This semester, we will consider three traditional models of health behavior: (1) Theory of Reasoned Action/Planned Behavior, (2) Social Cognitive Theory, and (3) Health Belief Model. In addition, we will have one unit on newer models of health behavior and “hybrid” models that integrate traditional theoretical model constructs. We will then discuss the biopsychosocial model of health psychology research and intervention, and where social psychological theories fit in this larger framework. We will then move to specific health/risk behaviors including exercise, condom use and pregnancy prevention, smoking, obesity, and adherence to medical regimen. Finally, we will examine individual differences relevant to health behavior (e.g., personality, genetics) and discuss methodological and analysis issues in intervention research.

**Requirements:** You will be expected to read all assigned materials, and come to class ready to engage in a lively discussion of the topic at hand. You should be prepared to give a brief overview of any of the articles assigned for that week, and will be called on randomly to do so during class. You will need to complete three reviews of specific articles I will assign. These reviews will be of the format you would use if you were completing a blind review for a peer-reviewed psychological journal. Finally, you will complete a final project, which will consist of a proposed design, implementation, and evaluation of an intervention to change the health behavior of your choice in a population of your choice. The only specific requirement is that your intervention be theory-based, in that it should utilize a social psychological model of health behavior or some variant thereof. You will turn in an outline of your project idea approximately 2/3 of the way through the semester. The final paper will be due during finals. The proposal should conform to APA style conventions, and contain an introduction, method, and proposed results section. This proposal will be due no later than 5pm on Monday, December 17, 2001.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Class participation (10 pts X 14)</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td>140</td>
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<td>2. Reviews (50 pts X 3)</td>
<td>week 4, week 8, week 13</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>3. Outline of Research Proposal</td>
<td>week 12</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td><strong>Total Points Possible</strong></td>
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<td>430</td>
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**Grading:** You should anticipate that your first review will not receive a particularly high grade. This is to be expected. Learning to write a good review is a process. Thus, aside from a strict “point total” for calculating final grades, much of your grade will be calculated taking into account improvement over the course of the semester in both your class participation and reviews. I give you point totals so that you will know the relative importance that I place on the assignments in grading, but there is no specific 90% = A cutoff for the final grades. Final grades are completely at my discretion, but I fully expect that each of you will produce “A” work in this class.

**Syllabus and Readings (available in a folder in Donna Huckaby’s office, D-261):**

**Week 1:** Introduction, Discussion of Syllabus, Format of Class

**Week 2:** Theory of Reasoned Action/Planned Behavior


*Thought questions:* How are the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behavior different? How has research on these models in general changed since their introduction?

**Week 3:** Social Cognitive Theory


- **How to write a review**
- **Assign REVIEW #1**
Week 4: Health Belief Model


Thought questions: Why was the self-efficacy added to the original conceptualization of the HBM? Why do you think it was not originally included? How do screening behaviors (e.g., breast self-exam) differ from health protective behaviors (e.g., eating a healthy diet)? Do we need different models for screening versus health behaviors? Are different model variables more important for one versus the other?

REVIEW #1 due next week

Week 5: New models and hybrid models


Thought questions: Do we really need MORE models of health behavior? What is the value of "hybrid" models of health behavior (e.g., Bryan et al., 1997, 2001)? To what degree is the "social" component of health behavior important? Does it depend on which behavior one is concerned with? Why?

* Turn in/discuss REVIEW #1
Week 6: Putting social psychological models in perspective


**Thought questions:** What is the nature of health behavior? Is it individually-driven? To what degree are various health behaviors impacted by society, race/ethnicity, gender, social class, etc.? How is this societal component defined in various broader models of health behavior?

Week 7: Exercise Behavior


**Thought questions:** There are two different ways exercise is conceptualized in this week’s readings. First, it is an outcome behavior to be predicted and explained. Second, it is used as the intervention in a randomized, controlled trial. What are the implications of considering exercise in these two ways?

* Assign REVIEW #2
Week 8: Condom Use and HIV Prevention


Thought questions: Is sexual behavior harder to study than other health behaviors? Why or why not? Why do you think the studies we read this week are each concerned with a narrow range of the population at risk?

**REVIEW #2 due next week**

Week 9: Abstinence and Pregnancy Prevention


Thought questions: Attempting to predict abstinence is attempting to predict the non-occurrence of an event. How does this make the study of abstinence more difficult? What should the goal of sexual risk reduction interventions be? How does the developmental stage of the population make a difference? Given what you know about adolescent pregnancy prevention interventions, do you think individual level interventions have the capacity to influence behavior?

- Turn in/discuss REVIEW #2
Week 10: Adolescent Smoking Prevention


*Thought questions:* What is the value of conceptualizing different types of smokers, either for preventive intervention or smoking cessation intervention? To what degree is the “image” of a smoker more strongly related to behavior than is the health consequences of smoking?

Week 11: Healthy Eating/Diet/Obesity


Week 12: Adherence to Medical Regimen


Week 13: Individual Differences: Personality, Genetics, and Health


*Thought questions:* From the perspective of intervention design, why is it important to look at individual difference variables such as personality and genetics? How does knowing about such individual differences influence group- or community-level intervention design? What about intervention evaluation? How can individual differences be related to social psychological models of health behavior?

Week 14: Methodological Issues in Intervention Research


REVIEW #3 due next week

Week 15: Methodological Issues in Intervention Research (cont.)


- Turn in/discuss REVIEW #3

Week 16: Presentation of Research Ideas (Field Trip)