Course description: In this course, we will conduct an overview of the field of Health Psychology primarily from a social psychological and judgment/decision making perspective. Social psychology has provided models and theories of behavior that are applicable to the question of why people might undertake health protective behaviors. These models address how beliefs, expectancies, motivation, and social influences affect health behavior. We will begin with an overview of the use of theoretical models in the design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions to increase health behavior and a comparison of the major models. We will then consider in depth three traditional/classic models of health behavior: (1) Theory of Reasoned Action/Planned Behavior, (2) Social Cognitive Theory, and (3) Health Belief Model. We will move on to explore newer models of health behavior that integrate traditional theoretical model constructs, explore other social psychological and judgment/decision making perspectives on health behavior, and examine the role of affect and emotion in guiding health behavior. We will also talk about the application of basic social psychological/JDM concepts (e.g., self-affirmation, nonconscious processes, incentive structures) to various health behavior contexts. 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. There will also be group activities in class that will be included in your participation grade. You will need to complete two 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 psychology or health 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 or judgment/decision making model of health behavior or some variant thereof. You will turn in an outline of your project idea towards the end of the semester. 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, May 4, 2015.

Grading: If you have never done a review before, you should anticipate that your first review will not receive a particularly high grade. 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 (both available on WebCT):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1, 1/12/15:</th>
<th>Introduction, Discussion of Syllabus, Expectations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 2, 1/19/15:</td>
<td>MLK Day – NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3, 1/26/15:</td>
<td>Overview of Models of Health Behavior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Thought questions:* Did reading these papers cause you to come away with a “best” model? How might the choice of model be dependent upon the behavior, population, health concern, goals of research, etc.? What are the strengths and limitations of current research on health behavior theory? What do you see as the main limitations and benefits of a social psychological perspective on health behavior?

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<th>Week 4, 2/2/15:</th>
<th>Theory of Reasoned Action/Planned Behavior</th>
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*Thought questions:* How are the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behavior different? Why do you think it has been so popular? What are its limitations?
Week 5, 2/9/15: Social Cognitive Theory


*Thought questions*: The TRA/TPB have very distinct theories about process and the relationships among model constructs. Do you see this same specificity in the SCT? How is this reflected in SCT-based research?

- How to write a review
- Assign REVIEW #1 – Bish et al

***BONUS READING***


Week 6, 2/16/15: Health Belief Model


*Thought questions*: Why was self-efficacy added to the original conceptualization of the HBM? Why do you think it was not originally included? Are different HBM model variables more important for some behaviors (e.g., vaccination) versus others (e.g., diet)?

REVIEW #1 due
Week 7, 2/23/15: Newer models, hybrid models, and model “extensions”


**Thought questions:** Do we really need MORE models of health behavior? What is the value of the “hybrid” models of health behavior? To what degree is the “social” component of health behavior important? Does it depend on which behavior one is concerned with? Why?

Hand back and discuss REVIEW #1

Week 8, 3/2/15: Judgment and Decision Making Perspectives on Health Behavior


**Thought questions:** Consider the models of health behavior (TPB, HBM); where do cognitions like risk appraisal and worry, not to mention decision-making fit in these models? What about interventions that circumvent directly targeting cognitions entirely (like nudge approaches)? How do you think that people remember their risk overtime? Higher than actual? Lower? The same? Why would this be important for decisions regarding one’s health?
**Week 9, 3/9/15: Affect and Health**


*Thought questions*: Consider the models of health behavior (TPB, HBM); what role do you see for affect in these models? Is it easier or more difficult to target affect about health behavior than it is to target relatively more rational cognitions about health behavior? What would an intervention to change affect associated with a behavior look like?

**Week 10, 3/16/15: Exercise Behavior**


*Thought questions*: Exercise is distinct from some other health behaviors in that there are direct biological antecedents and consequents of engaging in this behavior. There are also clear environmental facilitators and constraints on the behavior. How do these realities pose problems for traditional social psychological models of health behavior?

**Week 11, 3/23/15: HAPPY SPRING BREAK!! - NO CLASS**
Week 12, 3/30/15: Sexual Behavior: Condom Use, HIV Prevention and Pregnancy 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? 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?

- Assign REVIEW #2 – Corwin et al

Week 13, 4/6/15: Healthy Eating/Diet/Obesity


*Thought questions:* Why do you think obesity has become such an epidemic in western cultures (and increasingly around the world)? How effective are individual level models for predicting eating behavior and changing it? Is eating a realm where “paternalism” might be warranted? Why or why not?

REVIEW #2 due
Week 14, 4/13/15: Adherence to Medical Regimen


*Thought questions:* How are medical adherence behaviors distinct from other health behaviors that have to be repeated in an ongoing manner? Or are they? How does the use of these individual level models change when they become "second level"; i.e., when you assess a parent's attitudes about adherence in order to get at their child's adherence behavior? Do you think people are generally better at behavioral adherence or medication adherence? Is one easier to change than the other? Does one lend itself better to the social psychological theoretical frameworks we've discussed?

**Hand back and discuss REVIEW #2**

Week 15, 3/20/15: Individual Differences and Health Behavior


*Thought questions:* From the perspective of intervention design, why is it important to look at individual difference variables such as education, 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?

- **Project Outline Due**

**Week 16, 4/27/15: Methodological Issues in Intervention Research**


**BONUS READINGS:**


- **Presentation and discussion of research projects**