

## SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

**Discipline: Psychology**  
**Fall 2013 ~ B days, 10:50-12:05**  
**SEMS2500-107: Stress: Work, Technology, and Life**  
**Lower Division**  
**Faculty Name: John Mueller**  
2013-04-23

**Pre-requisites:** Intro. Psychology (or permission)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will examine the different ways of conceptualizing stress and related concepts, such as anxiety, arousal, tension, burnout, resilience, and so forth, and how physical and psychological health is affected. The coverage will focus somewhat on workplace or job-related stress, but also extend to general life stresses, and cultural differences. The emphasis will be on theoretical issues, mechanisms, assessment issues, and coping, instead of focusing on treatment per se. Handling stress will be considered in terms of our legacy of automatic physiological and emotional reactions to physical danger, in the context of the more subtle stressors in today's world, and using our cognitive resources for stress management.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The student will become familiar with the concepts and theories of the Psychology of Stress, and learn to evaluate the research findings in stress assessment and management. The student will understand personal, family, social, environmental, and work-related stress management issues and questions, and general stress reduction techniques, including relaxation, anxiety management, meditation, biofeedback, time management, nutrition, and exercise, as well as cognitive coping techniques.

## TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

The anticipated schedule of topics, arranged by phase of voyage, with chapters in the **RICE** text indicated as **R#**. (Some rescheduling may be required as port opportunities arise, if our itinerary changes, or if cross-course conflicts become apparent.)

Depart	Date	Class Day: <b>B</b>	Assignment	Destination
Southampton	Aug 27	1	Overview, orientation, pretest	St. Petersburg
St. Petersburg	Sep 02	2	Concepts, theories, models (R1)	Hamburg
St. Petersburg	Sep 04	3	Research designs and interpretation (R2)	Hamburg
Hamburg	Sep 10	4	Attitudes, beliefs, expectations (R3)	Antwerp
La Havre	Sep 17	5	Personality and stress (R4)	Dublin
La Havre	Sep 19	6	Physiology of stress (R5)	Dublin
Dublin	Sep 25	7	Family issues and stress (R6)	Lisbon
Casablanca	Oct 07	8	Job stress and burnout (R7)	Ghana
Casablanca	Oct 09	9	Technostress	Ghana
Casablanca	Oct 12	10	Review, flex, catchup, and integrate	Ghana
Casablanca	Oct 14	11	Exam 1 (chapters 1-7, mixed-format questions)	Ghana
Ghana	Oct 21	12	Social issues I - Cultural plus (R8)	Cape Town
Ghana	Oct 24	13	Social issues II - Life changes (R8)	Cape Town
Cape Town	Nov 01	14	Environment I - pollution (R9)	Buenos Aires
Cape Town	Nov 03	15	Environment II - disasters (R9)	Buenos Aires
Cape Town	Nov 06	16	Coping (R10)	Buenos Aires
Cape Town	Nov 09	17	Muscle relaxation (R11)	Buenos Aires
Cape Town	Nov 11	18	Imagery techniques (R12)	Buenos Aires
Buenos Aires	Nov 18	19	Meditation and biofeedback (R13)	Rio de Janeiro
Rio de Janeiro	Nov 24	20	Student stress I: Time plus (R14)	Manaus

Rio de Janeiro	Nov 26	21	Student stress II: Nutrition plus (R15)	Manaus
Rio de Janeiro	Nov 29	22	Humor as stress relief	Manaus
Manaus	Dec 07	23	Relaxation (Rice appendix)	Ft. Lauderdale
Manaus	Dec 09	24	Reflection and integration	Ft. Lauderdale
Manaus	Dec 13	Final	Chapters 1-15, emphasis 8-15	Ft. Lauderdale

*Note: There is not enough time in class to cover everything discussed in the book; classes will be used to highlight important topics and go into more depth on difficult concepts, as well as having discussions. Classes will also cover some material not covered directly in the book. The exams will have questions from all course material, which includes the assigned textbook, and all class activities. You are responsible for all class content and announcements whether you are present or not. It is important that you complete reading assignments before coming to class because class activities assume you are already familiar with the material. Some rescheduling may be required as port opportunities arise, or as cross-course conflicts become apparent. There will also be materials placed in the course folder on the ship's server system.*

## **FIELD WORK**

Field lab attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Please do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of our field lab.

***FIELD LAB*** (At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.)

The Field Lab will involve an 8-hour exercise in Antwerp, Belgium, specifically a visit to and tour of the World Health Organization in Brussels, Belgium. This will start with an hour of breakfast orientation on ship, travel to Brussels, tour the facilities, and discuss WHO projects on stress and disease around the world as possible. There will be a lunch break in Brussels, travel back to the ship, and a debriefing hour back on the ship. Many WHO projects deal with AIDS and other diseases in Africa, as well as stress due to poor economies and seemingly constant political strife, and this visit should pay dividends later and enrich the visits to our African ports.

Further details on this activity will be covered in class. The exercise will culminate in a short paper (about 5 pages), due roughly 2 weeks after departing Antwerp (about Oct. 1?), worth 20% of the course.

## ***FIELD ASSIGNMENTS***

There are other aspects of the international ports that will be blended into class meetings, actually "themes" in that the question extends across ports, and the differences become more apparent as more ports are experienced. For example, different cultures have different attitudes about showing weakness and thus getting treatment (for stress), economic differences, different stressors in the environment or society, different

expectations for personal responsibility, different views of the role of the family and individual development, and other practices. These discussions will be incorporated into the day-to-day class meetings.

## METHODS OF EVALUATION

30% Exam 1: Rice chapters 1-7, as in the table above. Mixed format: short essay (with choice, e.g., pick 2 of 3), compare and contrast, define, probably some true/false and/or multiple choice and/or completion, etc. Roughly mid-voyage (TBA).

30% Exam 2: Comprehensive final, with emphasis on remaining chapters in Rice, similar format to first exam. Final week (TBA).

20% - Field Activity: Students will do one field work exercise of 8 hours duration in a port, and write a short paper (5-6 pages) worth 20%, tentatively due about two weeks after departing that port.

20% Media analysis: Short paper (5-6 pages) comparing an everyday "news report" re stress research to the text (or journal), as to whether the popular press report is an accurate representation or not. A variant of this would make it a media report published locally in one of the ports on the trip. Further details on this assignment will be provided. The tentative due date for this would be (about 3 weeks from end of voyage, TBA) .

*Letter grades will correspond to the SEA Registrar's standards for percent achievement. See grading note below. Participation per se is not graded, but attendance is expected.*

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS (1)

AUTHOR: RICE, Philip L.  
TITLE: Stress and Health  
PUBLISHER: Brooks/Cole-Wadsworth  
ISBN #: 9780534265021  
DATE/EDITION: 1999 (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)  
COST: \$100 (about)

**Publisher web page:** <<http://tinurl.com/aq96b8l>>

## GRADING

Borderline grades would not be rounded up. I prefer to work with a mastery grading scheme, where there is no curve; that is, there is no upper limit on the number of As, Bs, there do not have to be any Cs, Ds, or Fs.

Percent	Letter	Percent	Letter	Percent	Letter	Percent	Letter
96-100	A	80-84	B	67-71	C+	54-58	D+

90-95	A-	76-79	B-	63-66	C	50-53	D
85-89	B+	72-75	C+	59-62	C-	49-0	F

*If there is an official Semester at Sea grading scale, that will be used instead.*

## **HONOR CODE**

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."

Health & Stress Newsletter. This publication is no longer in print. We opened the issues below so that you can view a sample of Health and Stress. If you enjoyed the issues, then JOIN US and have access to the entire archive. Sneak Peek (Click the covers to open).