



PS 343 PSYCHOLOGY, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: MOVING BEYOND JUST TREATING MENTAL DISORDERS
IES Abroad Santiago

DESCRIPTION:

The aim of this course is to provide a comprehensive view of the biopsychosocial framework of human well-being and health. We will cover the evidence supporting the role of psychosocial determinants and stress in health. In-class discussions are designed to enhance critical thinking and awareness of key topics within this course.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: One semester of coursework in Psychology, related disciplines or instructor approval.

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

A combination of the following methods will be used during classes: lectures, discussions, seminar format, and student presentations. Most of the materials (presentations, texts, pictures, etc.) used in class, as well as any other relevant materials, will be available for students on the IES Abroad Santiago Moodle platform (<https://moodle.iesabroad.org/login/index.php>).

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course Participation – 10%
- Essay - 10%
- Midterm Exam - 20%
- Reflective Journal - 20%
- Research Paper - 15%
- Oral Presentation - 5%
- Final Exam - 20%

Course Element

Active participation in class.

Essay

Write a two-page essay analyzing a Disney romantic movie, focusing on myths of romantic love (e.g., "love conquers all") and emotional manipulation strategies (e.g., idealization, dependency) that we learn in class. Include an introduction with the movie



details and a thesis, a body with examples and reflections, and a conclusion summarizing your critique and suggesting healthier portrayals in media. Follow standard formatting and use formal language.

Reflective Journal

A short Word document where students will write down their weekly thoughts and reflections about the lessons. The reflections themselves will not be evaluated, but rather the ability to express themselves

Research Paper

A written paper detailing a course-related topic of the student's preference and approved by the professor to be written in APA style (6th edition), with a length of 10 – 11 pages, and submitted online.

Oral Presentation

A PowerPoint or keynote presentation of the research paper is required that will include presenting the title, background, aim, methods, and the results found in the research paper.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Analyze the implications of the biopsychosocial model of health for understanding placebo effect and the evidence from the field of psychoneuroimmunology.
- Revisit the nature-nurture debate from an epigenetic perspective and implications in health.
- Analyze the nature and scale of health-related behaviors.
- Understand the basic principles underlying human mental health.
- Analyze the nature and scale of social determinants of health and the impact of socioeconomic inequalities.
- Evaluate and analyze the evidence in favor of the role of stress, type A personality and social support.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance and punctuality are mandatory for all IES Abroad classes, including course-related excursions. Any exams, tests, presentations, or other work missed due to student absences can only be rescheduled in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. If a student misses more than 1.5 classes (for courses taught once a week) or 2.5 classes (for courses taught twice a week) in any course, the final grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade (for example, A- to B+) for every additional unexcused absence. Six absences in any course will result in a failing grade.

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 1	About Health Session 1 Introduction to the course and the concept of health from the biomedical and biopsychosocial perspectives	Deacon et al. The Biomedical Model of Psychological Problems. The behavior therapist, pp. 169-235. Havelka et al. Biopsychosocial model- The integrated approach to health and disease. pp. 303-310.
Week 2	Session 2 The mind-body link, trauma, polyvagal theory, psychoneuroimmunology, and the placebo effect	Ader et al. Psychoneuroimmunology: interactions between the nervous system and the immune system. pp. 99-103.
Week 3	The role of genes and environment in Health Session 3 Human behavior and basic principles of learning. How to adopt healthy behaviors. Session 4 Serial Killers: Nature vs. Nurture debate (Reading is important here). Epigenetics and health	Ehrlich. Genes and cultures. What creates our behavioral phenome? pp. 87- 107 Weinhold. Epigenetics: The Science of Change. pp. 160–167. Carrie Deans, Keith A Maggert, What Do You Mean, “Epigenetic”?, <i>Genetics</i> , Volume 199, Issue 4, 1 April 2015, Pages 887–896, https://doi.org/10.1534/genetics.114.173492 Gunnar, et al. Salivary cortisol levels in children adopted from romanian orphanages. pp. 611-628. Lin, J., Bose, J. K., & Roy, T.-A. . (2024). The Role of Epigenetics in the Formation of Serial Killers: Nature vs. Nurture. <i>Journal of Student Research</i> , 13(1). https://doi.org/10.47611/jsr.v13i1.2394

Week 4	Health Risk and Health Protective Behaviors Session 5 Health-risk behaviors Session 6 Health-protective behaviors	Mokdad, et al. Actual causes of death in the United States. Pp. 1238-1245. Danaei, et al. The Preventable Causes of Death in the United States: Comparative Risk Assessment of Dietary, Lifestyle, and Metabolic Risk Factors. pp. 58-81 Michie, Interventions to change health behaviours: evidence-based or evidence- inspired? pp. 29-49 Spring, et al. Multiple health behaviors: overview and implications. pp. 3-10.
Week	Content	Assignments
Week 5	Social Determinants in Health Session 7 The case of US and Latin America Session 8 Social inequalities and health inequalities	Marmot, Stansfeld, Patel, North, Head, et al. Health inequalities among British civil servants: the Whitehall II study. Pp. 1387-1393. Marmot, Status Syndrome A Challenge to Medicine. pp. 1304-1307. Mackenbach, Mind the gap - hierarchies, health and human evolution. pp. 684. Wolfson, Relation between income inequality and mortality: empirical demonstration. pp. 22-24. Social Inequalities in the Leading Causes of Early Death. A Life course approach (UCL) pp 1-56. Eriksson, Social capital and health – implications for health promotion. pp.1- 11 Kawachi, Kennedy, Lochner, K., Prothrow-Stith. Social capital, income inequality, and mortality. Pp. 1491-1498. Montenegro, C., & Szabzon, F. (2025). "Chapter 18: Decolonizing social determinants of health? South American perspectives and future challenges". In Handbook on the Social Determinants of Health. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. Retrieved Jun 5, 2026, from https://doi.org/10.4337/9781035302093.00026

Week 6	Basic Principles in Mental Health Session 9 Psychological inflexibility and experiential avoidance Session 10 Psychological flexibility and valued based behavior	Chawla et al. Experiential avoidance as a functional dimensional approach to psychopathology: an empirical review. pp. 871–890. Levin, et al. Exploring the relationship between experiential avoidance, alcohol use disorders, and alcohol-related problems among first-year college students. pp. 443–448. Kashdan. Psychological Flexibility as a Fundamental Aspect of Health. pp. 865– 878. Fledderus et al. Mental Health Promotion as a New Goal in Public Mental Health Care: A Randomized Controlled Trial of an Intervention Enhancing Psychological, pp. 2372-2392.
Week 7	Midterm Exam Work & Health Session 11	Bayes, A., Tavella, G., & Parker, G. (2021). The biology of burnout: Causes and consequences. The World Journal of Biological Psychiatry, 1– 13. Ferrie, et al. Employment status and health after privatization in white collar civil servants: prospective cohort study. pp. 647–651. Rosales-Ricardo, Yury, Rizzo-Chunga, Florentino, Mocha-Bonilla, Julio, & Ferreira, José P. (2021). Prevalence of burnout syndrome in university students: A systematic review. Salud mental, 44(2), 91-102.
Week	Content	Assignments

Week 8	Stress & Health Session 12 The stress response Session 13 The relationship between Stress and Health	Sapolsky, Stress hormones: good and bad. pp. 540-542. Mc Ewen, Stress, Adaptation, and Disease. Allostasis and Allostatic load. pp. 33-44. Pellilcer, O., Salvador, A., Benet, I. (2002). Efectos de un estresor académico sobre las respuestas psicológica e inmune en jóvenes. pp. 317-322. Schneiderman, Ironson, Siegel, Stress and Health: Psychological, Behavioral, and Biological Determinants. pp. 607– 628. Vyas, et al. Chronic Stress and Glucocorticoids: From neuronal Plasticity to Neurodegeneration.pp.1-15.
Week 9	Stress Moderators Session 14 Stress-Prone Personalities – Type A personality Session 15 Social support in health: Family	Fiedman, Type A behavior pattern. Some of its pathophysiological components. pp. 593-604. Johnston, Can and should Type A behaviour be changed? pp. 785-788. Williams, et al. Type A, hostility, and Coronary Atherosclerosis. pp. 539-549. Miller, Cohen, Psychological interventions and the immune system: ameta-analytic review. pp. 47-63. Kiecolt-Glaser et al. Negative behavior during marital conflict is associated with immunological down-regulation. pp. 395-404.

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 10	Health Promotion: concepts and strategies Session 16 How do People Change? The transtheoretical model Session 17 Motivational interviewing and its role in promoting change.	Levesque et al. Stage of Change for Making an Informed Decision about Medicare Health Plans. pp. 1372–1391. Emmons Rollnick. Motivational interviewing in health care settings: opportunities and limitations. pp. 68–74. Luepker, et al., Community education for cardiovascular disease prevention: risk factor changes in the Minnesota Heart Health Program.pp. 1383–1393. Heloma, et al., Four-year follow-up of smoke exposure, attitudes and smoking behavior following enactment of Finland s national smoke-free work-place law. pp. 1111-1117. Prochaska, J.O., Norcross, J.C., Diclemente, C.C. (2007). Changing for good. A revolutionary six stages program for overcoming bad habits and moving your life positively forward. Franco G., Álvaro. (2006). Tendencias y teorías en salud pública. Revista Facultad Nacional de Salud Pública, 24(2), 119-130.
Week 11	Applying Health Promotion: practical approaches Session 18 Social approach: promoting a healthier society. Risk/protective factors in an elderly population Session 19 Reflective approach to stereotypes and prejudices	Wakwfield, et al. Use of mass media campaigns to change health behaviour. pp. 1261–1271. Wiimbush, et al. Impacts of a national mass media campaign on walking in Scotland. pp. 45-53.
Week 12	Guided research paper work session Research paper - Preparation/ collection	Bring everything you need to work on your research paper in class.

Week 13	Oral Presentation Research paper oral presentations Note: Deadline for Research Paper.	
Week	Content	Assignments
Week 14	Final Exam Cumulative Exam	

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- None

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Ader, R., Cohen, N., Felten, D. L. (1994). Psychoneuroimmunology: interactions between the nervous system and the immune system. *Lancet*, 345, pp. 99-103.
- Bayes, A., Tavella, G., & Parker, G. (2021). The biology of burnout: Causes and consequences. *The world journal of biological psychiatry : the official journal of the World Federation of Societies of Biological Psychiatry*, 22(9), 686–698. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15622975.2021.1907713>
- Carrie Deans, Keith A Maggert, What Do You Mean, “Epigenetic”?, *Genetics*, Volume 199, Issue 4, 1 April 2015, Pages 887–896, <https://doi.org/10.1534/genetics.114.173492>
- Chawla N, Ostafin BD. (2007). Experiential avoidance as a functional dimensional approach to psychopathology: an empirical review. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 63, pp. 871-890.
- Danaei, G., Ding, E. L., Mozaffarian, D., Taylor, B., Rehm, J., Murray, C. J. L., & Ezzati, M. (2009). The Preventable Causes of Death in the United States: Comparative Risk Assessment of Dietary, Lifestyle, and Metabolic Risk Factors. *PLoS Medicine*, 6, pp. 58-81.
- Deacon, Brett & McKay, Dean. (2015). The Biomedical Model of Psychological Problems: A Call for Critical Dialogue. *the Behavior Therapist*. 38. 231-235.
- Ehrlich, P., Feldman, M. (2003). Genes and cultures. What creates our behavioral phenome? *Current Anthropology*, 44, pp. 87-107.
- Eriksson, M. (2011). Social capital and health - implications for health promotion. *Global Health Action*, 4, pp.1-11.
- Emmons KM, Rollnick S. (2001). Motivational interviewing in health care settings: opportunities and limitations. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 20, pp. 68-74.
- Ferrie JE et al. (2001). Employment status and health after privatization in white collar civil servants: prospective cohort study. *British Medical Journal*, 322, pp. 647-651
- Fiedman, M. (1977). Type A behavior pattern. Some of its pathophysiological components. *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 53, pp. 593-604.
- Fledderus, M., Bohlmeijer, E. T., Smit, F., & Westerhof, G. J. (2010). Mental Health Promotion as a New Goal in Public Mental Health Care: A Randomized Controlled Trial of an Intervention Enhancing Psychological Flexibility. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100, pp. 2372-2392.
- Franco G., Álvaro. (2006). Tendencias y teorías en salud pública. *Revista Facultad Nacional de Salud Pública*, 24(2), 119-130.
- Gunnar, M.R., Morison, S.J., Chisholm, K., Schurder, M. (2001). Salivary cortisol levels in children adopted from romanian orphanages. *Development and Psychopathology*, 13(3), pp. 611-628.
- Havelka, M., Lucanin, J.D., Lucanin, D. (2009). Biopsychosocial model- The integrated approach to health and disease. *Collegium Antropolologicum*, 33, pp. 303-310.
- Heloma, A., Jaakola, M.S. (2003). Four-year follow-up of smoke exposure, attitudes and smoking behavior following enactment of Finland ÅÅs national smoke-free work-place law. *Addiction*, 98, pp. 1111-1117.
- Johnston, D.W. (1986). Can and should Type A behaviour be changed? *Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 62, pp. 785-788.

- Kawachi, I., Kennedy, B.P., Lochner, K., Prothrow-Stith, D. (1997). Social capital, income inequality, and mortality. *American Journal of Public Health*, 87, pp. 1491-1498.
- Kiecolt-Glaser, J., Malar, J., Chee, M., Newton, T., Cacioppo, J., Mao, H., Glaser, R. (1993). Negative behavior during marital conflict is associated with immunological down-regulation. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 55, pp. 395-404.
- Kashdan, T. B. (2010). Psychological Flexibility as a Fundamental Aspect of Health. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 30, pp. 865-878.
- Levesque, D. A., Cummins, C. O., Prochaska, J. M., & Prochaska, J. O. (2006). Stage of Change for Making an Informed Decision about Medicare Health Plans. *Health Services Research*, 41, pp. 1372-1391.
- Levin ME, Lillis J, Seeley J, Hayes SC, Pistorello J, Biglan A. (2012). Exploring the relationship between experiential avoidance, alcohol use disorders, and alcohol-related problems among first-year college students. *Journal of American College Health*, 60, pp. 443-448.
- Lin, J., Bose, J. K., & Roy, T.-A. . (2024). The Role of Epigenetics in the Formation of Serial Killers: Nature vs. Nurture. *Journal of Student Research*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.47611/jsr.v13i1.2394>
- Luepker, R. V., Murray, D. M., Jacobs, D. R., Mittelmarm, M. B., Bracht, N., Carlaw, R., Folsom, A. R. (1994). Community education for cardiovascular disease prevention: risk factor changes in the Minnesota Heart Health Program. *American Journal of Public Health*, 84, 1383-1393.
- Mackenbach, J.P. (2002). Mind the gap - hierarchies, health and human evolution. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 31, pp. 684.
- Marmot, M.G., Stansfeld, S., Patel, C., North, F., Head, J. et al. (1991). Health inequalities among British civil servants: the Whitehall II study. *The Lancet*, 337, pp. 1387-1393.
- Marmot, M. (2006). Status Syndrome A Challenge to Medicine. *Journal of American Journal Association*, 295(11), pp. 1304-1307.
- Mc Ewen, B.S. (1998). Stress, Adaptation, and Disease. Allostasis and Allostatic load. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. pp. 33-44.
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- Miller, G.E., and Cohen, S. (2001). Psychological interventions and the immune system: a meta-analytic review. *Health Psychology*, 20, pp. 47-63.
- Mokdad, A.H., Marks, J.S, Stroup, D.F. et al. (2004). Actual causes of death in the United States, 2000. *Journal of American Medical Association*, 291, pp.1238 -45
- Montenegro, C., & Szabzon, F. (2025). "Chapter 18: Decolonizing social determinants of health? South American perspectives and future challenges". In *Handbook on the Social Determinants of Health*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. Retrieved Jun 5, 2026, from <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781035302093.00026>
- Rosales-Ricardo, Yury, Rizzo-Chunga, Florentino, Mocha-Bonilla, Julio, & Ferreira, José P. (2021). Prevalence of burnout syndrome in university students: A systematic review. *Salud mental*, 44(2), 91-102.
- Sapolsky, R.M. (2000). Stress hormones: good and bad. *Neurobiology of disease*, 7, 540-542.
- Schneiderman, N., Ironson, G., & Siegel, S. D. (2005). Stress and Health: Psychological, Behavioral, and Biological Determinants. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 1, pp. 607-628.
- Spring, B., Moller, A.C., Coons, M.J. (2012). Multiple health behaviors: overview and implications. *Public Health*, 34, 3-10.
- Vyas, S., et al. (2016). Chronic Stress and Glucocorticoids: From neuronal Plasticity to Neurodegeneration. *Neuroal Plasticity*, 1-15.
- Wakwfield, M.A., et al. (2010). Use of mass media campaigns to change health behaviour. *Lancet*, 376, pp.1261-1271.
- Weinhold, B. (2006). Epigenetics: The Science of Change. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 114, pp. 160-167.
- Wiimbush, E., et al. (1998). Impacts of a national mass media campaign on walking in Scotland. *Health Promotion International*, 13, pp. 45-53.
- Williams, R.B., Haney, T.L., Lee, K.L., Hong Kong, Y., Blumenthal, J.A., Whalen, R.E. (1980). Type A, hostility, and Coronary Atherosclerosis. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 42, pp. 539-549.
- Wolfson, M.C. (2000). Relation between income inequality and mortality: empirical demonstration, *Western Journal of Medicine*, 172, pp. 22-24
- Social Inequalities in the Leading Causes of Early Death. A Life course approach (UCL) (2015), pp 1-56. Retrieved from http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/Content/FileManager/consultations2015/early-death-book_web-finalbell-and-roberts.pdf

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Ader, R., Felten, D. L., & Cohen, N. (2001). *Psychoneuroimmunology*, (3rd edition). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Apicella, C.L., Marlowe, F.W., Fowler, J.H., and Christakis, N.A. (2012) "Social Networks and Cooperation in Hunter Gatherers. *Nature*, 481, pp. 497-501.
- Biglan, A., (2015). *The Nurture Effect: How the Science of Human Behavior Can Improve Our Lives & Our World*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.
- Dawes, C. T., Fowler, J. H., Johnson, T., McElreath, R. & Smirnov, O. (2007). Egalitarian motives in humans. *Nature*, 446, pp. 794- 796.

- Frankl, V. (1985). *Man's Search for Meaning*. New York: Basic Books.
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- Prochaska, J.O., Norcross, J.C., Diclemente, C.C. (2007). *Changing for good. A revolutionary six stages program for overcoming bad habits and moving your life positively forward*.
- Rollnick, S. Miller, W.R., Butler, C.C. (2008). *Motivational interviewing in health care: Helping patients change behavior*. Guilford Press: New York.