PS 353 HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY & COMMUNICATION SKILLS
IES Abroad Freiburg

DESCRIPTION:
This course provides a general introduction to the field of health psychology including a theoretical basis and different practical approaches of health behavior change. It follows two different paths to explain and explore human health issues in order to identify effective methods to enhance the general and individual quality of life.

In the first half of the course, the main concepts of Health Psychology will be introduced and put into a practical context by addressing questions such as: How healthy (or unhealthy) is the German population in an international comparison? What are the most prevalent health risks? Which specific health issues can be promoted by public health policies? A strong focus will be on symptoms and interventions concerning specific health behaviors.

In the second half of the course, students will be given an overview on communication models and counseling guidelines before undertaking a short practical training (mostly via role plays) in communication skills to learn how to explore, counsel and intervene effectively by respecting and improving patients’ health resources.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: German

PREREQUISITES: none

ADDITIONAL COST: none

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
- Lectures
- Video-demonstrations
- Self-assessment-scales and role-play
- Discussions
- Oral presentations
- Role plays
- Online-resources
- Excursions

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
- Participation and Discussion - 10%
- Oral Presentation - 30%
- Midterm exam - 25%
- Written Analysis- and Reflection-Paper - 35%

Class Participation
Students are expected to participate in class discussions with questions and points related to the readings and with their own ideas related to the course topic in general. This also includes active participation in role plays.

Oral Presentations: Oral presentation on one specific health issue (e.g. addiction) using different medias (power point, videos etc.) and moderation of a critical group discussion about the topic.

Midterm evaluation: Multiple Choice Questions
**Written Analysis and Reflection Paper:** Over the course of the semester, each student is required to critically reflect on different course topics, generate ideas, and turn in a written assignment (max. 500 words/week). At the end of the semester, students are asked to turn in a summary of these weekly assignments (max. 12 pages).

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

- Explain the main theoretical concepts of Health Psychology and communication
- Critically reflect different intervention models promoting health behavior
- Identify the symptoms and intervention programs of specific health issues (dehabitation of smoking, healthy diet, etc.)
- Understand various pathways through which cultural surroundings, cognitions, and behaviors influence health and illness
- Follow guidelines of best practice communication and counseling
- Interact effectively and sensitively with people of diverse health status
- Critically self-reflect on communicative abilities

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**
IES Abroad courses are designed to take advantage of the unique contribution of the instructor, and the lecture/discussion format is regarded as the primary mode of instruction. Regular class attendance is mandatory. For every unexcused absence to class session a student’s final grade in the course will be reduced by 15% on the German grade scale. Tests/presentations missed during unexcused absences cannot be repeated. If a student misses a class it is his/her responsibility to catch up on everything that was covered in class. If a student cannot attend class due to illness then he/she should arrange to see a doctor who can issue a doctor’s note. Without a doctor’s note, an absence will count as an unexcused absence.

If a student misses more than 25% of class time, whether excused or unexcused, the student will receive an F in the course. Absences due to religious observances will be treated according to IES Abroad policy. Absences due to family and other emergencies may be excusable at the discretion of the Center Director.

**CONTENT:**

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| **Week 1** | • Introduction to the seminar: Structure, content & learning goals  
• Check on individual skills and expectations  
| **Week 2** | • Presentation of the main concepts of Health Psychology via lecture, readings, self-assessment and test-interpretation, focusing on:  
  o the bio-psycho-social model of health  
  o the model of Salutogenesis by Antonovsky  
  o Overview of general health variables | • Ehlert U. (2016) Verhaltensmedizin. Springer Verlag pp. 13 - 41  
• Antonovsky’s Sense of Coherence (SOC) scale – self-assessment and analysis  
• Lindström, B and Eriksson M. (2007). Contextualizing salutogenesis and Antonovsky in...

Week 3

- Main characteristics of public health policies in Germany in an international comparison
- Overview of theoretical measurements and statistics of health status in different countries
- Methods how to practically acquire and compare available data

- OECD-studies on Public Health Data
- Bundesgesundheitsministerium; Grundprinzipien der GKV [https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/themen/krankenversicherung/grundprinzipien.html](https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/themen/krankenversicherung/grundprinzipien.html)
- Hurlemann et. al. (2014) Prävention und Gesundheitsförderung. Huber Verlag. Chapter 1

Week 4

- Prevention and treatment methods in Heath Psychology, such as:
  - Psychoeducation
  - Counseling
  - preventive target group oriented programs etc.

- Hurlemann et. al. (2014) Prävention und Gesundheitsförderung. Huber Verlag. Chapter 1

Weeks 5-6

- The general knowledge of health variables acquired in week 1-4 will be the basis for further readings and oral presentations on specific health issues regarding:
  - unhealthy eating habits
  - stress
  - sexuality (HIV)

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<th>Week 7</th>
<th>presentations are supposed to include:</th>
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<td>- Epidemiology, Statistics, Definition and Classification</td>
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- Addictions (smoking, alcohol)
- chronic diseases
- Suicidality

- Presentations are supposed to include:
  - Epidemiology, Statistics, Definition and Classification
  - Symptoms and Consequences on an individual and a community level
  - Prevention and Treatment both on an individual and a public health level

**Midterm exam**

**Theoretical overview of counselling methods in Health Psychology**

**Week 8**

- **practical guidelines of different communication skills**
- **Introduction, overview and preparation for the practical exercises in the following weeks**


**Weeks 9-10**

- In small groups students will analyze and reflect their individual communicative styles
- Guided role plays will be the framework to a) actively apply, demonstrate and experience communication and counseling techniques (exploration, first interventions, difficult conversations etc.) and b) reflect, evaluate and compare different professional client-practitioner-relations
- The focus will be on role plays and exercises to assess emotions and physical reactions
- We will also include professional best practice examples and film clips for demonstration
- Further readings and professional practice guidelines in counseling psychology will be announced as decided upon

**Focus of practical exercises will be on the relating and understanding stages of the counseling process**

**Skills regarding listening, understanding, assessment of emotions, cognition and physical reactions**

**Warschburger P. (2009).** Beratungspsychologie. Springer Verlag. Chapter 4, pp. 165-167

### Weeks 11-12

- Focus of practical exercises will be on the changing stage of the counseling process
- Different practical intervention methods
- Final written Analysis- and Reflection-paper
- Final Exam


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**COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:**
- To be announced

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**