Objectives

Behavior contributes significantly to health, well-being and longevity. An abundance of research supports numerous behavioral guidelines for health promotion, including: regular physical activity; the maintenance of appropriate weight; the avoidance of tobacco products and illicit drugs; dietary intake of fruits, vegetables, and fiber, coupled with low consumption of saturated fats; moderate use of alcohol; and the ability to cope effectively with stress. Thus, the purpose of this course is to present an overview of health-promoting behaviors from the perspective of clinical health psychology. This course will emphasize changing behaviors to improve health and prevent disease. Psychological approaches for conceptualizing and changing behaviors to improve health will represent the major focus of the course. While the primary focus of the course will be intervention at the individual and group level, we will also review public health approaches that focus on change at the community or organizational level, and we will touch upon the contributions of sociology, epidemiology, medicine, political science and economics to understanding health and illness.

The specific topics chosen for in-depth exploration during the course comprise the major health issues facing our population, namely, obesity, nutrition, physical activity, and the use of tobacco. We will examine the behavioral antecedents of major diseases, particularly heart disease and cancer, by reviewing epidemiological and population-based studies of associations between behavioral and psychosocial variables and the occurrence of chronic disease conditions and decreased longevity. We will focus in detail on behavioral interventions to modify risk factors for disease, including the conceptual basis for the interventions, clinical trial data supporting their efficacy, and their application in the practice of health psychology.

Basis for Evaluation/Grading

The course will include the opportunity to design and carry out a health-promotion intervention, either with an appropriate clinical patient or with oneself as the subject in a self-management project. In addition, each class participant will design and propose a health-promotion research project. Both the clinical project and the research proposal will be presented in class. Class participation will consist of attendance, active engagement in class discussions, and presentations on alternative health promotion behaviors. The grade for the class will be based on (a) the research proposal (20%) and presentation (10%), (b) the clinical project and presentation (20%), (c) a final exam (30%), and (d) class participation (20%).
Schedule

January 8, 2015  Health Promotion: An Overview
January 15, 2015  Obesity: Prevalence, Determinants, and Consequences
January 22, 2015  Obesity: Treatment Issues & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations
January 29, 2015  Diet and Health & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations
February 5, 2015  Dietary Interventions & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations
February 12, 2015  Physical Activity & Health & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations
February 26, 2015  Community Health Promotion & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations
March 12, 2015  Smoking Cessation & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations
March 5, 2015  SPRING BREAK – no class
March 19, 2015  Clinical Presentations
March 26, 2015  Clinical presentations
April 2, 2015  Clinical presentations + research presentations
April 9, 2015  Research presentations
April 16, 2015  Research presentations
April 23, 2015  Final Exam
Scheduled Topics & Readings

January 8, 2015 Health Promotion: An Overview


January 15, 2015 Obesity: Prevalence, Determinants, and Consequences


January 22, 2015 Obesity: Treatment Issues & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations


January 29, 2015 Diet and Health & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations


February 5, 2015 Dietary Interventions & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations


February 19, 2015 Physical Activity Interventions & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations


February 26, 2015 Community Health Promotion & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations


March 12, 2015 Smoking Cessation & Alternative Health Promotion Behavior Presentations


March 5, 2015 SPRING BREAK – no class

March 19, 2015 Clinical Presentations

March 26, 2015 Clinical presentations

April 2, 2015 Clinical presentations + research presentations

April 9, 2015 Research presentations

April 16, 2015 Research presentations

April 23, 2015 Final Exam

**Additional Requirements**

- Students are expected to adhere to the University of Florida’s honesty policy regarding cheating and use of copyrighted materials.
- Students are expected to attend class and to notify the instructor in advance of absences. Make-up assignments or delays in meeting assignment deadlines must be approved in advance.
- Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.