

**BLOOMSBURG UNIVERSITY**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**Course Syllabus**

**Course:** Psychology of Adjustment

**Instructor:** Jeffrey D. Leitzel, Ph.D.

**Catalog #** 48.131.04

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**Fall 2006**

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**Office hours:** MWF 8:20 am to 10 am

**Schedule:** M W F 2 pm (Sec.4)

**Course Description:** This course addresses psychological approaches to understanding, managing, and changing our physical and emotional well-being. Relationships with others, our environment(s), and ourselves will be explored and examined. You will learn ways of applying psychological principles and concepts to enhance coping with common issues of adult life including various problems of living. Lecture, class discussions, group activities, experiential exercises, videotapes, and homework assignments will be used to meet the instructional goals.

### **Learning Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be expected to:

1. be able to articulate the major issues of relevance to psychological adjustment.
2. understand the many facets of the "self" and ways of going about making changes.
3. appreciate the multi-determined nature of their own and others behavior.
4. understand that maintaining physical wellness is an active process.
5. understand stress, sources of stress, and ways of managing stress.
6. have an understanding of our social milieu, how we interact with and perceive others.
7. grasp the reciprocal effects that exist between "us" and "our environment."
8. appreciate the difficulties that may arise when implementing a "self-change" program.

Students will demonstrate their attainment of these learning objectives during class discussions, on their written assignments and on exams.

### **Required Text**

Corey, G., & Corey, M. S. (2006). *I never knew I had a choice: Explorations in personal growth (8<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is required for all class meetings; three absences will be allowed without penalty. Exceeding three absences will result in a reduction of your attendance/participation grade, half a point off per absence beyond the third (I also track late arrivals and count each three as an additional absence), though you are responsible for any material presented or announcements that are made in class. Since exam items will be taken from both the textbook for the course and material not in the book that I present during class, it is in your best interest to be present for class. Regular, attendance and thoughtful participation during class can help in the event of a borderline grade.

### **Exams**

There will be three exams during the course of the semester and a comprehensive final exam. Exams will cover all material from the assigned readings and topics discussed during class as well as any films or videos we watch in class. If classes are cancelled on an exam date due to snow, the exam will be given during the next class. A snow cancellation of the class preceding an exam will not affect the date of the scheduled exam. An exam given following a snow cancellation will include all material indicated on this syllabus for that exam, even if it has not yet been discussed in class. Make-up exams will only be administered in the event of a student illness, family member death, or official college activity. If such circumstances prevent you from being present for an exam you should contact me as soon as it is clear that you will not be present for the exam. You should contact me to schedule a time to take a make-up exam prior to the class meeting following the exam. Failure to follow this procedure will result in a

grade of zero for the exam in question. Only under truly extraordinary circumstances will more than one make-up exam be allowed for any student during the semester.

**Course Schedule (subject to modification)**

**Tentative course schedule (subject to change, any changes will be discussed in class and substantial changes will be posted to my web site) exact exam dates will be announced in class, this schedule provides the sequence, but not exact dates:**

<i>Week of</i>	<i>Topic(s)</i>	<i>Reading(s)</i>
8-28	Introductions, Course Overview, Adjustment & Growth	Chapter 1
9-4	<b>(No class 9-4)</b> Childhood & Adolescence	Chapter 2
9-11	<b>9-11 Class in library computer instruction rm. - 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Andruss Library</b> Finish Childhood & Adolescence Adulthood	Chapter 3
9-18	Finish Adulthood Physical wellness	Chapter 4
9-25	Finish Physical wellness <b>Exam #1</b> /Cover exam # 1	
10-2	Stress: Sources and Management Love	Chapter 5 Chapter 6
10-9	Relationships <b>No class on 10-13 – reading day</b>	Chapter 7
10-16	Gender & Gender Roles	Chapter 8
10-23	Finish gender & gender roles <b>Exam # 2</b> Cover exam # 2	
10-30	Sexuality	Chapter 9
11-6	Finish Sexuality Work & recreation	Chapter 10
11-13	Finish Work & Recreation Loneliness/Solitude	Chapter 11
11-20	<b>(Self-regulation project write-up due on 11-20 at start of class)</b> <b>Exam # 3</b> <b>No class on 11-22 or 11-24 – Happy Thanksgiving</b>	
11-27	Cover exam # 3 Death & Loss	Chapter 12
12-4	Meaning & Values Continuing Personal Growth/Wrap Up Discuss self-regulation projects (time permitting)	Chapter 13 Chapter 14

Final Exam: Tuesday December 12 @ 3:30 pm

**Evaluation/grading**

Attendance/participation	15 points
Exam #1	10 points
Exam #2	15 points
Exam #3	20 points
Final Exam	20 points
Self-regulation project	20 points (details follow)

**Grade Ranges**

A = 90-100    B = 80-89.99    C = 70-79.99    D = 60-69.99    E = <60

**Self Regulation Project:** Each student will identify an aspect of the self (e.g., assertiveness, time management, socialization), a health related behavior (e.g., smoking, exercise, eating), a

physical/biological variable (e.g., blood pressure, weight), or attitude which s/he wishes to modify. An intervention (e.g., obtaining new information, confronting negative self-talk, behavioral experiments, exercise, meditation, etc.) for modifying the latter will also be selected. Each student must consult at least two literature sources in psychology or counseling (can be journals or books) for guidance related to designing their intervention. The student will then implement a program aimed at changing the behavior/physical variable using the intervention s/he has selected. This program must be at least 4 weeks in duration. Longer duration is fine, the four weeks represents a minimum.

Each student will submit a 3-5 page (not including any cover page or citations) report on their self regulation project. This report will consist of: 1) an introduction, identifying the target behavior, how it will be measured, describing baseline levels of the target, and the method for changing the target. An explanation of why the latter were chosen will also be provided, including a summary of the information you found in your literature sources (include the complete citations for your sources at the end of the paper 2) a summary of what occurred during the implementation phase including problems that were encountered and any changes that were made, etc.; 3) a conclusion in which the outcome of program is described and which reflects on the effects of this project. Be sure to utilize the relevant guidelines in the text for analyzing and planning reasonable interventions for different kinds of issues. The table that follows is provided to give you some ideas for potential targets behaviors. Any other issues addressed in the text are also fine.

Be very careful not to try to take on too much in such a brief period. Grades for this project are not necessarily based on the success or failure of the project itself, but more on the soundness of the interventions are selected and how thoroughly monitoring is carried out as well as, if necessary, making appropriate adjustments to the plan.

The project is worth twenty percent (20%) of your final grade. The report will be due no later than the date listed on the course schedule **at the beginning of class**. If you arrive late for class on this date, or turn your paper in later in the day, it is considered 1 class late. Late papers will be penalized, 10% of point total per class meeting late. I will be happy to read and comment on papers submitted on or before two weeks prior to the due date, which would give you an opportunity to make any necessary revisions prior to submitting the paper for the final grade.

#### **Potential Issues to Focus on for Self-Regulation Project**

<b>Behavioral Excesses</b>		
Drinking too much	Swearing	Jealousy
Smoking too much	Daydreaming too much	Using Drugs
Eating too much	Negative thoughts	Lying
Feelings of anxiety	Overspending my budget	Test anxiety
Worrying too much	Worrying about decisions	Anger
Twisting my hair	Consuming too much caffeine	Fear of Speaking
Worrying about my looks	Running up telephone bill	Procrastinating
Biting my fingernails	Feeling anxious around people	Getting upset
<b>Behavioral Deficits</b>		
Lack of assertiveness	Lack of interaction with others	Being depressed
Poor time management	Carelessness about personal appearance	Poor self image
Lack of exercise	Setting and achieving goals	Few dates
Poor study habits	Lack of planning for future	Poor grades
Lack of social skills	Acquiring and maintaining employment	Lack of sleep
Lack of positive thoughts	Poor memory	

## **Extra credit opportunities**

### **1. Reading check quizzes**

At the beginning of the coverage of most chapters, we will start things off with a five question quiz. We will take about five minutes for these quizzes at the beginning of coverage for the chapter, this may be at the beginning of class, or in the middle, if we finish one chapter and start another one. I anticipate giving at least 10 of these, possibly more. Students can earn up to five extra credit points, by answering 80% or more of the total number of these questions correctly, students answering less than 80% of the questions correctly will receive a prorated portion of the 5 points. Absolutely no make ups of the reading checks will be given for any reason. These are extra credit and basically serve as a reward for being in class on-time and being prepared (having read the chapter in the text). If you arrive late for class and a quiz is in progress you will not have “extra time” to look at the questions, though you will be able to answer whatever questions time permits. In general, these will be scored immediately.

### **2. Outside information presentations**

The class meeting following exams will consist of going over the exam, clarifying any misunderstandings that remain, and providing students with assistance with their self-regulation projects. Up to three points extra credit can be added on to your grade by finding a story or article from a popular media source (i.e., magazine or newspaper) that relates directly to the course material. Since many students will be likely to see the same article(s) in newspapers, the following procedure will be in place. If you see an article or story that you feel is appropriate, e-mail me with the title and the source of the piece as well as the specific material in our textbook (page, section) that it is relevant to. The first person to e-mail me about a given piece will be able to present a brief (2-3 minutes max.) overview of the article and how it relates to the course material. These overviews will be presented to the class at the meeting following each exam and handed in to the instructor in written form along with a copy of the article itself. Each one of these articles that you track down and present is worth one point, added directly into your final grade for the course. Students may do a maximum of three of these article presentations (one article following each exam). If more students prepare articles than time permits presenting during the meeting after the exam, we may use a few minutes at the beginning of the following class meeting to finish up any “left-over” articles, or I may simply accept the written summary.

An additional two points can be earned by looking through newspapers and/or magazines for cartoons or comic strips that illustrate principles or issues that we have examined in class during the course of the semester or that are discussed in the textbook.

Steps to prepare each submission:

1. Make a clear copy of the comic strip or cartoon. **Internet sources will not be accepted.**
2. Provide a typed paragraph explaining the principle or issue that the comic or cartoon relates to.
3. Provide a reference to the specific page and section in our text that is relevant.
4. Provide the complete source of the comic or cartoon, including publication name, date (or volume & number), and page.
5. Hand in the typed paragraph with the cartoon or comic strip copy attached.

You may submit a maximum of four of these, which can earn 0.5 points each.

Be sure that you clearly understand the concept that you are relating to the cartoon or comic, because the extra credit points will not be awarded for inappropriate connections or misunderstandings of course concepts.

If you are submitting more than two, only two of the comics or cartoons may be from a local newspaper, the other one or two that you submit, must be from a non-local newspaper or magazines of general circulation. **Again: Internet sources will not be accepted.**

Since you can earn a total of 10 points of extra credit by simply showing up on time and prepared for class and finding a few things in print media that relate to the course, I will not entertain requests for “ad hoc” extra credit assignments as the end of the semester nears if your grade is not where you would like it to be.

**Grade adjustments**

I will not “adjust a grade” at the end of the semester due to academic probation, athletic eligibility, getting kicked out of school, scholarships, or for any other reason unrelated to your performance in the course. You will receive the grade that you earned. If you believe that I made an error in recording or calculating your grade, please contact me as soon as you discover the error.

Any student who is interested in additional readings related to the course material should speak with me. I will be happy to provide suggestions.