**Introduction to Prevention and Mental Health Promotion**

**Fall 2025**

**SYLLABUS**

Course Number: COUN 4010-001, Fall 2025

Credit Hours: 3 Semester hours credits/Graded

Class Meeting Times: Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-3:15

Class Location: EDUC 1123

Instructor: Derriya Sankey MRC (She/Her/Hers)

Graduate Teaching Assistant

E-mail: [**dzs0134@auburn.edu**](mailto:dzs0134@auburn.edu)

Office Hours: Fridays-3:00-4:00 (virtual)

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations may be necessary and will be communicated to the class in a timely manner.

**Course Description:**

Addressing the ideas of prevention and health promotion in counseling psychology. We will address concepts such as polyvagal theory, intersectionality, stress, body image, and health promotion and prevention.

**Respect for Diversity:**It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. **Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.** Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students.

I attempt to foster an environment in which each class member can hear and respect each other. It is critical that each class member show respect for all views expressed in class. It is expected that some of the material in this course may evoke strong emotions, please be respectful of others' emotions and be mindful of your own. Let me know if something said or done in the classroom, by myself or other students, is particularly troubling or causes offense. While our intention may not be to cause discomfort or offense, the impact of what happens throughout the course is not to be ignored. If this occurs, there are several ways to alleviate some of the discomforts:

1. Discuss the situation privately with me. I am always open to listening to students’ experiences and want to work with students to find acceptable ways to process and address the issue.
2. Discuss the situation with the class. Chances are there is at least one other student in the class who had a similar response to the material. Discussion enhances the ability of all class participants to have a fuller understanding of the context and impact of course material and class discussions.
3. Notify me of the issue through another source such as your advisor, a trusted faculty member, or a peer. If you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue directly with me, I encourage you to seek out another, more comfortable avenue to address the issue.

*Diversity Statement Adapted from Lynn Hernandez, Behavioral and Social Sciences, School of Public Health, Brown University*

**Student Learning Outcomes**:

1. Understanding of how the ideas of prevention and promotion apply to counseling psychology, as well as how these ideas apply to psychology in general.
2. Gain an understanding of what science has shown to be worth promoting.
3. Gain an understanding of what science has shown to be worth preventing.
4. Gain a cross-cultural perspective of health, growth, and community.
5. Understand the impact of social justice and advocacy.

**Required Reading:**

***All these articles will be uploaded on Canvas. Please read the assigned articles before we meet.***

Alonzo, R., Hussain, J., Stranges, S., & Anderson, K. K. (2021). Interplay between social media

use, sleep quality, and mental health in youth: A systematic review. *Sleep Medicine Reviews*, *56*. <https://doi-org.spot.lib.auburn.edu/10.1016/j.smrv.2020.101414>

Aslanian, S., & Roth, A. (2021). *Inside the College Mental Health Crisis*. Inside the college mental

health crisis | Under Pressure | APM Reports. Retrieved from <https://www.apmreports.org/episode/2021/08/19/under-pressure-the-college-mental-health-crisis>

Conroy, J., & Perryman, K. (2022). Treating trauma with child-centered play therapy through the SECURE lens of polyvagal theory. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, *31*(3), 143–152. https://doi-org.spot.lib.auburn.edu/10.1037/pla0000172

Davies, E., Read, J., & Shevlin, M. (2022). The impact of adverse childhood experiences and recent life events on anxiety and quality of life in university students. *Higher Education (00181560)*, *84*(1), 211–224. https://doi-org.spot.lib.auburn.edu/10.1007/s10734-021-00774-9

Discovering the Importance of Play through Personal Histories and Brain Images: An Interview with Stuart L. Brown. (2009). *American Journal of Play*, *1*(4), 399–412.

Gerhardt, L. (2020, February 5). *The rebellious history of the Fat Acceptance Movement*. Center For Discovery. Retrieved January 10, 2022, from https://centerfordiscovery.com/blog/fat-acceptance-movement/

Haney, A. M., & Rollock, D. (2020). A Matter of Faith: The Role of Religion, Doubt, and Personality in Emerging Adult Mental Health. *PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY*, *12*(2), 247–253. <https://doi-org.spot.lib.auburn.edu/10.1037/rel0000231>

Jones, Jacqueline P., Jessica M. Drass, and Girija Kaimal. 2019. “Art Therapy for Military Service Members with Post-Traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury: Three Case Reports Highlighting Trajectories of Treatment and Recovery.” The Arts in Psychotherapy 63 (April): 18–30. doi:10.1016/j.aip.2019.04.004.

Marks, D. F. (1996). Health Psychology in Context. *Journal of Health Psychology*, *1*(1), 7–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/135910539600100102 **(please read pages 4-15 only)**

Stephen W. Porges. (2022). Polyvagal Theory: A Science of Safety. *Frontiers in Integrative Neuroscience*, *16*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fnint.2022.871227

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module** | **Topics** | **Required Readings** | **Due Dates** |
| 1 | **Introduction**   * Introductions * Syllabus Overview |  |  |
| 2 | Neuroscience in Action | Health Psychology in Context |  |
| 3 | The Autonomic Nervous System  Polyvagal Theory | Porges, 2022 |  |
| 4 | The Benefits of Play  Play Personalities | Discovering the Importance of Play Interview with Brown | **Vlog**  **Due: Sunday, September 7th at 11:59 PM** |
| 5 | The Impact of Stress:  ACES, PTSD, C-PTSD | Davies, 2022 | **Journal 1**  **Due: Sunday, September 14th at 11:59 PM** |
| 6 | * Fostering Healthy Attachment * Co-Regulation | Conroy, 2022 |  |
| 7 | Social Media and Mental Health and Midterm Review | Alonzo et al., 2021 | **Documentary Review**  **Due: Sunday, September 21st at 11:59 PM** |
| 8 |  |  | **Midterm: October 7th (Class time)** |
| **FALL BREAK-OCTOBER 9TH-10TH** | | | |
| 9 | Body Image: The Media and Relationships | Gerhardt, 2020 |  |
| 10 | Eating Disorders |  | **Journal 2**  **Due: October 26th at 11:59 PM** |
| 11 | Sports Psychology  Exercise and Movement and Self-care and community care |  | **Interview**  **Due: Sunday, November 2nd at 11:59 PM** |
| **Flex Time-November 3rd-7th** | | | |
|  | College student mental health | Aslanian, S., & Roth, 2021 | **Presentations will take place November 17th-19th** |
| **THANKSGIVING BREAK-November 24th-28th** | | | |
| **Final exam:** Friday, December 12th 1:30-3:30 | | | |

**Assignments:**

Assignments are due at 11:59 PM on the date listed on the syllabus and Canvas. Canvas is considered the official time stamp for assignments. Assignments turned in after the indicated time on Canvas are subject to point deduction. Late papers/assignments will receive a 10% deduction in grade for each business day they are late.

**A. Journal 1**

(5 points) - Summarize what you have learned about the importance of play. What information was new to you? Where do you disagree/agree? *What life circumstances have shaped your opinions?* Discuss your play personality and explain what shaped it. How did you play as a child? How do you play as an adult? **Your journal must be at least TWO pages long and utilize APA format (typed, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman, and use 1.0-inch margins).**

**B. Journal 2**

(5 points) - Summarize what you have learned about body image. *What life experiences have shaped* ***your*** *opinions?* Discuss how the material we covered in class has influenced the way you understand your relationship with food, movement, and your body. What is your understanding of body politics, body liberation, and body respect? **Your journal must be at least TWO pages long and utilize APA format (typed, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman, and use 1.0-inch margins).**

**C. Vlog**

(5 points) Record and upload a 3–5-minute video (audio and video):

* Define three terms that you learned in this class *in your own words*
* Discuss how you are going to apply what you learned to your own life
* How does learning about the brain and the nervous system benefit you personally?
* What insights have you gained?
* What questions are you pondering about the brain and the nervous system?
* The goal is for you to be direct, and thoughtful about what you’re learning.

**D. Documentary Review**

(15 points) You will choose one of the following documentaries to watch and write your paper.

Must include correct references & citations per APA guidelines

<https://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/apa-format/apa-citation/>

<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/paper-format> This includes correct formatting.

OPTION A: Heroin(e) - available on Netflix

OPTION B: Period. End of Sentence - available on Netflix

OPTION C: [Homeless with Mental Illness](https://youtu.be/Dx6OiJiQSks)- available free on YouTube

OPTION D: [Nadiya: Anxiety and Me](https://youtu.be/rkfTHRkl47w)- available free on YouTube

In a 3-5 page essay, respond to the following:

1. What issues are discussed in the documentary? What did you personally learn? (3 points)
2. Why are these issues important to the community in the documentary? How are community members impacted? Discuss power, privilege, and intersectionality. (3 points)
3. How did the community help each other, as discussed in the documentary? (3 points)
4. Name two other organizations, initiatives, or individuals who are addressing this issue as well (either in the same city or elsewhere in the country, or in the world). This will not be mentioned in the documentary, you will have to conduct your own research. How is their work similar/different from the individuals/organizations in the documentary? (3 points)
5. Bring in two external sources to present an in-depth understanding of the topic, from a counseling psychology perspective. These must be *peer-reviewed articles or journals*. Do studies support what you saw in the documentary? How are scientists and practitioners in the field approaching this topic? (3 points)

**E. Health Across Cultures Interview and Paper:**

**The interview portion of the assignment (this is 30-45 minutes long):**

(20 points for the paper) - You will choose someone to interview. This interview is to be video recorded and submitted to me**.** After you complete the interview, you will write a *formal* 4-6page paper discussing the following:

1. Whom did you interview? Introduce your interviewee by speaking about their intersecting identities. Mention parts of their identity like gender, race, disability, immigrant status, professional status, etc. Introduce them by telling a story - we’re not just collecting data here.
2. How does your interviewee define health and how do they define mental health? (**One** **brief direct quote 2-3 lines is acceptable here.** You may also paraphrase). Why/how did they reach this definition? Who has access to health care in their community - what is that access like? Who does not have access? Why?
3. How do they wish health care was different in their community? What do they currently like/dislike? Who has the power and/or the responsibility to make changes happen?
4. Finally, ask about personal/communal practices that your interviewee engages in to promote health and well-being (prayer, meditation, exercise, therapy, healing rituals…etc.)
5. Utilizing at least *four external academic, peer-reviewed sources,* expand on two concepts that your interviewee mentioned. How are these topics currently discussed and viewed in the literature?
6. How are you personally similar/different from your interviewee? Do you hold similar opinions? Discuss your identities and topics that brought you tension or that you found yourself in agreement with. Explain why you might have felt this way. Discuss your intersectionality, and life experiences.

(5 points for the interview)

1. You must be engaged, respectful, and *present* during your interview. No distractions from phones/electronics or other sources.
2. You must “arrive at the interview early”, you must be alone in the space, and you must notify your guest that you are recording.
3. You must take a few minutes to establish rapport. Do not dive right in. Introduce yourself and the class you are enrolled in. Remind your interviewee that you will be talking to them for 30-45 minutes.
4. You must be prepared with questions. Your questions are short, clear, and concise. If your interviewee skips ahead and answers a question, be mindful of that.
5. You thank the interviewee for their time.

**Everything for this project must be submitted on Canvas before the deadline.**

**F. Health Care Across Cultures – Class review**

(10 points) – On a designated class day you will be asked to present your project (the person you interviewed, and a topic of interest related to the interview that you learned about).

You will be graded on the following:

1. Presentation. – 3–5-minute oral presentation sharing what you learned from conducting the interview and any take aways you may have learned. You can discuss how the information is applicable to your future career or life in general.
2. Respond to questions from the group if applicable.

**G. Midterm**

(20 points)

**H. Final Exam**

(15 points)

**I. Extra Credit Opportunities** The College of Education has a subject pool operated through SONA. The system provides students access to sign up for research studies for extra credit. These studies can be in person or online. You received an email from the SONA administrator asking that you log in to the system and create a password. If you are struggling to access this, please email sona@auburn.edu.

For every SONA credit you earn, you earn 2 cumulative bonus points **(NOT points on your final grade)**. No more than 6 extra credit points can be applied to your grade through SONA. If you have questions about how these extra credit points are applied please email me. If you have questions about participating in studies, please email [sona@auburn.edu](mailto:sona@auburn.edu)

**Opportunity = 2 points to the final grade** earned in one of the following ways:

Attend a Virtual Open House (Organizer must submit your attendance proof to your instructor). Can also write a 1 page reflection about the meeting and your goals to earn an additional 3 points that can be added to an assignment or test.

**Please see Canvas for flyers as it relates to Open House.**

**Grading Scale:**

All assignments must be completed. Grades will be based on total point accumulation in the course:

Vlog 5

Journal 1 5

Journal 2 5

Documentary Review 15

Interview and Paper 25

Symposium 10

Midterm 20

Final 15

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total Points 100

A 90-100%; B 80-89%; C 70-79%; D 60-69%; F <60%

**Class Policy Statements**

**Name/Pronoun Statement:** Please advise me of your name and pronouns early in the semester (either via email or in person).

**Attendance:** Attendance is required for this course. Students must have cameras on to receive attendance credit for that day. If a student cannot have their camera on for specific reasons, please contact me to discuss. Students may miss up to two classes (unexcused absence) without penalty. Additional absences will result in a 10-point grade reduction. Students will be held responsible for any content covered in the event of an absence. Students are expected to be on time for class and limit cell phone use.

**Excused Absences**: When feasible, the student must notify the instructor prior to the occurrence of any excused absences, but in no case shall notification occur more than once a week after the absence. Appropriate documentation for all excused absences is required. Please see university policies for additional information on absences.

**Religious/Cultural Observance**: Persons with religious or cultural observances that coincide with this class should let me know in writing before the date of said religious or cultural observance.  I strongly encourage you to honor your cultural and religious holidays!  However, if I do not hear from you, I will assume that you plan to attend all class meetings.

**Personal Technology**: The use of a laptop, tablet or any other device for taking notes or otherwise participating in class is permitted. However, please do not use a personal device for any purpose unrelated to our class. All devices should be silenced. Cell phones should be put away, except in the rare instance that I ask you to use them for an activity. If there is a serious need to leave your cell phone on, such as a family emergency, please let me know.

**Email**: Outside of class, I will communicate primarily through Outlook, feel free to email me using your official Auburn email. If you do not receive a response from me within 24 to 48 hours of sending an email, please be sure to follow up with me.

**Recording**: To create a safe classroom and learning environment and to respect students’ rights to privacy, recording of class is prohibited. This includes audio and video recordings.

**Class Cancellation**: If a class is canceled or the university closes, I will post the planned class activities on canvas, and students are responsible for completing these assignments.

**Make-Up Policy**: Arrangements to make up a missed in-class activity, or presentation due to **properly authorized excused absences must be initiated by the student within one week of the end of the period of the excused absence(s).**

**Late papers/assignments will receive a 10% deduction in grade for each day they are late.**

**Academic Honesty**: The University Honesty Code and the university policies, see the website at https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/default.aspx for more information, pertaining to cheating will apply to this class. Much plagiarism occurs because of missteps in regard to reading, note-taking, and citation practices, procrastination, and/or panic. Care, timeliness, and communication will eliminate most of the risk. If you have questions about whether you should give credit to a source in your work, you may clarify it with me. In general, though, I recommend always citing sources you have consulted as well as those you borrow from directly. If you have difficulty with an essay, please contact me immediately!

**Disability Accommodations**: Students who need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternate time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail. If you have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility, but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

**Student Mental Health and Well-Being:** If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact **Student** **Counseling and Psychological Services (SCPS)** at **(334) 844-5123and** <http://wp.auburn.edu/scs> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in the Medical Clinical and Haley Center. The East Alabama Mental Health Center has a toll-free number that may be called 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for emergencies **800-815-0630**.

**Professionalism**: As faculty, staff, and students interact in professional settings, they are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors as defined in the College’s conceptual framework. These professional commitments or dispositions are listed below:

a. Engage in responsible and ethical professional practices

b. Contribute to collaborative learning communities

c. Demonstrate a commitment to diversity

d. Model and nurture intellectual vitality

**Title IX:**  Auburn University is committed to providing an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment based on protected class. If you believe you have been the victim of harassment or discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, or sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression), we encourage you to report it. If you report sexual assault or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, the faculty member is obligated to notify the University’s Title IX Coordinator about the basic facts of the incident. For more information about your Title IX reporting and resource options at Auburn University, please go to: [www.auburn.edu/titleix](http://www.auburn.edu/titleix)

*Course Policies Adapted for Use from CRLT, University of Michigan.*