PSY 407/507
Seminar on Biobehavioral Family Processes – Social Determinants of Health
Fall 2021

Class times: Tuesday & Thursday from 10:00-11:20 am
301 Gerlinger Hall

Dr. Elizabeth Skowron
Pronouns: she/her/hers
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:00 to 2:00 pm
sign up for office hours in advance through Canvas

COURSE DESCRIPTION
In this course, we will explore many aspects of social experiences, and their effects on biology for better and worse (i.e., biological embedding of social experience). We will read and discuss scholarly writings, including integrative reviews and primary research focused on exposures to adverse childhood experiences and their effects on child development, biobehavioral processes in the context of social relationships, and mental, and physical health outcomes. We will consider questions about the effects of stress on health, whether the experience of adversity “gets under the skin,” multigenerational links between social experiences in one generation and biology in the next, and the ability of interventions to “reverse” the effects of toxic stress on health and well-being. Is there evidence for biological embedding of positive social experiences? Can positive social experiences buffer against or reverse the negative effects of toxic stress? We will read and discuss research on psychological interventions and social policies that address toxic stress in children and families.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. To develop a strong understanding of scientific research on adversity and toxic stress, and its effects on health and development
2. To explore psychosocial causes and correlates of disease
3. To explore psychosocial factors in families and communities that are protective for children’s health outcomes
4. To develop skills in reading, evaluating, and integrating original research spanning psychology and related disciplines
5. To develop skills in translating research findings to positively inform and affect social policy and policy makers.

CLASS COMMUNICATION
Our class will communicate through our Canvas site. Announcements and emails are archived there and automatically forwarded to your UO email, and can even reach you by text. Check and adjust your settings under
Account > Notifications. I will host office hours through Zoom each week on Tuesdays from 12:00pm-2:00pm, and also have a running discussion forum on our Canvas site called “Class Questions and Answers” for the entire group to ask and answer. I am available to meet with you outside my regular office hours, too, knowing that there is considerable uncertainty in all of our lives right now. Just email me to set a time. (I do not have an office phone.) If you have a question or concern about course content or activities, or experience Internet access challenges, my email is a good way to reach me. If I cannot help you with a technical challenge with Canvas or Zoom, I will encourage you to contact the UO Service Portal.

Also, please check Canvas prior to attending class—in case that there is a COVID-related interruption, I will notify students through Announcements.

COURSE LECTURES & READINGS

Textbook:


We will read a number of chapters from Robert Sapolsky’s book, “Why Zebra’s Don’t Get Ulcers...” The ebook version is available through a number of outlets for $12.99.

All other readings (i.e., research articles, concept papers, and research reviews) will be available through Canvas. The lectures and class discussions are generally coordinated with the readings throughout the term. Some of the material will be covered in both readings and class, but some of the material in the reading will not be discussed in class and new material not covered in the reading may also be presented during class time.

CONDUCT

My goal is to create a learning environment that is accessible and welcoming to all kinds of diverse identities, backgrounds, and beliefs, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, age, socioeconomic status, religion, language, and culture. Please be respectful of diverse experiences and perspectives in this course, especially when we are discussing potentially sensitive topics. You may always contact me with any suggestions or concerns related to inclusivity.

As we convene together for in person learning during this challenging time, it is important that we work together and build on our strengths. We are returning with a range of feelings about and comfort with being in person, and this means we need to be patient with each other, identify ways we can assist others, and be open-minded to receiving help and feedback from others. Be patient with your classmates and be open to their helpful insights that can maximize your learning.

COVID STATEMENT

This class is officially offered in person. I will hold class in Gerlinger 301 and you are welcome to attend in person. My goal this term is to make it as safe and easy as possible for students to access this course in whatever format they are comfortable. Therefore, I will endeavor to live-stream classes via Zoom and record them for later viewing. In-person attendance is not required. Feel free to stay at home if you prefer. ABSOLUTELY DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IN PERSON IF YOU HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS. As per this UO
COVID-19 Safety Policy, masks are required indoors. I will not be able to teach you in person if you are not wearing a mask over your nose and mouth.

Remote course access via Zoom URL:
https://uoregon.zoom.us/j/99213750454?pwd=VW5UdUxJYmc3d3VtbHFCUzZiK2gzdz09
Meeting ID: 992 1375 0454
Passcode: 231486

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Your grade will be determined by your performance on:
1. Participation in class discussions
2. Weekly annotated bibliographies on course readings
3. A social policy proposal, submitted as a presentation file
4. A critical research essay on a debate related to stress and social determinants of biobehavioral health

1. Class Participation
Students enrolled in this course will have different academic, professional, and personal backgrounds that will enrich our class discussions. Positive class participation consists of attending class prepared to engage in discussion of the readings and lecture topics, share insights, and contribute to a collaborative learning environment. Thus, the focus here is on intellectual engagement that is respectful of diverse experiences and perspectives in the course material and among all of us, particularly as we discuss potentially sensitive topics.

2. Annotated Bibliographies
To help you more effectively learn and reflect on the course readings, and get more out of class discussions, each week you will complete an annotated bibliography for each of the assigned readings. You can refer to the specific Guide to Annotated Bibliographies on in the Canvas Course Information module about how to construct an annotated bibliography (AB) for guidance. Beginning in Week 2, ABs for Tuesday course readings will be due on Mondays at 5:00 pm and ABs for Thursday course readings will be due on Wednesdays at 5:00 pm as electronic copies submitted on Canvas. Please submit your ABs for a set of class readings in 1 file with file names: ‘ClassWeek#.Author last name.Your last name’. The maximum number of ABs you will complete on class readings is 30.

3. Social Policy Proposal
The goals of this policy proposal are to:
1. Provide an opportunity to focus on an important, and potentially controversial social policy issue that relates to stress and social determinants of biobehavioral health that are of particular interest to you;
2. Build your skills for developing an informative, and persuasive audiovisual presentation with slides; and
3. To communicate with the class about your findings in order to help build our collective knowledge base on the topic.

We will spend time in this course discussing how science can inform policy and practice. For this project, you are tasked with creating a proposal for a policy initiative to address social determinants of biobehavioral health. You will research the initiative and create a presentation that (a) makes a compelling case for the initiative, (b) outlines how best to proceed with the initiative, and (c) explains why this initiative is especially deserving of support. Your presentation should also include possible downsides or costs of your initiative, and ideas for how to manage or offset them. Be creative, interesting, and fun in building your presentation, while remaining
grounded in the facts. Demonstrate intellectual discipline in delivering an accurate, detailed, and meaningful presentation of your proposal. Engage your audience in a manner that will facilitate learning and be persuasive.

Your proposal presentation will include a summary slide that provides a visual roadmap of the whole presentation, and consist of a total of 6-10 slides. The proposal presentation will be worth 25% of your overall grade. It is due on Tuesday, November 23rd at 5:00 pm as an electronic copy submitted on Canvas. Late proposal presentations will be penalized one letter grade per day in fairness to students who submit their proposal on time. A short proposal presentation outline (1-page) is due online on Canvas on Friday, November 12th at 5:00 pm. The presentation outline will be worth 5% of your overall grade. You will share proposal presentations in class during Week 9 & 10.

4. Critical Research Essay
An important goal of this course is to further develop your ability to understand and evaluate the psychological research and cross-disciplinary research that we focus on in this course. To that effect, you will write a research paper that critically discusses a debate regarding stress and social determinants of biobehavioral health. You may choose to delve more deeply into the phenomena we will be discussing in class, but you are not limited to these issues. Your paper should be concise, at 5-7 double-spaced pages in length, and draw from at least 6 peer-reviewed sources. In this essay you will:

1. Present a topic and explain why it is interesting and important
2. Present a debate in the field related to this topic
3. Present a research study that was designed to address this debate and discuss which side the findings support and why. Or present a research study idea that would address this debate.
4. Present one counter argument the other side used (or would or could use) to address the findings (e.g., providing an alternate explanation or debunk the findings).
5. Conclusion (this should include your own opinion too).

The essay should include a title page with your name, and a list of references (cited in text using APA-style) which are not included in the total page count. No abstract or running head is necessary. Your research essay will be worth 25% of your overall grade, and it is due on Tuesday, December 7th at 5:00 pm as an electronic copy submitted on Canvas. Late essays will be penalized one letter grade per day in fairness to students who submit their essay on time.

- A short outline (1-page) is due online on Canvas Friday, November 5th at 5:00 pm. The essay outline will be worth 5% of your overall grade.
- A set of annotated bibliographies for at least 4 of your 6 peer-reviewed sources are due online on Canvas on Friday, November 19th at 5:00 pm. These annotated bibs for your essay will be worth 5% of your overall grade.

These two earlier deadlines for work-in-progress give you time to develop your ideas and avoid last minute writer’s block before the paper is due.

You are encouraged to take advantage of Academic Learning Services (PLC 68; 541-346-3226), which offers free workshops and drop-in tutoring for writing. Also see this resource for APA Format Guidelines: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html. Please note that when giving feedback on assignments, I will do so in Canvas, and turnaround time for feedback is generally one week.

Academic Honesty
All work submitted in this course must be exclusively your own and produced exclusively for this course (no resubmissions of papers produced for prior classes allowed). No form of cheating or plagiarism will be tolerated. Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else’s product, words, ideas, or data as one’s own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references. By placing one’s name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. On written assignments, if verbatim statements are included, the statements must be enclosed in quotation marks. Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects, or re-submission of papers you produced for previous courses, can inadvertently lead to a charge of plagiarism. In addition, it is plagiarism to submit work in which portions were substantially produced by someone acting as a tutor or an editor. If you are in doubt about your work, please consult with us, or seek assistance from the staff of Academic Learning Services (PLC 68; 346-3226). If cheating or plagiarism is discovered, then the university will be notified, and appropriate action will be taken, which typically results in a failing grade for the course.

Final Grades:
30% Weekly Annotated Bibliographies
5% Class Participation
5% Proposal Presentation Outline
25% Proposal Presentation
5% Critical Research Essay Outline
5% Critical Research Essay Annotated Bibliographies
25% Critical Research Essay

Out of the total possible points, if your accumulated percentage of points is:
- 90-100%, your grade will be an A
- 80-89%, your grade will be a B
- 70-79%, your grade will be a C
- 60-69%, your grade will be a D
- < 60%, your grade will be an F

For those taking the class pass/fail your grade must be ≥ 70% to receive a P. Within each letter grade, a plus may be assigned to scores within the top ~2% and a minus may be assigned to scores within the bottom ~2%. I may choose to curve grades at the end of the quarter.
### SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY CLASSES: LECTURE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

**PLEASE NOTE:** This outline is tentative, and there may be changes during the quarter. If any updates are made, I will announce them on Canvas. Please refer to course Modules section on Canvas for links to recorded lectures and discussion topics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC AND READING</th>
<th>READING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>09/28/21</td>
<td><strong>Course Overview and Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Read: Syllabus &amp; Guide to Annotated Bibliographies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>09/30/21</td>
<td><strong>Social Determinants of Health</strong></td>
<td>Read: Braveman &amp; Gottlieb (2014)</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>10/05/21</td>
<td><strong>Adverse childhood experiences and health</strong></td>
<td>Read: Shonkoff, Boyce, &amp; McEwen (2009) and Felitti et al. (1998)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10/07/21</td>
<td><strong>Adverse childhood experiences and health</strong></td>
<td>Read: Blair &amp; Raver (2012) and McLaughlin &amp; Sheridan (2016)</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>10/12/21</td>
<td><strong>How does stress affect physical health I: Biological mechanisms</strong></td>
<td>Read: Sapolsky Ch. 1-3</td>
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<td>10/14/21</td>
<td><strong>How does stress affect physical health II: Biological mechanisms</strong></td>
<td>Read: Hostinar, Nusslock, &amp; Miller, 2018 (Optional) Nusslock &amp; Miller, 2016</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>10/19/21</td>
<td><strong>Protective and vulnerability factors</strong></td>
<td>Read: Sapolsky Ch. 13-15</td>
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<td>10/21/21</td>
<td><strong>Social hierarchies and stress</strong></td>
<td>Read: Sapolsky Ch. 15 and Ch. 17: The View from the Bottom</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>10/26/21</td>
<td><strong>Experience, biology, and parenting I</strong></td>
<td>Read: Sapolsky Ch. 6 and Champagne (2008) (Optional) Francis et al. (2002)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10/28/21</td>
<td><strong>Experience, biology, and parenting II (child maltreatment)</strong></td>
<td>Read: Skowron et al. (2013) and Wells et al. (2020)</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>11/02/21</td>
<td><strong>Weathering &amp; skin deep resilience</strong></td>
<td>Read: Brody, Yu, Chen, &amp; Miller (2020)</td>
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<td>11/04/21</td>
<td><strong>Advances in Intervention Science that Reduce the Health Consequences of Adversity: Parenting Interventions: Strengthening African American Families program (SAAF)</strong></td>
<td>Read: Brody, Yu, Chen, Miller, Barton, &amp; Kogan (2021) and Chen et al. (2017)</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>11/09/21</td>
<td><strong>Parenting Interventions: Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-Up (ABC)</strong></td>
<td>Read: Dozier &amp; Bernard, 2017</td>
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<td>11/11/21</td>
<td><strong>No class meeting – self care day</strong></td>
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| Week 8 | 11/16/21 | **Parenting Interventions: Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)**  
Read: Skowron, Nekkanti, Skoranski, Scholtes, Mills, Berkman, & Funderburk (under review); Kaminski & Claussen (2017) |
| 11/18/21 | **Pediatric Care & Early Childhood Education**  
Read: Shonkoff, Boyce, Levitt, Martinez, & McEwen (2021) *Leveraging the Biology of Adversity and Resilience to Transform Pediatric Practice*; and Heckman, 2006 *Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children*; |
| Week 9 | 11/23/21 | **Social Policy Presentations & Discussion** |
| 11/25/21 | **No Class: Thanksgiving Day** |
| Week 10 | 11/30/21 | **Economic Programs & Place-Based Interventions**  
Read: HCDC Racism Brief; Harlem Children’s Zone: our results @ [https://hcz.org/results/](https://hcz.org/results/); |
| 12/02/21 | **Social Policy Presentations & Discussion** |
Appendix 1. Additional COVID-pandemic-specific guidelines for this term:

- Wear your mask and make sure it fits you well
- Stay home if you’re sick
- Get to know your neighbors in class, and let them know if you test positive
- Get tested regularly
- Watch for signs and symptoms with the daily symptom self-check
- Wash your hands frequently or use hand sanitizer
- Complete the UO COVID-19 case and contact reporting form if you test positive or are a close contact of someone who tests positive.

The university guidelines indicate that we are not currently allowed to eat and drink in classrooms at the UO. If you need to eat or drink, take medication, or anything else that necessitates taking off masks, we ask that you step outside to do so. Please feel free to do this whenever you need to—there is no need to ask permission around this. Students who may have mobility issues that make this guidance challenging should contact me. In addition, being back in person may feel more challenging for some of us, for a variety of reasons. If you need to step outside of the room momentarily to take care of your own physical or mental needs, please feel welcome to do so as well.

COVID Containment Plan for Classes (Fall, 2021)

As the University of Oregon returns to in-person instruction, the key to keeping our community healthy and safe involves prevention, containment, and support. If a student in our class tests positive for COVID-19, all relevant classes will be notified via an email by the Corona Corps Care Team with instructions for students and staff based on their vaccination status. Specifically:

- **Vaccinated/Asymptomatic students:** Quarantine not required, but daily self-monitoring before coming on campus advised; sign up for testing 3-5 days after notification through MAP

- **Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students:** 14-day quarantine advised – do not come to class – and sign up for testing 3-5 days after notification through MAP, if asymptomatic, or through University Health Services (541-346-2770) or your primary care provider, if symptomatic.

- **Symptomatic students:** stay home (do not come to class/campus), complete the online case and contact form, and contact University Health Services (541-346-2770) or your primary care provider to arrange for immediate COVID-19 testing.

Students identified as close contacts of a positive case will be contacted by the Corona Corps Care Team (541-346-2292).
Appendix 2. Other Important UO Campus Resources Available to You as a Student

- **Support:** The following resources are available to you as a student.
  - University Health Services or call (541) 346-2770
  - University Counseling Center or call (541) 346-3277 or (541) 346-3227 (after hrs.)
  - MAP Covid-19 Testing
  - Corona Corps or call (541) 346-2292
  - Academic Advising or call (541) 346-3211
  - Dean of Students or call (541)-346-3216

Life at college can be complicated, let alone during a world-wide pandemic. If you're facing challenges with feeling overwhelmed, stressed, are experiencing anxiety or depression, struggling with relationships, or just need some help navigating current life challenges, you don't need to handle them on your own--there's help and support on our campus.

Our University Health Services help students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. If you need general resources on coping with stress or want to talk with another student who has been in the same place as you, visit the Duck Nest (located in the EMU on the ground floor) and get help from one of the specially trained Peer Wellness Advocates.

Our University Counseling Services (UCS) also has a team of dedicated staff members to support you with your concerns, many of whom can provide identity-based support. All clinical services are free and confidential. Find out more at counseling.uoregon.edu or by calling 541-346-3227 (anytime UCS is closed, the After-Hours Support and Crisis Line is available by calling this same number).

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (346-3216, 164 Oregon Hall) for support.

The UO Basic Needs Resource Guide includes resources for food, housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, technology, finances, and legal support. Your safety and well-being impacts learning. Please contact resources that can help you to thrive and let me know if you need any help connecting.