

Judith Flynn Office hours-Mondays 3:15-5, other times by appt.

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A writing and speaking intensive seminar that explores the basics of the stress response, physiological effects of the stress and factors that affect individuals' stress responses. Popular science writing as well as primary academic scientific research studies are read and discussed and activities designed to elicit and calm stress responses will be explored. Each student will write a literature review and present a primary scientific finding that highlights current research on stress. Development of and feedback on communication skills will be a primary focus of the course.

***The direction of the seminar will depend a lot on the interests of the students.*** This syllabus may be subject to **change** as a result of the number of students in the seminar and the students' primary interests.

Learning/teaching goals are to:

- 1) obtain a greater understanding of the biology of stress and consequences of the stress response and trauma;
- 2) understand the complexities of scientific research by reading and researching findings in current stress-related research;
- 3) improve oral communication skills, in conversation, discussion and presentations; learn to critically evaluate/assess oral communication better
- 4) further develop writing skills both through semi-formal response papers and a scientific research review;
- 5) develop a community of learners who reflect on their experience of stress as informed by scientific literature and their own embodied experience;
- 6) nurture greater self-awareness and embodiment and to increase performance level at higher levels of stress (stress management);

Required texts (available at Lamont reserves):

Sapolsky, Robert (2004) Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers - free pdf available online at <http://www.mta.ca/pshl/docs/zebras.pdf>

Van der Kolk, Bessel (2015) The Body Keeps the Score (buy the paperback, not the kindle edition) \$12.23 at Amazon

**Other readings will include some complimentary, scientific primary research articles that will be emailed to you and/or posted on website; about two per week.**

*Class 1* Shopping " course overview, breath meditation, questionnaires

*Class 2* Sapolsky - Chapters 1-4 , quiz 1 Davidson et al (2003), breath meditation/heart rate coherence; loving kindness, building community, overview of presentation

*Class 3* Sapolsky Chapters 5-8, lovingkindness article, self compassion scale 2; **Sarah Jessop**, one minute presentations of scientific finding, benefactor meditation, walking meditation

*Class 4* Sapolsky Chapters 9-14 quiz 3, Rockliff et al (2008) depression inventory, attachment scale, optional Germer article.

*Class 5* Quiz 4; Sapolsky 14-18 response 1 due

*Class 6* Body Knows the Score 1-3, quiz 5 " presentations start!

*Class 7* Body Keeps the Score 4-7; quiz 6;

*Class 8* Body Keeps the Score 7-9; quiz 7

*Class 9* Body Keeps the Score 10-13, quiz 8

*Class 10* Body Keeps the Score, 14-17 quiz 9

*Class 11* Body Keeps the Score, 18-20, quiz 10

*Class 12* **Last class** response 2 due

Attendance is essential and mandatory. The final paper is expected to be a scientific literature review; 7 +/- 2 pages (so somewhere between 5-9 pages). Papers will be expected to incorporate *at least* ten primary scientific articles and be written in the style of the background section of an academic review article. If you don't have background on this, read the tip sheet, read the student examples and make sure to ask for help. By making you submit a draft that is worth only 5%, I will give you a lot of feedback and set you up to do well on the final paper assessment.

There are weekly quizzes based on the reading. I do not give make-up quizzes. You get to drop the lowest one. If you are expecting to need to be away this semester and expect to miss class then this course, in which attendance is mandatory, is not a good fit for you.

Late work is penalized 1/3 grade per day late. If you need an extension due to extenuating circumstances please talk to me **before** the assignment is due. Generally, I feel that it's fair to grant people extensions on their written work if they face unforeseen challenges. Otherwise, I think it's more pedagogically sound that late work is penalized. Successful people ask for the help they need and learn to manage their time.

Student evaluation:

10% Quality of in-class participation and engagement (being on time! (I keep track of late arrivals) and being completely present (please don't text, instagram, browse during class). Peer feedback on presentations (and comments on peer's response papers) is included in this and I evaluate/read the feedback you give your peers.

20% 2 response papers (~5 pages each) that engage with readings and properly cite outside scientific articles using APA format. The goal of these assignments is to integrate objective with subjective learning. These will be posted on the course discussions and a small portion of the class will be expected to read your response. If you want to also write a version that includes information just for me that is fine, too.

30% weekly quizzes on readings (rewards memory and attention to material)

5% First draft of paper due one week before your presentation.

5% Rough draft of presentation, needs to happen **at least** 3 days before presentation so you have time to integrate my feedback.

15% Final paper due the day before presentation " must be emailed to me.

15% Final presentation. Sign-ups in the second week of class.