

PSY 559 Psychological Aspects of Women's Health  
Spring 2020  
Tues/Thurs 10:00-11:20

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Office Hours - TBA

### Overview

This course covers a variety of psychologically important topics in women's health based on theoretical perspectives and current research findings. We address psychological contributors to and consequences of women's physical and mental health and illness, focusing primarily on 1) diseases that affect women differently or disproportionately compared with men, 2) women's reproductive health, 3) health behaviors, 4) violence against women, and 5) women as health professionals.

### Format and Objectives

Two to four readings are assigned per class session. Readings are selected from sources in Psychology, Medicine, Nursing, Public Health, and some mainstream media. Students are expected to read assignments carefully in advance of class (it is best to read them in their numbered order) and to discuss topics raised by the readings during class sessions. To facilitate thoughtful analysis and exchange, a student "Discussion Leader" will be assigned to each class session. Discussion Leader responsibilities are described below. One objective of the course is for students to refine their ability to understand and critique theories and research in a scholarly manner -- by noting merits or weaknesses, by drawing comparisons, and by identifying (and perhaps resolving) contradictions. A second objective of the course is to facilitate original thinking about psychological aspects of women's health and to make use of Psychology to understand and alleviate health problems. Students will demonstrate these skills through their role as Discussion Leader, through their participation in class discussions, and from writing a paper addressing psychological issues in an area of women's health.

### Course Requirements

1. Students are expected to arrive at class on time and must notify the instructor -- in advance whenever possible -- if they are unable to attend. Unexcused absence may result in an unsatisfactory evaluation.
2. Students are expected to complete all readings and to participate in class discussions. Participation does not require making "brilliant" comments, nor does it entail constant speaking. It means offering comments when one has a contribution to make based on thought about the readings or discussion topic.
3. Depending upon class size, students will select one or two sessions for which they will serve as the Discussion Leader. The Discussion Leader should identify **at least five "critical issues"** relevant to the class topic or readings and bring a written description

of these to class with relevant notes to guide discussion (approximately two pages; typed, double-spaced, and labeled with name and date). For example, a critical issue might highlight a discrepancy in the reading, describe an important point not covered, resolve a question or devise a study to test ideas raised by the reading, describe a health issue to which the reading material could be applied, or suggest an integration or contradiction with topics raised in previous class sessions. The Discussion Leader should identify any relevant critical issues that are of interest to them. Reference citations and a reference list are not necessary on the written critical issues and notes. The Discussion Leader will present their critical issues in class and guide class discussion about them. The written critical issues and notes should be submitted to the instructor at the end of the class session for her written feedback.

A list of class session dates and topics will be made available during the first week of the semester for students to select the dates/topics on which they would like to serve as Discussion Leader. Some dates will not be available. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they are signed-up for the appropriate number of class sessions (this will be determined during the first week of the semester) and that they come to class prepared on the appropriate date(s).

4. The paper assignment is a survey of research on psychological aspects of a topic in women's health whether covered in this course or not. The particular topic must be approved in advance by the instructor. The paper should cite 15 or more references, including at least 10 that were not assigned in class. **It may be a portion or a complete paper that fulfills other requirements for the student (such as a Specialties paper or introduction to a dissertation proposal), provided this is approved in advance by the instructor and any other involved parties, such as the student's advisor or other instructor.**

The paper should be 15 to 20 pages long, not including the Title Page, Abstract, Reference List, and any other materials, such as Tables or Figures (if included, these should be limited). Double-space, use 1-inch margins, a common font (e.g., Arial or Times New Roman or Courier), a font size of 12, and include page numbers in a header. Left-align text with a ragged right. The paper should be written and referenced in APA style and must include an Abstract. You may format the title page as you wish. Your paper must be submitted **by 3:30 on Friday May 8th**. Submit both a hard (paper) copy and electronic copy emailed as an attachment to [marci.lobel@stonybrook.edu](mailto:marci.lobel@stonybrook.edu).

Paper topics must be approved in consultation with the instructor. Please schedule an appointment with her as early in the semester as possible. The instructor will help students select topics based on student interests and expertise. Topics must be finalized and approved by the instructor by Monday April 6th. Before beginning your paper, be sure you carefully review the document entitled "Improving Your Psychology Manuscripts" that will be made available to you on a google drive or on Blackboard.

### Assigned Readings

All readings will be made available to students via shared google drive folders. Folders are labeled with the Class Session Number (1 through 30), date, and topic. Access will be provided based on your stonybrook.edu email address.

### Grading

Grades will be computed according to the following APPROXIMATE algorithm:

- Participation and attendance - 30%
- Discussion Leader role – 20%
- Critical issues - 20%
- Paper – 30%

### Class Schedule

A detailed class schedule will be provided. Assigned readings and class session topics are subject to change.

### Class Schedule Summary

CLASS #	DATE	TOPIC
1	Jan 28	Introduction and Course Business [NO READING ASSIGNMENT]
2	Jan 30	Overview
3	Feb 4	Gender Differences in Health
4 & 5	Feb 6 & 11	Heart Disease (CHD I and II)
6 & 7	Feb 13 & 18	Cancer I and II
8	Feb 20	Autoimmune Disorders
9	Feb 25	Contraception – ATTEND PSY 342 IF POSSIBLE: JAVITS 110 2:30-3:50
10	Feb 27	HIV/AIDS
11	Mar 3	Menstruation & Menopause
12 & 13	Mar 5 & 10	Pregnancy and Childbirth I and II
14	Mar 12	NO CLASS - ATTEND PSY 342 IF POSSIBLE: JAVITS 110 2:30-3:50
15 & 16	Mar 17 & 19	Spring Break
17	Mar 24	Unwanted Pregnancy
18	Mar 26	Eating
19	Mar 31	Disordered Eating
20	Apr 2	Obesity
	Apr 6	***PAPER TOPIC APPROVED BY TODAY***

CLASS #	DATE	TOPIC
21 & 22	Apr 7 & 9	Exercise I and II
23	Apr 14	Oral Health
24	Apr 16	Cigarettes & Tobacco
25 & 26	Apr 21 & 23	Alcohol & Other Substances
27	Apr 28	Mental Health
28	Apr 30	Violence & Harassment
29	May 5	Women as Health Professionals
30	May 7	The Future
	May 8	***PAPER DUE BY 3:30***