

# PSYC\*1400 Mental Health & Wellbeing

## Course Description:

This course is offered in partnership with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) for students at the University of Guelph who have an identified mental health challenge and are currently being supported by SAS. With a positive mental health orientation there is a focus on better understanding and promoting mental health and wellbeing for undergraduate students on campus. This means a joint focus on both a scholarly and applied understanding of mental *illnesses* but mostly mental *health* within the context of the University experience. Students are expected to gain increased mental health/illness knowledge and understanding, increased academic self-efficacy in the context of mental health challenges, and awareness/practice at skills for improving wellbeing. It is also expected that this course will assist in normalizing the University experience for those with mental health challenges, orienting them to important supports available on campus, in the community and online. With a positive mental health focus, this course also aims to increase students' awareness of their own personal strengths, competencies and resources.

**Credit Weight:** .50

**Class Schedule and Location:** Tuesday and Thursday 10-11:20, MACK 305

## Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Sophia Fanourgiakis, MA, MSc

Instructor Email: [sfanourg@uoguelph.ca](mailto:sfanourg@uoguelph.ca)

Office location and office hours: Mackinnon EXTENSION 3012 OFFICE HOURS TBA – by APPT.

## Course Content

### Specific Learning Outcomes:

1. **Critical and Creative Thinking:** Students will be encouraged to integrate information from a variety of sources (lecture, readings, personal research) to generate a presentation or creative project meant to forward positive mental health for young adults. This process will support the development of inquiry skills and creative/critical thinking.
2. **Literacy:** Students will learn how to extract information from their weekly readings, lectures, the library and online. By critiquing online resources students will learn how to more carefully evaluate the vast amount of mental health information that is available online. Students in the course are expected to acquire increased knowledge of mental health stigma research, mental health literacy in general as well as greater awareness around unique profile.
3. **Communicating:** Through completing mock exam questions on weekly readings, students will be building their reading comprehension skills and developing awareness of how instructors might go about crafting questions on course content. Students will develop oral communication skills within this small seminar class in which verbal participation will be integral for most students. Students will also learn about how to best communicate in online formats; whether it is through emails to professors or communicating on online forums related to mental health. Through completing and receiving feedback on several written assignments in the seminars students will develop their written communication skills.
4. **Professional and Ethical Behaviour:** The nature of this seminar course on mental health is such that students will learn about and apply constructs such as confidentiality and self-disclosure in a unique classroom environment.

**Lecture Content: READINGS ARE TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO CLASS ☺**

Lectures aim to introduce students to central issues in mental health theory, research and practice. Lectures will be mixed format including discussion, questioning, group exercises and sharing, video clips, and guest speakers. Topics will highlight various aspects of mental health and wellbeing as described above. Assigned readings will accompany lectures. *Students will not be expected nor desired to use class lecture time to discuss personally distressing issues that are better addressed with a variety of other personal supports available on campus and in the community (e.g., personal counsellor, mental health advisor, student support worker, etc.) How to best handle what to share about your personal experience and other decisions about self-disclosure will be an important topic in the first class and throughout the course.*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Jan 6	Understanding Mental Health and Mental Illness: Positive Mental Health Model Creating a Safe and Productive Classroom	
Jan 8	Wellness Centre  Evaluation Measures	
Jan 13	Increasing Mental Illness Literacy: Overview of Mental Illnesses	<b>Custom text:</b> 71-95 Psychological Disorders
Jan 15	<i>Stress and Its Effects:</i>  <i>Guest Speaker: Kathy Somers</i>	<b>Custom text:</b> 3-25 Stress and Its Effects
Jan 20	Mental Illness Stigma – Self-Stigma  Guest Speaker: Dr. Kim Wilson	LIKE MINDS reading
Jan 22	Stress and its Effects: Planning for Challenges at University and Cultivating Resilience  <b>**Mock Exam Questions I due</b>  <b>***Hypothetical Advocacy Email due</b>	APA Road to Resilience  <b>Custom text:</b> 25-47 Coping with Stress
Jan 27	Increasing Academic Self-Efficacy and Accessing Support  Student Accessibility Services Overview  <i>Guest Speakers: Mental Health Advisors</i>	
Jan 29	<b>***First Section IWLP due (THIS IS CHANGE) NO CLASS TODAY</b>	

Feb 3	Mental Health Services: Finding What Works for YOU  <b>***Mock Exam Questions II due</b>	<b>Custom text: 95-end!</b>
Feb 5	<i>Individual Meetings with Students</i>	
Feb 10	Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Self-Management Skills  <b>***Mock Exam Questions III due</b>	Overview of CBT: Anxiety BC
Feb 12	Relaxation and Mindfulness Skills  <b>***Mental Health Website Critique Due</b>	University of Guelph Wellbeing website
READING WEEK		
Feb 24	Understanding Personal Strengths and Resources	VIA Character Strengths Niemiec, 2013
Feb 26	Nutrition and Sleep  <b>***Understanding Personal Strengths Exercise due</b>	Your Body and Wellness
March 3	Yoga  Guest Speaker: Kristin Honey	Constructive Responses to Stress Corey & Corey 162- 171
March 5	Self-Compassion  <b>***Compassionate Letter to Self due</b>	Neff Reading
March 10	Student Ambassadors	
March 12	Building Better Relationships <b>***Dialogue with a Peer due</b>	Interpersonal Communication Chapter
March 17	Mental Health in the Workplace/Planning Time for Project  <b>***Individual Wellbeing and Learning Plan Due</b>	Standards for Mental Health in the Workplace
March 19	Mental Health Online	
March 24	Recovery and new Mental Health Narratives  <b>***Bulls Eye Values Exercise Due</b>	Recovery Reading
March 31 & Apr2	Mental Health Project Presentations	

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS	Due Date	%
<p><b>Individual Learning and Wellbeing Plan – Part I</b>  <b>Please answer these three questions in a maximum 1 page single spaced document:</b></p> <p><b>1. What do you consider to be your personal strengths?</b> In this section please share some of your positive qualities (e.g., sense of humour, creativity, kindness, love of learning, integrity, etc.)</p> <p><b>2. How have your mental health challenges impacted your experiences at University to date?</b>  In this section you might comment on how mental health/illness has impacted your studies or your transition to University, social life, stress levels, satisfaction with relationships, etc.</p> <p><b>3. What are you most hoping to gain from this course over the upcoming semester?</b> Please briefly mention what topics most interest you in the course and what positive impacts you are hoping to achieve through this process.</p> <p>This is to be <b>submitted to Dropbox on January 14</b>. Dr. Lumley will have this assignment available during your individual meeting with her in early January.</p>	JAN 29	10
<p><b>Hypothetical Advocacy Email</b>  Related to your mental health challenge, you realize that you will need an accommodation in one of your courses. For this assignment, you are to write a professional, assertive, and respectful e-mail to a professor advocating for an accommodation that you believe your mental health challenge merits in their course (e.g., an extension for a particular assignment, extra time for a quiz, etc.). Choose any course that you are currently taking or have taken and write a <b>hypothetical</b> e-mail to this professor. This will be submitted on Dropbox for review by instructor. <b>This is not intended to be sent to your professor</b></p>	Jan 22	5

<p><b>Mock Exam Questions</b>  On three weeks (noted to the right), in response to readings assigned, students are to create <b>two questions</b> that could be used for a <i>hypothetical</i> exam in this course. Once created, students are to post to CourseLink under the <b>Exam Questions</b> heading. <b><u>Questions must be posted by midnight before the class in which they are due.</u></b> Questions can either be multiple choice format or short answer style. Some of the questions will be taken up in class with students able to obtain a prize 😊 for correctly answering others' questions.</p>	Jan 22 Feb 3 Feb 10	6
<p><b>Mental Health Website Critique</b>  Students are to create a critique of an online resource relevant to mental health. You can start by doing an internet search on a topic that interests you related to mental health. Your paper will have a title page and will be a maximum of 4 pages double-spaced (including title page). Although a concrete structure is provided in a separate document on CourseLink, this is a personal critique. Feel free to discuss how you were impacted by the website and use first person to describe the site. For example, "I found this site very informative and the stories contained within were personally relevant".</p>	Feb 12	15
<p><b>Understanding Personal Strengths Exercise</b>  Complete the Values in Action Strengths Survey online: <a href="https://www.viacharacter.org/surveys.aspx">https://www.viacharacter.org/surveys.aspx</a>. You will receive a profile of your personal strengths. Think about your top three strengths. In a <b>maximum of 1 page single-spaced</b>: 1. Briefly note your reaction to the results, 2. Describe how you use these strengths in your daily life, 3. Describe a few new ways you might bring these strengths into your daily life to increase your well-being.</p>	Feb 26	5
<p><b>Compassionate Letter to Self</b>  University comes with many stressors as discussed in class. Taking a less self-critical and more self-compassionate view is a very adaptive way to cope and has been associated with greater mental health and wellbeing. You will be asked to write a brief letter to yourself about a stressor or difficult experience in your life. First, briefly describe that stressor, next give yourself the message that it is common for other humans to experience this or other forms of suffering and finally (this is the really important part!) give yourself compassionate advice or encouragement (as you would a friend in this exact situation).</p>	Mar 5	5
<p><b>Dialogue with a Peer</b>  One of your peers has asked you a difficult question related to your mental health challenge. Write up a brief dialogue that demonstrates two different ways you could respond to that question. Here are some example questions to use to guide your response or you can create your own. [1. Why are you only taking three courses? 2. Why aren't you writing the exam with us? 3. How do you know that person? (Someone you know from class or SAS)]</p>	Mar 12	4

<p><b>Final Individual Wellbeing and Learning Plan</b>  This is an opportunity to review your key challenges/stressors that impact your learning and wellbeing at University. This document is a chance to also highlight how to better use your key personal strengths as well identifying coping strategies you think might serve you well as you pursue your studies. This document can be as long as you like but should be <b>at least 3 pages double-spaced</b>. A detailed description of this assignment can be found on CourseLink.</p>	Mar 17	15
<p><b>Bulls Eye Values Exercise</b>  This assignment involves completing a worksheet posted on CourseLink. A good part of focusing on positive mental health or mental health promotion is paying more attention to what we VALUE and want more of in our lives. This seems like a very basic idea, but we rarely take time to consider such important questions in our busy lives.</p>	Mar 24	5
<p><b>Mental Health Presentation/ Display</b>  <b>OPTION #1 –PRESENTATION</b> Deliver a 10-minute presentation (firm time limit) addressing some aspect of <b>Mental Health</b>. Your talk should have a discussion questions or other ways (e.g., class exercise or polling) to promote larger class involvement. Your talk will be presented to the larger class on one of the last two days of class. This date will be determined in class mid semester.  <b>OPTION #2- DISPLAY</b> Create a website, poster, brochure or other creative application on some aspect of <b>Mental Health</b>. Your work will be displayed to the larger class on one of the last two days of class. You may or may not opt to verbally present your work.</p>	Mar 31 or April 2	20
<p><b>Participation</b>  A great deal of this course is experienced in class. This portion of your performance in the course is allotted to your in class participation. It is recognized that not all students will feel comfortable with verbal participation and general non-verbal attentiveness and engagement are considered here as well</p>		10

## Course Policies

Grading Policies: This is a 0.5 credit course, requiring 10 hours per week for the average student. To attain credit in this course, students must participate in/complete a minimum 75% of class. The final grade is a pass or fail. This alternate grading scheme has been selected to minimize competition between students and anxiety about grading performance and maximize focus on the process of learning. Students' performance will be monitored in 5 major areas to determine whether the credit will be awarded (Mock Exam Questions, Individual Learning and Wellbeing Plan, Website Critique, Seminar Assignments, and Final Presentation/Project). Due dates are to be met.

Course Policy regarding use of electronic devices and recording of lectures:

Electronic recording of classes is expressly forbidden without consent of the instructor. When recordings are permitted they are solely for the use of the authorized student and may not be reproduced, or transmitted to others, without the express written consent of the instructor.

## **Course Resources**

### **Required Text:**

CUSTOM TEXT Weiten, W., Hammer, E., Dunn, D. (2014). *Adjust: Applying psychology to everyday life*. Wadsworth: Cengage. (Selected Chapters)

### **Other Resources:**

All other readings will be posted on Courselink along with other handouts and useful resources for this course. Specific readings for each week posted are noted in the course schedule. **NOTE: Some readings may be added as we go along across the semester.**

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Consideration**

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for

Academic Consideration:

[Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions](#)

### **Academic Misconduct**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community, faculty, staff, and students to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring.

University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

[Academic Misconduct Policy](#)

## **Accessibility**

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible.

For more information, contact CSD at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email [csd@uoguelph.ca](mailto:csd@uoguelph.ca) or see the website: [Student Accessibility Services Website](#)

## **Course Evaluation Information**

Please refer to the [Course and Instructor Evaluation Website](#) .

## **Drop date**

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is March 6, 2015. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Academic Calendar: [Current Undergraduate Calendar](#)