



Department of Psychology

Psychology 503.68 - Special Topics in Health Psychology: Psycho-Oncology

Winter Session 2008

Instructor: Dr. Michael Handman

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Office hours: Friday 11:30-12:30

Class location: Room 811 – Main Building

Class time: Friday 1:00 - 3:50pm

Rationale:

It is well documented that a diagnosis of cancer can have a powerful psychological and social impact on patients and their families. Psychosocial oncology is a relatively new discipline which has developed in response to the needs expressed by patients and their families on one hand and observed by professionals on the other. It is a field that currently attracts practitioners from many fields including medicine, psychology, educational psychology, social work, family studies, nursing and pastoral care.

Psychosocial oncology has not only relevance for clinicians but it also attracts researchers from various disciplines.

In its theoretical and research components, psychosocial oncology is of relevance to various disciplines including epidemiologists, medical physicists, pharmacists, anthropologists, biostatisticians, health economists and others.

The proposed course is designed for students who have a substantial background in psychology. This course may provide the students with an opportunity for future practicum/internship experiences and ultimately, a possible career venue.

The course assignments will allow the students to explore their own specific areas of interests.

Required text:

Psycho-oncology, edited by Jimmie C. Holland. Oxford University Press 1998.

The text is available on reserve through the Red Deer College library.

Limited copies are also available in the University bookstore.

Objectives of the course:

- Explore specific issues such as the “mind- body connection”.
- Describe psychological problems encountered by cancer patients and their families.
- Outlines different procedures.
- Contextualize the psychological and psychiatric problems that can occur within the family life cycle through the course of the disease and its treatment, as well as within the socio-cultural milieu.

Evaluation:

- Assignment 30% Due Feb 15, 2008.
- Assignment 30% Due Apr 11, 2008.
- Class Presentation 30% Team of 2-3 students. Topic to be discussed with instructor.
- Participation 10%

Assignments handed-in late will lose 10% per day including weekends and **must** be submitted to the B.A. Collaborative Office.

Emailed assignments, assignments slipped under the office door or left on the instructor’s desk will **not** be accepted.

Presentations and Assignments:

Rationale: At the 400-level Psychology courses, presentations are common. The experience can be an invaluable preparation for oral reports in any future career you might choose.

A team of 2-3 will present on a topic pre-discussed with the instructor. The presentation will promote discussion and critical evaluation of the topic.

Written Assignments: The expectation is for a 10-12 pages, doubles space, font size 12. Include at least 10 references in APA format.

Please review some primary source material (original articles) in addition to secondary sources.

The assignments give you the opportunity to expand and research a specific topic of interest in Psycho-oncology.

Grading scale:

A+	96% - 100%	B-	72% – 75%	D	50% - 53%
A	90%- 95%	C+	67% - 71%	F	0 – 49%
A-	85% - 89%	C	63% - 66%		
B+	80% - 84%	C-	59% - 62%		
B	76% - 79%	D+	54% - 58%		

As stated in the University Calendar:

- “It is at the instructor’s discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of the term work is between two letter grades.”
- “To determine final letter grades, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage”.

Lecture schedule

January 11	Course overview. Societal views of cancer and the emergence of psycho-oncology.
January 18	Psycho-social factors in cancer: incidence and prognosis.
January 25	Psychosocial adaptation of cancer survivors.
February 1	Family and the cancer patient.
February 8	Psychotherapeutic issues.
February 15	Psychological problems of curative treatment. Assignment 1 is due.
February 22	No classes – winter break.
February 29	Adjustment Disorders.
March 7	Anxiety Disorders.
March 14	Depressive Disorders.
March 21	No classes – Good Friday
March 28	Bereavement: a special issue in oncology.
April 4	Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy.
April 11	Behavioral intervention in pediatric oncology. Assignment 2 is due.