Welcome to the syllabus for *The Psychology of Stress and Trauma*!

I hope that this syllabus tells you just about everything you need to know about the course. If you have a question, please read the syllabus first!

To make the syllabus easier to navigate, I have divided it into the following sections:

I. Basic Course Information
II. Information on Instructors and Teaching Assistant
III. Learning Objectives
IV. Course requirements
V. Grading
VI. Class schedule and topics
VII. Course policies
VIII. University policies

**I. BASIC COURSE INFORMATION**

This course is an introduction to the psychological aspects of stress and trauma. In this course, you will learn about the major theories and research findings related to stress and trauma, including the effects of stress and trauma on mental and physical health, factors related to more effective coping with stress/trauma (e.g., social support) and interventions designed to decrease the negative effects of stress and trauma (e.g., stress management training). You will practice analyzing and critiquing the scientific methods used to study these topics and will have the opportunity to apply stress and trauma research to your own life through reflection and personal application assignments.

This course is partially online. You will watch videotaped lectures and complete other assignments online on the Moodle site and will attend an in-person discussion section on Thursdays from 8:00 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. in Room 330 of the Science Teaching and Student Services (STSS) building.

The prerequisite for this course is Psychology 1001: Introduction to Psychology (or equivalent).

Here is the link to the Moodle Course site:

[https://ay14.moodle.umn.edu/course/view.php?id=4531](https://ay14.moodle.umn.edu/course/view.php?id=4531). The Moodle site will contain all this information and more!
II. INFORMATION ON INSTRUCTOR AND TEACHING ASSISTANT

Instructor:

I (Pat Frazier) am the instructor. I do the lectures that you watch online and will facilitate class activities on Thursdays. Here is my contact information:

Office: N571 Elliott Hall
Email: pfraz@umn.edu
Phone: 612/625-6863
Office hours: 9:30 - 10:30 Thursday and by appointment
Mailbox: 2nd floor Elliott Hall

The best way to reach me is via email. I check my email many, many times a day. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours. You can call me Pat or Professor Frazier. Either is fine with me. I only listed one office hour because in my experience students rarely come to office hours. I am generally in the office from 9-430 Monday-Friday so feel free to make an appointment to meet with me outside the specified office hour.

Here is a bit more about me. I am a Professor in the Counseling Psychology and Social Psychology programs in the Department of Psychology. I received my MA and PhD from the University of Minnesota. My research is on how stressful and traumatic events affect people and how they can most effectively deal with them. I also have begun to develop and test interventions to help people cope with stress more effectively.

Kelli (the TA) and I developed this course during the 2013-2014 academic year with the help of a focus group of undergraduate students. They gave us feedback on the lectures and helped us create the assignments. So, if you don’t like something, blame them! :) This is the first time I will be teaching the full course. It is still a work in progress and we welcome your feedback as well.

Teaching Assistant:

Kelli Howard is the Teaching Assistant for the class. She will also facilitate class activities on Thursdays. Here is her contact information:

Kelli Howard, MEd
PhD Candidate in Psychology
Office: N580 Elliott Hall
Email: howar473@umn.edu
Office hours: By appointment. You are also welcome to send quick questions via gchat anytime.

Kelli is a 5th year Doctoral Student in Counseling Psychology at the U. She works as a mental health counselor at the U’s Counseling Center (UCCS) and also at Hazelden/Betty Ford Center as a psychology trainee with adolescents. Kelli's background and research interests are in college student development and the integration of mental health prevention programs into university classrooms.
III. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Course Learning Objectives

The three main learning objectives for the course are to:

- To describe key theories and findings related to stress and trauma, their effects, factors related to recovery, and treatments for stress and trauma
- To critically analyze research and to describe how research methods affect results
- To apply research to your own life to improve your own ability to cope with stress

The objectives for each specific course module will correspond to these broader course objectives. The assessment methods will also correspond to these course and module objectives. For example, knowledge of theories and findings would be assessed through quizzes and exams, ability to critically analyze research would be assessed through written assignments, and application would be assessed through reflective assignments. To assist in the application of the course material, we are also partnering with the City of Rosemount to development a needs assessment and action plan related to stress management for their employees. See section on in-call assignments for more information.

University of Minnesota Student Learning Outcomes

I have chosen these specific learning to correspond to the University of Minnesota’s student learning outcomes (listed below). I have italicized those most relevant to this course.

LO 1. Identifying, defining, and solving problems
LO 2. Locating and critically evaluating information
LO 3. Mastering a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry
LO 4. Understanding diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies
LO 5. Communicating effectively
LO 6. Understanding the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression across disciplines
LO 7. Acquiring skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning.

University of Minnesota Student Development Outcomes

This course is also relevant to the University of Minnesota’s student development outcomes. Often, we think about student development outcomes being facilitated through experiences outside of the classroom. However, because this is a class on stress I hope that it will help you develop some of these skills especially related to goal orientation, self-awareness, and resilience (SDOs 3-5).

SDO 1. Responsibility and Accountability by making appropriate decisions on behavior and accepting the consequences of their actions.
SDO 2. Independence and Interdependence by knowing when to collaborate or seek help and when to act on their own

SDO 3. Goal Orientation by managing their energy and attention to achieve specific outcomes

SDO 4. Self-Awareness by knowing their personal strengths and talents and acknowledging their shortcomings

SDO 5. Resilience by recovering and learning from setbacks or disappointments

SDO 6. Appreciation of Differences by recognizing the value of interacting with individuals with backgrounds and/or perspectives different from their own

SDO 7. Tolerance of Ambiguity by demonstrating the ability to perform in complicated environments where clear cut answers or standard operating procedures are absent

For more information on student learning and development outcomes see: http://class.umn.edu/degree_requirements/sldo.html

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

According to University of Minnesota policy, one credit represents three hours of academic work per week averaged over the semester to complete the work of the course to achieve an average grade. Because this is a 3-credit course, you should expect to spend 9 hours per week on average completing the course requirements. See link below for more information http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTWORK.html

It may seem like there are a lot of assignments in the course but there is no textbook to read. The lectures are the textbook. We have designed the activities to help you engage with and apply the information in the course.

Online activities:

You will need to watch the videotaped lectures online before class. The lecture modules are each about 15-20 minutes long. Each week there will be approximately 75 minutes of lectures to watch outside of class. These lectures prepare you for class on Thursdays. To help you engage with the material in the online lectures there will be brief online written assignments and/or quizzes on the lectures on each of the 11 weeks in which there are lectures (not weeks 1, 8, and 13). The lectures and assignments for each week will be posted on the Moodle site. They need to be completed before 8 a.m. on Thursday (before class). The Moodle site will prevent you from submitting them after that time. These assignments will be worth 3 points each (14% of your grade).

Written assignments:

There will be 11 short written assignments throughout the semester (all weeks except 1, 8, and 13). These will usually form the basis of the in-class assignments on Thursdays. These will include assignments such as reading an article or case study and answering questions about it based on the lecture material. These assignments will be fully described on the Moodle site and all reading materials will be available for download on the site. These need to be completed
before 8 a.m. on Thursday (before class). The Moodle site will prevent you from submitting them after that time. These written assignments will be worth 4 points each (18% of your grade).

**In class assignments:**

There will be written activities during each Thursday class section. These will either be completed individually or in small groups and may involve discussing the written assignment for the week, writing a brief reaction to a guest speaker, or applying course material to our collaborative project with the City of Rosemount that you will learn more about in class (see http://rcp.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/EmployeeWellness.pdf).

Starting in Week 2 you will be assigned to a small group that you will work with throughout the semester. So, choose your seat carefully on Week 2 - your table mates will be your group members for the semester.

If you do not attend class you will not receive the points for these in class assignments (unless it is a legitimate verified absence). These assignments are worth two points each and together count for 9% of your grade. A point will be taken off for substandard performance on these assignments. This would include writing a reaction paper that has very little content (e.g., one sentence) or obvious nonparticipation in a small group assignment.

Although attendance is not mandatory, I strongly encourage you to attend all class meetings. We are all here to teach and to learn from each other. And, as described above, every class session includes graded assignments and you will not receive the points for assignments completed during missed class periods. In addition to attending class, my expectation is that you will complete the written assignments before each class and participate in class discussion and small group activities. The success of the class depends in large part on you and your willingness to discuss issues, raise questions, and respectfully share ideas.

One more thing about attendance: Please make every effort to be on time. Arriving late (or leaving early) disrupts the learning process for the entire class. Exceptions include serious illness, family emergency, or a legitimate conflict with recognized University activities.

**Research Experience Assignment:**

There is also a research experience assignment. Part 1 of the assignment is a regular course assignment. Specifically, in week 9, you will watch a short video. Following the video and for the next three weeks, you will fill out a short log entry. The goal of this assignment is to help you manage stress. This part of the assignment is worth 10 points.

Part 2 of the assignment will allow us to assess whether these activities are effective. Because this part of the assignment is a research study, we can’t require you to complete it. If you chose to complete this part of the assignment, you will give consent and, starting with week 4 and ending on week 15, you will answer a brief survey about stress each week. Each should take 1-2 minutes. You will earn one point for each survey for a total of 12 points.

If you do not want to complete Part 2 of the assignment, you can complete an alternative assignment for the same number of points (12). This involves keeping a “critical thinking logbook” to assess how stress and research about stress is portrayed in the popular media. You will be required to find and read three articles from published popular media sources (e.g., the internet, newspapers, or magazines – not psychological or medical journals).
that discuss research on stress. After reading each article, you will write a short report (approximately ½ to 1 page) in which you link the information in the article to the material covered in class. You must include each original popular media article with each corresponding logbook entry. Each logbook entry is worth 4 points. Logbooks are due no later than the last day of classes for the semester (Wednesday, 12/10) and should be submitted electronically either in Moodle or by e-mail.

In sum, everyone completes Part 1 of the Research Experience assignment. The 10 points for completing that assignment will be part of your online activity points during weeks 9-12. Part 2 of the Research Experience assignment involves completing 12 very brief surveys for 12 points. If you do not want to do that, you can hand in three entries in a Critical Thinking Logbook for 4 points each. During week 4, you will decide which of the Part 2 assignments you want to do. Part 2 (or the alternative) are worth 5% of your grade.

Examinations:

Finally, what would a class be without a couple of exams?! There will be two exams - a midterm during week 8 (October 23) that will cover the material in weeks 2 - 7 and a final on December 13 that will cover the material in weeks 9-14 and have some integrative questions that cover all the course material. The exams are worth 54% of your grade.

Extra Credit:

You can receive a maximum of 5 extra credit points for various activities. For example, we will post optional extra-credit activities on the Moodle site. Other opportunities also will be offered throughout the semester, such as course-related speakers and events on campus or in the community. Feel free to propose alternative extra-credit activities as well.

Summary:

Online written assignments and quizzes 14% (33 points = 11 weeks, 3 points per week)
Written assignments 18% (44 points = 11 weeks, 4 points for each)
In-class assignments 9% (22 points = 11 weeks, 2 points each)
Research experience assignment 5% (12 points = 12 brief surveys or alternative)
Midterm Exam 21% (50 points; covers weeks 2-7)
Final Exam 33% (80 points; 50 points covers weeks 9-14; 30 points for cumulative portion of exam)

V. GRAADING

I will use this standard grading scale:

A = 93 - 100%
A- = 90 - 92.9%
B+ = 87 - 88.9%
B = 83 - 86.9%
B - = 80 - 82.9%
C+ = 75 - 79.9%
C  = 70 - 74.9%
C-  = 65 - 69.9%
D+ = 60 - 64.9%
D   = 55 - 59.9%
D-  = 50 - 54.9%
F   = Below 50%

The University uses plus and minus grading on a 4.000 cumulative grade point scale as follows:

A Achievement **outstanding** relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements (no grade of A+ should be submitted; A, 4 grade points; A-, 3.67 grade points).

B Achievement **significantly above** the level necessary to meet course requirements (B+, 3.33 grade points; B, 3 grade points; B-, 2.67 grade points).

C Achievement **meeting the basic course requirements** in every respect (C+, 2.33 grade points; C, 2 grade points; C-, 1.67 grade points).

D Achievement **worthy of credit** even though it does not fully meet the basic course requirements in every respect (D+, 1.33 grade points; D, 1 grade point; no grade of D- should be submitted).

F Performance **failing to meet the basic course requirements** (0 grade points).

**University Policy on Incompletes**

An “I” grade is given if coursework is incomplete and the instructor 1) has a "reasonable expectation" that the student can successfully complete the unfinished work on his/her own no later than one year from the last day of classes and 2) believes that legitimate reasons exist to justify extending the deadline for course completion. If a student does not complete the requirements for the course and does not request an incomplete, a grade reflecting the student's performance in the course should be assigned; however, under these circumstances, a grade of I should not be assigned. Assigning a grade of I when a student has not requested it might delay necessary intervention with a student having academic difficulty.

The student and instructor must fill out a written agreement stating the terms for completion whenever an incomplete is requested and approved. This form, Agreement for the Completion of Incomplete Work, can be downloaded here. Students assigned I's must complete the unfinished work by the date agreed upon with the instructor or, if no date is specified, no later than one year after the last day of final examinations of the term in which the I is given.

Students are expected to make up the work on their own; if completion of the work requires that a student attend the class in substantial part a second time, assigning an I is not appropriate. I grades change to Fs (or Ns if taken on the S-N system) if not completed within one year after the last day of final examination of the term in which the I is given, or the end of the student's next term of enrollment, whichever comes first.
For additional information, please see:
http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADINGTRANSCRIPTS.html.
http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/gradingpolicies.html

VI. COURSE SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

A Special Note about Some Course Topics

It can be challenging and painful to deal with trauma and some members of the class will have their own trauma histories. If at any time the coursework becomes personally difficult for you, please contact me or Kelli. If you find you are troubled by material while taking this course, and need support or counseling, please be sure to pursue that support by seeking out a supportive friend, counselor, and/or a social service (see resources below in the section on Mental Health and Stress Management).

Although class members can disclose personal experiences if they choose to, this class is not intended as a forum for discussing students’ personal traumatic experiences. We will be focusing on critical thinking and research on stress and trauma. Within the classroom, there will be an emphasis on creating a safe atmosphere, including respect for diverse perspectives and experiences and confidentiality. Revealing personal information about others outside the classroom is a breach of confidentiality.

All required readings and other materials will be available on the Moodle site at least one week prior to the due date. I hope to have all lectures posted for Weeks 2 - 7 posted very shortly.

Week 1: Thursday September 4, 2014

There are no assignments for this week. During class we will discuss the details of the course and introduce ourselves to each other.

Week 2: Thursday September 11, 2014

Definition and measurement of stress; major sources of stress

Week 3: Thursday September 18, 2014

Definition and prevalence of trauma

Week 4: Thursday September 25, 2014 (Rosh Hashanah)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other emotional effects of trauma

Week 5: Thursday October 2, 2014

Beyond PTSD: Resilience and posttraumatic growth
Week 6: Thursday October 9, 2014
Stress and mental health, relationships, academic functioning

Week 7: Thursday October 16, 2014
Stress and physical health

Week 8: Thursday October 23, 2014
MIDTERM (Material from Weeks 2-7)

Week 9: Thursday October 30 2014
Perceived control and adjustment to stress and trauma
Research Experience Assignment starts

Week 10: Thursday November 6, 2014
Social support and adjustment to stress and trauma
Research Experience Assignment continues

Week 11: Thursday November 13, 2014
Coping with stress and trauma
Research Experience Assignment continues

Week 12: Thursday November 20, 2014
Interventions for stress and trauma
Research Experience Assignment continues

Week 13: Thursday November 27, 2014
Thanksgiving - no class or assignments this week

Week 14: Thursday December 4, 2014
Diversity issues

FINAL EXAM: Saturday, December 13 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.
Covers material from weeks 9-14 with some integrative questions covering all course material
VII. COURSE POLICIES

Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences:

Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. Such circumstances include verified illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections. For complete information, please see: http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html.

Students are expected to take exams at the times scheduled in the syllabus. Possible exceptions include serious illness, family emergency, or a legitimate conflict with recognized University activities. If one of these situations applies, please contact me to request a makeup. Please make these arrangements as soon as you know of the conflict--BEFORE the exam if possible.

Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom:

Because cell phone use (e.g., text messaging, internet browsing, playing games, Facebook) is often disruptive to others in the classroom, cell phone use is prohibited during class time. Cell phones should be silenced or set to vibrate. Only emergency-related use of cell phones is allowed during class. Laptops and similar electronic devices may be used only for note taking or in-class assignments because any other use can be disruptive to other students in the class. For complete information, please see: http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html.

VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

In addition to the course-specific information above, please be aware of the following University policies:

Student Conduct Code:

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University you are expected to adhere to Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code. To review the Student Conduct Code, please see:http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf.

Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to
teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities.

**Scholastic Dishonesty:**

You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. (Student Conduct Code: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf) If it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. For additional information, please see:http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/INSTRUCTORRESP.html. The Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity has compiled a useful list of Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to scholastic dishonesty: http://www1.umn.edu/oscai/integrity/student/index.html. If you have additional questions, please ask me (the instructor) or Kelli (your TA).

**Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials:**

Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes or videos beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing course materials undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate shared norms and standards of the academic community. For additional information, please see: http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html.

**Sexual Harassment:**

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/SexHarassment.pdf

**Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action:**

The University provides equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For
more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy:  

**Disability Accommodations:**

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. Disability Services (DS) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact DS at 612-626-1333 to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations. If you are registered with DS and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, please contact your instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss how the accommodations will be applied in the course. For more information, please see the DS website, https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/.

**Mental Health and Stress Management:**

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu.

**Academic Freedom and Responsibility:**

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.*

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Psychology Department Chair, your adviser, the Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost.

* Language adapted from the American Association of University Professors "Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students".