

SOCIOLOGY 313/413

SOCIOLOGY OF STRESS & COPING - FALL 2008

Instructor: Dr. Eva Kahana

THURSDAY 4:30-7:00 - MATHER MEMORIAL RM 222

Office Locations: Mather Memorial Rm. 231B; Phone 368-2704
Stone Commons Rm. 108E; Phone 368-1070

Office Hours: 3:00-4:00 on class days, otherwise by appointment.

Course Objectives and Requirements

This course will focus attention on human stress throughout the life course and its role in personal health and well-being. There have been exciting advances in recent years in understanding the nature of stress in everyday life as well as elements of extreme stress. Trauma is experienced by many people due to normative events such as illness and bereavement or natural and man-made disasters, such as crime or war.

Coping strategies and social supports will be considered which ameliorate negative impact of stress. The instructor has conducted several major funded studies of coping with stressful life events, including long distance moves, institutionalization, heart attack and survival through the Holocaust. Challenges in doing stress research and in developing policies to reduce adverse effects of stress will be discussed.

This course aims to acquaint the student with sociological and interdisciplinary perspectives on stress, coping and health in a developmental perspective.

Required Readings

Packet of selected readings available on Blackboard. Additional reprints may be handed out as the term progresses.

Short paperback books (good reads!)

1. Tec, N. (1984). *Dry tears: The story of a lost childhood*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
(Available in the bookstore.)
2. Zola, I.K. (1982). *Missing pieces: A chronicle of living with a disability*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. (Available in the bookstore.)
3. Alterra, A. (2007). *The Caregiver: A Life with Alzheimer's*. Ithaca, New York: ILR Press of Cornell University Press.

Exam and Assignment Policy

Two exams, a term paper, and class assignments are required for this course. Exams will be short answer and essay, and will cover 1) assigned readings, 2) lectures, 3) major points stressed in guest lectures, audio-visual material and class hand-outs. Students are expected to have read the readings discussed in each class so that they can knowledgeably contribute to the class.

Class assignments will not be graded but will be checked. Each exam and the term paper count for 1/3 of the grade. The term paper should be a critical review of literature on a course related topic. Students must provide a one-paragraph outline of the term paper and a sample list of 5 references to be approved by the instructor by Oct. 4. Students may contract to conduct a research proposal or project and submit a written report of their project in lieu of a term paper.

Graduate students are expected to submit a term paper reflecting understanding of methodological contributions and limitations as well as substantive findings of research. Exams of graduate students are also expected to reflect understanding of theoretical and methodological perspectives.

Syllabus Modification Policy

Modification of this syllabus may occur. If so, the changes will be announced in class. Should you have to miss class, it is important to find out from fellow students which announcements were made, what material was covered, and/or additional handouts distributed.

Schedule of Classes

August, 28 - Class #1

Distribution of syllabus. Overview of stress paradigm. Discussion of students' interests.

Readings:

- Kahana, E., Kahana, B, (2003). Contextualizing successful aging: New directions in age-old search. In R. Settersten, Jr. (Ed.), *Invitation to the life course: A new look at old age*. Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Company.
- Thoits, P. (2006). Personal agency in the stress process. *Journal of Health & Social Behavior*, 47, 309-323.

September 4 - Class #2

From hassles to life events and extreme trauma: The range of stressors and their health and mental health sequelae.

Readings:

- Wheaton, B. (1996). The domains and boundaries of stress concepts. In H.B. Kaplan (Ed.), *Psychosocial stress: Perspectives on structure, theory, life-course, and methods* (pp. 29-58). New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Pearlin, L., Schieman, S., Fazio, E., & Meersman, S. (2005). Stress, health, and the life course: Some conceptual perspectives. *Journal of Health & Social Behavior*, 46, 205-219.
- (*Begin reading BOOK) Tec, N. (1984). *Dry tears: The story of a lost childhood*.

September 11 - Class #3

Catastrophic stress: War, trauma & genocide.

Guest Speaker: Zev Harel, PhD, Professor of Social Work, Cleveland State University

Readings:

- McFarlane, A.C. & van der Kolk, B.A. (1996). Trauma and its challenges to society. In B.A. van der Kolk, A.C. McFarlane, & L. Weisaeth (Eds.), *Traumatic stress: The effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body, and society* (pp. 24-36). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Kahana, B., & Kahana, E. (2001). Holocaust trauma and sequelae. In E. Gerrity, T. Keane, & F. Tuma (Eds.), *The mental health consequences of torture* (pp. 143-158). New York, NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishing Corporation.
- Linley, P.A. (2003). Positive adaptation to trauma: Wisdom as both process and outcome. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 16(6), 601-610.
- McFarlane, A., & Norris, F. (2006). Definitions and concepts in disaster research. In F. Norris, S. Galea, M. Friedman, & P. Watson (Eds.), *Methods for Disaster Mental Health Research* (pp. 3-19). New York: Guilford Press.

September 18 - Class #4

Designing research to explore the stress paradigm. The measurement of concepts.

Class exercise: Developing a scale of stressful life events.

Readings:

- Kahana, E. (1992). Stress research, and aging: Complexities, ambiguities, paradoxes and promise. In M.L. Wykle, E. Kahana, & J. Kowal (Eds.), *Stress and health among the elderly* (pp. 239-256). New York, NY: Springer Publishing.
- Kasl, S.V. (1992). Stress and health among the elderly: Overview of issues. In M.L. Wykle, E. Kahana, & J. Kowal (Eds.), *Stress and health among the elderly* (pp. 5-34). New York, NY: Springer Publishing.
- Stress and coping measures from Elderly Care Research Center studies.

******Assignment 1 due: Find two research articles dealing with a specific type of stress. Compare & contrast their approaches.**

September 25 - Class #5

Childhood stress and its long-term sequelae, perspectives on resilience and vulnerability.

Guest Speaker: Rachel Hammel, MPA, Sociology, Case Western Reserve University

Readings:

- Rubin, L. (1996). Fall down seven times, get up eight. In L.B. Rubin (Ed.), *The transcendent child: Tales of triumph over the past* (pp. 1-15). New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Rubin, L. (1996). Ana Gutierrez: From migrant farmworker to Ph.D. In L.B. Rubin (Ed.), *The transcendent child: Tales of triumph over the past* (pp. 119-144). New York, NY: Basic Books.
- English, D. (1998). The extent and consequences of child maltreatment. *The Future of Children*, 8(1), 39-53.
- Kendall-Tackett, K. (2002). The health effects of childhood abuse: Four pathways by which abuse can influence health. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 26, 715-729.
- (*Finish reading BOOK) Tec, N. (1984). *Dry tears: The story of a lost childhood*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

October 2 - Class #6

Stress and stigma. (Recommended Viewing: Philadelphia)

Guest Speaker: Cathie King, PhD, Sociology, Case Western Reserve University

Readings:

- Liebow, E. (1996). Tell them who I am: The lives of homeless women. In K. Finsterbusch & J.S. Schwartz (Eds.), *Sources: Notable selections in sociology* (pp. 183-194). Guilford, CT: Dushkin Publishing.
- Gerhardt, U.E. (1985). Stress and stigma explanations of illness. In U. Gerhardt & M.E.J. Wadsworth (Eds.), *Stress and stigma* (pp. 161-204). New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

- Fife, B.L., & Wright, E.R. (2000). The dimensionality of stigma: A comparison of its impact on the self of persons with HIV/AIDS and cancer. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 41(1), 50-67.
- Low, C., Beran, T., & Stanton, A. (2006). Adaptation in the face of advanced cancer. In M. Feuerstein (Ed.), *Handbook of Cancer Survivorship* (pp. 211-228).

******Assignment 2 due: Submit a one-paragraph outline of term paper or research project, with 5 references, for instructor approval (see details on page 1).**

October 9 - Class #7

EXAM 1: In-class, open-book exam. Exam will be proctored.

Books and readings can be brought to exam.

Typed or handwritten notes are not permitted.

October 16 – Class #8

Stress of chronic and life-threatening illness; mental illness

Guest Lecturer: Boaz Kahana, PhD, Professor of Psychology, Cleveland State University

Readings:

- Moos, R.H. & Davis-Tsu, V. (1984). The crisis of physical illness: An overview and conceptual approach. In R.H. Moos (Ed.), *Coping with physical illness* (pp. 3-25). New York, NY: Plenum.
- Charmaz, K. (1997). Experiencing chronic illness. In K. Charmaz (Ed.), *Good days, bad days: The self in chronic illness and time* (pp. 9-40). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Pierret, J. (2003). The illness experience: State of knowledge and perspectives for research. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 25, 4-22.
- Dohrenwend, B.P., Levav, I., Shrout, P.E., Schwartz, S., Naveh, G., Link, B.G., Skodol, A.E., & Stueve, A. (1998). Ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and psychiatric disorders: A test of the social causation-social selection issue. In B.P. Dohrenwend (Ed.), *Adversity, stress and psychopathology* (pp. 285-318). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

October 23 – Class #9

Focus on Disability

Guest Speaker: Elizabeth Drebber, PhD, Clinical Rehabilitation Psychologist, Metro General Hospital

Readings:

- Kelley-Moore, J., Schumacher, J., Kahana, E., & Kahana, B. (2006). When do older adults become “disabled”? Social and health antecedents of perceived disability in a panel study of the oldest old. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 47, 126-141.
- (BOOK) Zola, I.K. (1982). *Missing pieces: A chronicle of living with a disability*.

October 30 – Class #10***Coping and social support as moderators in the stress process.***

Readings:

- Krause, N. (2006). Social Relationships in Late Life. In R. Binstock & L. George (Eds.), *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences, Sixth Editio* (pp. 181-200). New York: Academic Press.
- Taylor, S.E., & Aspinwell, L.G. (1996). Mediating and moderating processes in psychosocial stress. In H.B. Kaplan (Ed.), *Psychosocial stress: Perspectives on structure, theory, life-course, and methods* (pp. 71-110). New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Warren-Findlow, J. (2006). Weathering: Stress and heart disease in African American women living in Chicago. *Qualitative Health Research, 16*(2), 221-237.
- Miller, C.T., & Kaiser, C.R. (2001). A theoretical perspective on coping with stigma. *Journal of Social Issues, 57*(1), 73-92.
- George, L. (2006). Perceived Quality of Life. In R. Binstock and L. George (Eds), *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences* (pp. 320-336). New York: Academic Press.

November 6 – Class #11***The stress of caregiving, end-of-life, and bereavement***

Guest Lecturer: Linda Noelker, Ph.D., Senior Vice President, Planning and Organizational Resources, Benjamin Rose Institute.

Readings:

- Ejaz, F., Noelker, L., Menne, H., & Bagaka's, J. (2008). The impact of stress and support on direct care workers' job satisfaction. *The Gerontologist, 48, Special Issue 1*, 60-70.
- Pearlin, L.I., & Mullan, J.T. (1992). Loss and stress in aging. In M.L. Wykle, E. Kahana, & J. Kowal (Eds.), *Stress and health among the elderly* (pp. 117-132). New York, NY: Springer Publishing.
- Lynn, J. (2001). Serving patients who may die soon and their families: The role of hospice and other services. *Journal of the American Medical Association, 285*(7), 925-932.
- (*Begin reading BOOK) Alterra, A. (2007). *The Caregiver: A Life with Alzheimer's*.

Nov. 13 - Class #12

*******Term paper due*******

Begin Student Presentations. Students should prepare a handout (generally one-page) highlighting the salient components of their completed term paper and be prepared to give a brief (5-10 minute) presentation.

*****Exam 2, the take-home exam, will be distributed. Due December 4*****

November 20 – Class #13

Cognitive impairment: Stressors faced by patients and caregivers

Student Presentations Continued

Reading:

- (*Finish reading BOOK) Alterra, A. (2007). *The Caregiver: A Life with Alzheimer's*.

November 27 - Class #14

No Class—Thanksgiving Holiday (Opportunity to research take home exam)

December 4 - Class #15

******Exam 2 (take-home exam) due.**

Please leave with Michelle in Mather Memorial Rm. 226.****

Social and environmental sources of stress

Readings:

- Wright, E.R., Gronfein, W.P., & Owens, T.J. (2000). Deinstitutionalization, social rejection, and the self-esteem of former mental patients. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 41(1), 68-90.
- Harrell, S.P. (2000). A multidimensional conceptualization of racism-related stress: Implications for the well-being of people of color. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 70(1), 42-57.
- Evans, G.W., & Stecker, R. (2004). Motivational consequences of environmental stress. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 24(2), 143-165.