

Sabancı University
Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
PSY 345: Stress & Well-Being in Adulthood
Fall 2020
Instructor: Emre Selçuk

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Office Hour: Wednesday, 16.40-17.30

<https://sabanciuniv.zoom.us/j/91829705303?pwd=dWdUQVYyVTFZLzRqWG5XOG0ZzdZz09>

Meeting ID: 918 2970 5303

Passcode: dm4uui

Course Description: Seeking happiness and understanding what it is have been a thousand-year-old quest for humans. Lessons on how to lead a serene and happy life can be found even in the oldest texts. Modern day is no different with literally thousands of books on how to cope with stress and find happiness filling the shelves of bookstores. Likewise, one can find numerous online columns, blogs, and podcasts tackling these topics.

This long-standing interest in stress and well-being is also reflected in research on human behavior. The central goal of PSY 345 is to provide an overview of this research. We will apply a psychological science perspective to stress and well-being. What is stress and what is well-being? What is the relationship between the two? Can we reliably measure something like happiness? Can stress really kill us? Can you find happiness by searching for it? Who are more vulnerable to negative effects of stress? Who are more likely to be happy? We will discuss what psychological science has to say in response to these and other similarly interesting questions on stress and well-being.

Required Readings: A reading list has been assembled from top scientific journals in the field. Together the readings provide a sampling of the major topics, issues, theories, and methods on study of stress and well-being. It is totally fine if you are not able to follow all the technical details in a paper; but do try your best to understand the main ideas.

Lectures: I will be posting video lectures on either assigned readings or new material or both.

Zoom meetings: The meetings will take place on Wednesdays at 15:40-16:30 (See SUCourse+ for the link). We will not meet every week. The course outline indicates the dates on which the meetings will take place. I will not be lecturing during these meetings. I will not be taking attendance either. The aim of these meetings is to answer **your** questions about the lectures, readings, and assignments.

“Spread the Good” Presentations: You will work in groups to prepare two presentations targeting a general audience with no formal training in psychology. What would you tell people if you had 15 minutes to talk about psychology of stress? Perhaps you talk to them about “good stress” vs. “bad stress.” Or you may opt for talking about how stress affects health. Or perhaps you may give them some practical tips on what protects them from harmful effects of stress. Or maybe you will talk about a combination of these. Or maybe about none of these but you will come up with a totally new idea. What about if the topic of your talk was well-being? It is totally up to you how to shape the content of your presentation. But whatever route you take, keep in mind that your talk should be informed by scientific

research discussed in lectures and readings. You will present two talks, one on stress and one on well-being. The due dates are indicated in the course outline.

For these assignments, you will form **groups of 5** at the beginning of the semester. One member in each group should email Zeynep Özden (zeynepozden@sabanciuniv.edu) who the group members are **by October 16th**. If we do not hear from you by then, we will randomly assign you to groups. All group members are expected to take part in the presentations.

This assignment requires coming up with a creative narrative for the presentations, thinking deeply about how you can tie research findings to daily life, and practicing to communicate research findings in daily life language. Thus, I urge you to refrain from leaving your preparations to the last minute. I highly recommend that you meet with your group members on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to work on your presentations. If you cannot find any common free hour, you can use the class time when there is no Zoom meeting.

Exams: There is a midterm and a final exam. Both are take-home type. The submission deadlines are stated on the outline.

Course Assessment:

Presentations: 10% each (20% total)

Midterm: 35%

Final: 45%

Grades: The following grading scheme is used to assign the final grade for the course. No changes can be made to your final grade unless there has been an arithmetical error.

A	100-90	B	79.99-75	C	64.99-60	D	49.99-45
A-	89.99-85	B-	74.99-70	C-	59.99-55	F	44.99-0
B+	84.99-80	C+	69.99-65	D+	54.99-50		

Make-up for missed exams: In order to be eligible to take a make-up exam, you should have a valid and documented excuse.

Research Participation: Students can optionally serve as participants in research that is run by Sabancı University researchers. By participating in research, you can get extra points. For this course, you will be able to earn up to 3 bonus points. Six research points (1 research point equals ~ 30 minutes of research participation) will be converted to 3 bonus points added to your overall total at the end of the semester. More information on the available research projects will be provided during the semester. You will be able to sign up for the experiments and get your research participation points through the online Sona system at <http://sabanciuniv.sona-systems.com>.

Academic Integrity: Every student in this course is expected to abide by the Sabancı University Academic Integrity Statement. Please see <https://www.sabanciuniv.edu/en/academic-integrity-statement>

Course Outline

Week 1 (October 5th-9th)

October 7th: Zoom meeting on course overview & your questions about the course, syllabus, expectations, etc.

Video Lecture(s): What's stress? How can you measure it?

Readings: Cohen, S., Gianaros, P. J., & Manuck, S. B. (2016). A stage model of stress and disease. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 11, 456-463.

Almeida, D. M. (2005). Resilience and vulnerability to daily stressors assessed via diary methods. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 14, 64-68.

Week 2 (October 12th-16th)

Video lecture(s): Why is stress bad? Because it may kill you

Readings: Cohen, S. (2020). Psychosocial vulnerabilities to upper respiratory infectious illness: Implications for susceptibility to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). *Perspectives on Psychological Science*.

Chiang, J. J., Turiano, N. A., Mroczek, D. K., & Miller, G. E. (2018). Affective reactivity to daily stress and 20-year mortality risk in adults with chronic illness: Findings from the National Study of Daily Experiences. *Health Psychology*, 37, 170-178.

Week 3 (October 19th-23th)

October 21st: Zoom meeting on your questions about Week 1 and 2 lectures and readings

Week 4 (October 26th-30th)

Video lecture(s): Not everyone is affected equally from stressful life events. What protects you? What makes you vulnerable?

Readings: Miller, G. E., Lachman, M. E., Chen, E., Gruenewald, T. L., Karlamangla, A. S., & Seeman, T. E. (2011). Pathways to resilience: Maternal nurturance as a buffer against the effects of childhood poverty on metabolic syndrome at midlife. *Psychological Science*, 22, 1591-1599.

Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K., Renna, M. E., Shrout, M. R., & Maddison, A. A. (2020). Stress reactivity: What pushes us higher, faster, and longer—and why it matters. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*.

Week 5 (November 2nd-6th)

November 4th: **Zoom meeting** on your questions about Week 4 lecture(s) and readings, the upcoming “Spread the Good” presentation, and the midterm.

November 6th: “Spread the Good Presentation” (on the topic of stress) due.

Week 6 (November 9th-13th)

November 13th: Midterm exam due.

Week 7 (November 16th-20th)

Video lecture(s): What’s happiness? How can you measure it?

Readings: Lucas, R. E., Wallsworth, C., Anusic, I., & Donnellan, M. B. (2020). A direct comparison of the day reconstruction method (DRM) and the experience sampling method (ESM). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Killingsworth, M. A., & Gilbert, D. T. (2010). A wandering mind is an unhappy mind. *Science*, 330, 932.

Week 8 (November 23rd-27th)

Video lecture(s): Who is happy?

Readings: Hudson, N. W., Lucas, R. E., & Donnellan, M. B. (2020). Are we happier with others? An investigation of the links between spending time with others and subjective well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Hills, T. T., Proto, E., Sgroi, D., & Seresinhe, C. I. (2019). Historical analysis of national subjective wellbeing using millions of digitized books. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 3, 1271-1275.

Week 9 (November 30th-December 4th)

December 2nd: **Zoom meeting** on your questions about Weeks 7 and 8 readings and lectures, and your questions about midterm answers.

Week 10 (December 7th-11th)

Video lecture(s): “Regrets, I have a few”: How does remembering past events affect well-being?

Readings: Iyengar, S. S., Wells, R. E., & Schwartz, B. (2006). Doing better but feeling worse: Looking for the “best” job undermines satisfaction. *Psychological Science*, 17, 143-150.

Newman, D. B., Sachs, M. E., Stone, A. A., & Schwarz, N. (2019). Nostalgia and well-being in daily life: An ecological validity perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Week 11 (December 14th-18th)

Video lecture(s): Striving for happiness? Know its vices and virtues

Readings: Mauss, I. B., Savino, N. S., Anderson, C. L., Weisbuch, M., Tamir, M., & Ludenslager, M. L. (2012). The pursuit of happiness can be lonely. *Emotion*, 12, 908-912.

Rohrer, J. M., Richter, D., Brümmer, M., Wagner, G. G., & Schmukle, S. C. (2018). Successfully striving for happiness: Socially engaged pursuits predict increases in life satisfaction. *Psychological Science*, 29, 1291-1298.

Week 12 (December 21st-25th)

Video lecture(s): “Happiness is everything... Or is it?”

Readings: Choi, J. H., Miyamoto, Y., & Ryff, C. D. (2020). A cultural perspective on functional limitations and well-being. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.

Zilioli, S., Slatcher, R., Ong, A. D., & Gruenewald, T. L. (2015). Purpose in life predicts allostatic load ten years later. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 79, 451–457.

Week 13 (December 28th-January 1st)

December 30: Zoom meeting on your questions about Weeks 10-12 lectures and readings, the upcoming “Spread the Good” presentation and the final exam.

Week 14 (January 4th-8th)

January 8th: “Spread the Good Presentation” (on the topic of well-being) due.

Finals Exam Period

January 23th: Final exam due.