SOCIOMETRY 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!)
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:

September 4 - Class #2

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

Readings:

September 11 - Class #3

Catastrophic stress: War, trauma & genocide.

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

Readings:
**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:
- 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:

**October 2 - Class #6**

*Stress and stigma. (Recommended Viewing: Philadelphia)*

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

Readings:

****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:

**October 23 – Class #9**

*Focus on Disability*

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

Readings:
October 30 – Class #10

Coping and social support as moderators in the stress process.

Readings:


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:


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:

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: