American University of Beirut
Department of Psychology
PSYC 239 The Psychology of Trauma
Spring 2017/18

Professor:
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Texts:

Additional assigned chapters from:

Additional articles will be provided for you in a booklet to be purchased at the University Bookstore.

Goals and objectives: This is an introductory course aimed at examining the nature of trauma, the theories of trauma, and how the experience of trauma affects the individual, the family and the community. The course will also cover the socio-political considerations of trauma as well as resilience, recovery and post-traumatic growth.

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able:
• to demonstrate knowledge of the various theories of trauma from emotional, cognitive, behavioral and biological perspectives (PLO 2a, 5b)
• to understand the role of social, environmental and cultural factors when assessing and diagnosing trauma (PLO2b)
• to differentiate empirically validated psychotherapy interventions for trauma from evidence-based psychotherapy from pseudo-scientific psychotherapy. (PLO1b,c)
• to demonstrate an attitude of critical thinking concerning the process of assessment, diagnosis and treatment of trauma, while understanding the value of population based evidence versus case specific data. (PLO 2 a, b, c)
• to gain a solid knowledge base in the ethical standards of clinical research and practice. (PLO 4b,c)
• to effectively and fluently communicate psychological knowledge and critical thinking skills through writing assignments and oral discussions. (PLO6a,b)
Format: The primary format of this class will include lecture and group discussions.

Class attendance and policy: You are required to attend all class meetings on time and for the entire time. Please note that arriving late to class is considered a disruption to the students and class process, so please do not do it.

I understand that extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances may arise, such as accidents, sudden illnesses, family emergencies, etc., which will cause a student to miss class. Those circumstances must be confirmed by formal documentation. Once such documentation is produced, the necessary arrangements will be made.

Academic Integrity: The “Student Code of Conduct” in the AUB Student Handbook applies to this course and will be strictly enforced. All of your work must be your own. Writing that is copied from published sources (unless quoted and attributed), even if slightly modified, will be considered plagiarism and grounds for a failing grade on the paper or in the course. Additionally, any student caught cheating or attempting to cheat will receive a failing grade for the assignment or exam.

Special Accommodations
AUB strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to an impairment (chronic or temporary mental health or medical conditions), please inform me immediately so that we can privately discuss options. In order to help establish reasonable accommodations and facilitate a smooth accommodations process, you may contact the Accessible Education Office: accessibility@aub.edu.lb; +961-1-350000, x3246; West Hall, Rm. 314.

Readings:
You are expected to read the day’s readings before coming to class. This will allow you to participate more effectively in class discussion. The texts are available at the University bookstore along with a booklet of your required readings.

Exams and Grading:
There will be one mid-term essay exam during the course of the term and one final term paper. Classroom participation will count for 10% of your final grade. Participation will reflect your level of preparation, critical thinking and command of the material you read in the prior week. Not only the quantity but also the quality of your participation will count towards your participation grade.

    Midterm Essay Exam: 45%
    Final Essay Exam:  45%
    Participation:     10%

Schedule:

Week 1 – Jan 27 Introductions to the course, to each other, and to the syllabus

Week 2 – Feb. 3 The history of trauma and socio-political considerations
Herman (2015) Chp 1 A forgotten history
Janoff-Bulman (1992) Chp 1 Our fundamental assumptions
Week 3 – Feb 10  An introduction to the psychological experience of trauma and to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
Herman (2015) Chp 2  Terror, Chp 3 Disconnection
Janoff-Bulman (1992) Chp 3 Trauma and the terror of our own fragility

Week 4 – Feb 17  The trauma of isolation, captivity and torture in adults and children – When home becomes a prison and prison a home.
Herman (2015) Chp 5 Child abuse

**Recommended readings on captivity and torture**
Herman (2015) Chp. 4 Captivity

Week 5 – Feb 24  War Trauma in Women and Children
Herman (2015) Chp 6 A New Diagnosis

Week 6 – March 3  The Brain on trauma
Vanderkolk, B. (2015) Chp 3 Looking into the brain, Chp 4 The anatomy of survival

Week 7 – March 10  Memory models of PTSD
Freyd (1996) Chp 4 Why forget?
Week 8 – March 17  Midterm Essay Exam

Week 9 – March 24  The influence of culture and community on trauma and PTSD
Guest Speaker
Herman (2015) Chp 7 A healing relationship and Chp 8 Safety
Ruglass & Tackett (2015) Chp 4 Gender, ethnicity and culture in trauma psychology, Chp 6 Burnout, compassion fatigue and clinician self-care

Week 10 - March 31  Short-term treatment – cognitive and behavioral models
Ruglass & Tackett (2015) Evidence-based treatment for trauma, PTSD and related conditions

Recommended readings

Week 11 – April 7  Post-traumatic growth
Herman (2015) Chp 9 Remembrance and Mourning, Chp 10 Reconnection

Recommended readings
Week 12 – April 21  Healing and the Arts  
Guest Speaker  

Recommended reading  

Week 13 – April 28  
Film + Discussion  

Final Essay Exam - TBA