



Course Syllabus: Health Psychology
College of Liberal Arts
PSYC 3853 – X20
Spring 2026
Contact Information

Instructor: Don Knox, PhD

Office: OD 117

Office hours: MWF 11:30 – 12:00

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Course Description

Prerequisite(s): [PSYC 1103](#), [PSYC 2203](#).

An examination of the contributions of psychology to the promotion and maintenance of health, the prevention and treatment of illness, and the improvement of the health care system and health policy formulation. Topics include the mind-body relationship, health-enhancing and health-compromising behaviors, stress and coping, patient-practitioner interaction, pain management, and psychological issues in chronic and terminal illnesses.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Health Psychology; Straub

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work, not the individual to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers

media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Course Grade - List all graded assignments with their point value and or percentage of total grade. Letter Grade Scale indicates the overall points or % to letter grade scale for example 1270 to 1137 = A.

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
4 Exams at 150 points each	600
Health Journal/Self-Improvement	200
10 Discussions (20 points each)	200
Total Points	1000

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	900
B	800 to 899
C	700 to 799
D	600 to 699
F	Less than 600

Exams

4 Exams at 200 points each. May contain m/c; t/f, short answer or essay questions

Self-Improvement

A fifth grade, 200 points, will be awarded based upon completion of a personal journal. This project has been developed to give you an opportunity to explore an area of special interest, while at the same time developing the skills set out in the learning objectives. I want you to undertake a "self-improvement" project that you feel will have a positive change in you as a person. By 1/30, each student will turn in their topic of self-modification (there is a Unit module set up for this project). You need to chronicle your progress in the journal with a minimum of three entries per week. Entries should contain data and qualitative assessment of your progress to that point. You will need to include your results from the "Check your health" exercises in the textbook and your observations about your results. There will be five turn in periods.

Discussions

There will be 10 discussions posted throughout the semester. These should help you stay up with the textbook and/or supplemental material readings. For the week that discussion covers, your initial response to my question(s) is worth 10 points and is always due that Wednesday at 11:59 PM (marked as the due date in the course calendar) and you need to reply to two different students by that Friday at 11:59 PM and each response is worth 5 points. For grading consistency, I will only grade your first two replies to other students. The discussion closes at that time and cannot be reopened. Your original post MUST be at least 200 words and your replies to other students at least 100 words. Affirmational posts are ok but do count as part of the required word count. Posts need to be academic in nature. Discussions are your 6th grade group and are worth 200 points in total.

Extra Credit

None

Late Work

None

Make-up Work/Tests

Make up exams for excused absences only. Absences must be run through the Dean of Students Office.

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: 1/1/2026

Deadline to file for graduation: 2/16/2026 for May graduates.

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W": 4/29/2026

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. Although in general students are graded on intellectual effort and performance rather than attendance, absences may lower the student's grade where class attendance and class participation are deemed essential by the faculty member. In those classes where attendance is considered as part of the grade, the instructor should so inform students of the specifics in writing at the beginning of the semester in a syllabus or separate attendance policy statement. An instructor who has an attendance policy must keep records daily. The

instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning before being dropped from the class. Instructor's records will stand as evidence of absences. A student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor. Any individual faculty member or college has the authority to establish an attendance policy, providing the policy is in accordance with the General University Policies.

Instructor Class Policies

Personal and highly sensitive information is discussed in this class. There will be no taping of class. There will be no use of cell phones, head phones, air pods etc. in class.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees, and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. However, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans, and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make an application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License-to-carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "Run. Hide. Fight." which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Gender Operational Definition

For the purposes of this course, there are two sexes, male and female, that are determined at conception. Gender, as a social construct, will not be discussed. Gender and biological sex, as it relates to health, will be discussed.

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

Date	Activities/Assignments/Exams
1/30/26	Project Topic
2/13/26	Exam 1 and Journal turn-in #1
3/20/26	Exam 2 and Journal turn-in #2
4/17/26	Exam 3 and Journal turn-in #3
5/13/26	Exam 4 and Journal turn-in #4
Weekly	Discussions

Tips for Success:

Here are some tips for success in my classes. Some students have the mindset that Internet classes are easier because you can use your book or that it is self-paced. Both of these things are untrue. Students that struggle with the time element with my tests typically do not read the chapters. There simply is not enough time to look everything up in the textbook when you take the quizzes or exams. You get the same amount of time on them that my traditional classroom students get – you get three hours of college credit just like they do – why should your tests be any different? I have deadlines and I do not allow for late work or extra credit. Same is true in my traditional classrooms. I really want each of you to succeed in this class and do well in life. In a very small way, I get to be a part of your successes and failures from here on out and that is a privilege for me.

1. Get your work done early. I will not accept late work for any reason. Unfortunately, some will test this policy and wait until one minute has passed from the deadline and then attempt to give me a myriad of excuses. I will not accept late work or more importantly, treat students differently. Early work is encouraged! Some of you will wait until late in the day something is due to complete items. That is fine but there is no instructor support. I consider this waiting until the last moment. Items are typically available the weekend before they are due for those of you that can only get work done on the weekend. I urge you not to wait.
2. Do not copy and paste information from other sources - I will do my best to get you dismissed from the college if I catch you plagiarizing. I want your opinions not "Wikipedia" or "Course Hero" and your opinions are so much more important to me.
3. I do not believe in extra credit. If you have time for extra credit assignments, then you have time to complete the needed assignments and study. Please do not ask for extra credit or special consideration. All students deserve the same opportunities and considerations.
4. I promise you that you will get the grade you earn. Those that complete all items tend to earn very good grades. Please exceed the minimum word count requirements. Assignments less than the minimum will not be graded. Just like in life, please exceed minimal expectations in college.

5. Please use your MSU-Texas student email account. While I usually reply to email within **24 business** hours but please allow 48 business hours. On weekends and holidays, please do not expect a response until 24 to 48 business hours after that period ends. If you cannot access your MSU-Texas email account, then please contact the IT support people. They do a fantastic job in helping people out with their email issues.
6. I will not open any email attachments. Please do not send them. Only use the assignment links provided. It is preferred that you attach your writing assignments there. I will open those attachments. Make sure that you only use *.doc. *.docx or *.rtf files. I cannot open any other file types.
7. If you decide that you need to use Chrome as your browser, please be aware that while the browser is compatible with D2L - your computer may not be set up in manner that allows that compatibility to be 100%. I urge you to clear out your Internet cache prior to loading assignments or taking exams. This is your responsibility. This has nothing to do with MSU-Texas or D2L - it is a problem that resides in your computer set up. There is a possibility that you will load a blank document or not have your answers saved while testing may happen if you do not follow this advice.