

## Trauma and Resiliency

Professor: Melanie D. Hetzel-Riggin, Ph.D  
 Office: Kochel 170E  
 Phone: (814) 898-6949 (I RARELY check)  
 Email: [mdh33@psu.edu](mailto:mdh33@psu.edu) (BEST CONTACT!)

Course Meets: MWF 8:00 to 8:50 am  
 in Kochel 59  
 Office Hours: by appt.

**Course Description (from the University Bulletin):** This course will provide an overview of the current state of knowledge and research on traumatic stress, resiliency, and treatment. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the psychological theories and research on traumatic stress studies. Students will learn about the history and development of the traumatic stress studies field, as well as the maturation of the posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnosis and its implications for assessment and treatment. Topics included in this course include the effects of different types of trauma, acute reactions to trauma, the classification and epidemiology of trauma and related disorders, resiliency and vulnerability factors, individual differences in adaptation to trauma, and the effects of trauma on memory systems. Students will also learn about developmental, cultural, and social issues associated with the effects of trauma; prevention, stages of recovery, and treatment of trauma.

### Course Objectives

By the end of the course students will be able to:

1. Discuss the history of the field of traumatic stress studies and development of the PTSD diagnosis
2. Summarize the effects of different types of trauma
3. Identify acute reactions to trauma
4. Describe the epidemiology of trauma and traumatic stress
5. Describe resiliency and vulnerability factors in traumatic stress disorder development, including the effects of developmental, social, and cultural factors
6. Discuss individual differences in exposure to trauma and the development of traumatic stress
7. Explain the effects of trauma on memory
8. Describe trauma-informed care
9. Summarize the stages of recovery from trauma
10. Discuss the prevention and treatment options for trauma
11. Demonstrate an ability to critically evaluate new information on traumatic stress studies

### Required Texts

Herman, J. (2022). *Trauma and recovery*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Perry, B.D., & Winfrey, O. (2021). *What happened to you? Conversations on trauma, resilience, and healing*. New York, NY: Flatiron Books.

Van der Kolk, B. (2015). *The body keeps score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. New York, NY: Viking.

### Supplementary Readings

Additional handouts, articles, exercises, or other readings may be assigned throughout the semester.

### **Course Website and Communication Plan**

My primary way of communicating to everyone will be through Canvas. I will post any announcements regarding class or assignments on Canvas. Please check each day before class for any announcements. Additional materials, such as course syllabi, readings, audio recordings, homework, discussion boards, exams, quizzes, and/or other material will be made available on the web site throughout the semester. In addition, I will post the grades to the web site grade book.

The site address is <https://psu.instructure.com>. Look for the course in which you are enrolled. You will need a valid Penn State Access Account in order to gain access to the site. Please see me if you need additional help and I will walk you through the validation procedure. You may also call the campus computer consultants at 814-898-6415 or email them at [bdiHELP@psu.edu](mailto:bdiHELP@psu.edu). Helpdesk staff assists with computing questions and computer hardware/software problems.

### **Contacting Me**

Please utilize your Penn State email account when contacting me via email. Make sure the **class number and section number**, as well as your **last name**, are in the subject line. If you do not include these in the subject line I may overlook the email. I generally receive about 100 emails a day and have an active junk filter on my email, so please follow these instructions.

I generally respond to emails within a 24-hour period (except some weekends when I am away and during scheduled holidays and breaks). If you do not receive a reply message within that time frame, please resend your message, as there must have been either A) a technical error in the retrieval process or B) I am trapped under something heavy and cannot get to a computer. Since in most cases, the answer will not be B, please resend it! Also keep in mind that if you are sending me a message of an urgent nature regarding technical issues, please recheck your email or Canvas account shortly thereafter about any instructions that I may provide to assist you. You may miss a window of opportunity for any resubmissions if you are not checking your Penn State email and/or Canvas account on a regular basis. Please get into the habit of checking both accounts for important messages that I may send throughout the semester.

NOTE: You must use Microsoft Word and save your work in Word files for electronic submissions when you are asked to submit work as an attachment. You must then submit the work as an attachment to the correct Dropbox in Canvas on time. Email is NOT an acceptable form of submission. If you cannot do this from home, you must use computers in the labs on campus, so prepare accordingly.

### **Grading and Assignments**

**Note:** I do not assign grades to students; students earn grades. As such, you are the person responsible for ensuring that you obtain the grade that you desire in this class, not me. Your performance both in-class and on assignments allows you to earn a certain grade in this class. This course is designed in such a way that your attendance, preparation, and work outside of class will earn you a favorable grade.

**Attendance.** Students are expected to attend class regularly. If you choose not to attend class, you may miss graded in-class assignments, information regarding upcoming tests, and further explanation of difficult concepts. You will not be able to make up the in-class assignments. If you are unable to attend

class, please contact a classmate regarding missed material. You are responsible for the notes that you missed.

***In Class Work and Participation (80 points, ~2 points per day):***

Your participation is an essential element of this class. This course is largely discussion-based, and you will learn the most when you are engaged, and actively interacting with the material and with one another. Active participation means that you attend class, have read the material, can pose and answer questions, and are invested in group activities. Participation activities include engaging in discussions, group work, and short reaction papers. There will also be several activities that you will need to do out of class to earn participation points. We will be engaging almost every day in discussion and reaction participation activities. These will be graded based on the percentage of participation activities you complete over the course of the semester. These are graded pass/fail; **if you miss class, you will not be able to make them up.** Participation is often what “makes or breaks” a student’s grade at the end of the semester, when they are hovering between two grades, or between pass and fail.

***Exams (150 points, 50 points each):***

There will be three exams. Each exam will cover approximately one third of the material we have covered during the semester. Short answer and essay question exams based on the material learned throughout the semester. You may use your books, notes, etc. but you **must cite your sources** using APA style. In addition, you must paraphrase the material in your own words so that I can make sure you understand the material. You will have one week to complete each exam.

***Applications (150 points, 25 points each):***

Throughout the semester we will cover a wide range of material, from the history and evolution of trauma studies, ethics, research, assessment, cultural competencies, and controversies in the field. You will complete six (6) application activities regarding these topics; the description of each and Dropbox for the assignments can be found on Canvas.

***Research Paper (100 points for paper):***

You will choose a particular area of interest in the field of traumatology, research the most recent literature on your topic, and write an integrated APA style paper of your findings from the readings you have completed. Students are expected to use the 7<sup>th</sup> Edition APA style manual.

Some examples of broad topics that can be further refined: War trauma; military sexual trauma; the response of the VA to returning soldiers; suicide of returning soldiers; borderline personality disorder and its basis in developmental trauma; self-injury; substance abuse and its relationship to trauma; neurobiology of trauma; the dissociative disorders; efficacious and/or experimental treatment approaches; genocide and/or ethnic conflict; intergenerational transmission of trauma and/or resilience; the role of transference and countertransference in trauma treatment; domestic violence; cultural competence in trauma therapy; vicarious traumatization. There are many other topics that can be explored; if you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask!

You will need at least 15 references that are articles from peer-reviewed journals. You should also include readings from the course, as these should very much inform your work, but these will not count toward the 15 refereed journal articles. Your paper should be 10-12 pages in length, excluding the cover and reference pages.

**Journals (40 points total, 10 points each journal):**

Students will be expected to keep journal entries on Canvas. The goal of these assignments is for the student to gain a better understanding of how course materials and experiential components are influencing the development of their personal and professional lives. All students will write four (4) journals over the course of the semester. The journals should be approximately 2-3 pages in length. The journals should not be a reiteration of information presented, but a well-thought-out response to the information – including your thoughts, feelings, and opinions of the topic. These journals are opportunities to think further about some aspects of the reading that are of particular interest to you. How you do this is up to you. Examples include but are not limited to: a critique of some ideas from the reading; writing about how some topic from the reading relates to your experiences in the service-learning practicum; and writing about how some topic from the reading relates to an experience you or someone known to you has had. The basic idea here is that you are using these brief writing exercises to think more deeply about some aspects of the reading that seems especially interesting to you. You are strongly encouraged to use the material in your reaction papers to raise topics, issues, and questions during class discussions. The journals are due on the day they are listed on the syllabus. They will be turned in through Canvas.

**Final Grades:** Final grades will be calculated as follows: In Class Work & Participation (80 points); Exams (150 points); Applications (150 points); Paper (100 points); and Journals (40 points) = 520 points.

**Grading System**

<b>Numerical Grade</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>
93% and above	A
90-92.9%	A-
87-89.9%	B+
83-86.9%	B
80-82.9%	B-
77-79.9%	C+
70-76.9%	C
60-69.9%	D
Below 60%	F

**General Expectations and Information**

First, you can expect this course to be challenging, interesting, and at times demanding. This course is designed to include different activities for learning and hence may challenge everyone in different ways. Though the **tried and true standard of textbook reading will be necessary, it will not alone be sufficient to succeed in this course.**

Second, please expect that some topics covered in the course will invoke new or difficult thoughts and/or feelings. Remember to be respectful of other's thoughts, opinions, and experiences. It is expected that students do not engage in the perpetuation of **stereotypes, discrimination, prejudice, or other forms of bias and intolerance.** Please see your instructor if you have further questions or concerns regarding this expectation.

Finally, due to the nature and content of this course you may experience instances of discomfort as well as curiosity. It is often tempting for people to start diagnosing themselves and/or their friends and family when they learn about the impact of trauma. While we will be discussing the breadth and depth of trauma, **this class is not a substitute for therapy or other helping options.** If you encounter personal issues you would like to explore in further depth, I recommend you consider speaking with a counselor at Personal Counseling Center.

*Preparation for Class.* Class meetings **will involve discussion and participation by all members of the class (not just me).** This type of active participation is both a better way to learn and a lot more interesting (and fun) than simply listening to lectures. To facilitate learning, it is important for you to prepare as much as possible for class meetings by **conscientiously completing the reading assignments before the start of class.** While doing the assigned readings, actively search for the information relevant to the learning objectives. Then, come to class prepared to discuss what you have learned and to ask any questions you might have. The preparation for and participation during classes are intended to be learning activities. That means that your comments in class are not expected to always be correct. Making mistakes is part of the learning process. Some of this material is difficult and a certain degree of confusion, uncertainty, or misinterpretations is to be expected (in addition, in some cases there won't be 'right' or 'wrong' answers, just points of view). So, do not be afraid to be wrong.

Note that during class meetings we probably will not have time to discuss all the material, or all aspects of those learning objectives that we do discuss. Therefore, I will focus our class time on what I think is most difficult or likely to be misunderstood or on providing additional information not available in the readings. **Note that you are responsible for all information relevant to the learning objectives that is presented in the assigned readings** (even if we do not discuss it during class meetings) **and/or in class** (even if it is not mentioned in the readings). Exams will include questions from the reading, lecture, and assignments. Therefore, if you feel confused or uncertain about any material (whether or not it is discussed in class) it is your responsibility to let me know so that I can clarify that material for you. This can be done in class and/or by coming to see me during office hours.

I strongly encourage you to talk with me individually throughout the semester if you have any questions concerning course material or about how you are doing in the class. If you are having problems in the course, do not wait too long to talk with me; come early in the semester while there is still time to improve. Of course, you are also welcome to come speak with me even if you are not having difficulties but are just interested in the material and would like further information. If you cannot make my posted office hours, I will be glad to make an appointment for another time. To make an appointment, just see me in class or send an email.

### **The Learning Environment**

Please cooperate with me and your fellow students to create an environment that fosters learning and communication. We all should be respectful in our behavior and comments and should eliminate disruptions that might be distractions. Disruptions to the learning environment include (but are not limited to): talking while others are speaking, reading newspapers, magazines, or unrelated course material in class, use of personal electronic devices during class (e.g., phones, text messaging, etc.), eating disruptively in class, or otherwise behaving rudely. Use, or the ringing/buzzing, of cell phones or other electronic devices is particularly disruptive. Please mute these devices and store them out-of-sight before class begins. If you feel the need to text your friend during our class time, please step out in the

hallway to do it. **I reserve the right to answer texts and phone calls that occur during scheduled class hours.**

No late work will be accepted. “My computer/disk isn’t working” is **not** an acceptable excuse. I see it as the new “My dog ate my homework.” There are enough computers on this campus that you should be able to find one from which you can submit work if you plan ahead. Save your work early, often, and in multiple locations.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle.

According to Penn State policy G-9: Academic Integrity, an academic integrity violation is “an intentional, unintentional, or attempted violation of course or assessment policies to gain an academic advantage or to advantage or disadvantage another student academically.” Unless your instructor tells you otherwise, you must complete all course work entirely on your own, using only sources that have been permitted by your instructor, and you may not assist other students with papers, quizzes, exams, or other assessments. If your instructor allows you to use ideas, images, or word phrases created by another person (e.g., from Course Hero or Chegg) or by generative technology, such as ChatGPT, you must identify their source. You may not submit false or fabricated information, use the same academic work for credit in multiple courses, or share instructional content. Students with questions about academic integrity should ask their instructor before submitting work.

Students facing allegations of academic misconduct may not drop/withdraw from the affected course unless they are cleared of wrongdoing (see G-9: Academic Integrity). Attempted drops will be prevented or reversed, and students will be expected to complete course work and meet course deadlines. Students who are found responsible for academic integrity violations face academic outcomes, which can be severe, and put themselves at jeopardy for other outcomes which may include ineligibility for Dean’s List, pass/fail elections, and grade forgiveness. Students may also face consequences from their home/major program and/or The Schreyer Honors College.

For more information, visit the [Academic Integrity for Students \(Penn State Behrend\)](#) website.

### **Tutoring**

Tutors can help you find gaps in your understanding of concepts, show you how to get the most out of your textbook, and give you advice about how to prepare for tests and study for the course. Tutoring services are available to all Penn State Behrend students. You can visit a tutor by appointment (in-person and online) or by stopping by one of the four (4) drop-in tutoring centers. A schedule for all options is available on TutorTrac at [tutorapp.bd.psu.edu](http://tutorapp.bd.psu.edu). The Learning Resource Center is located at 203 Lilley Library and can be reached at (814) 898-6140 or [BDtutor@psu.edu](mailto:BDtutor@psu.edu).

### **Disabilities and Learning Differences**

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University’s educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) website

provides contact information for every Penn State campus (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator>). For further information, please visit Student Disability Resources website (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/>).

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: See documentation guidelines (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines>). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations. For more information, visit the [Disabilities and Learning Differences \(Penn State Behrend\)](#) website.

### **Educational Equity Concerns**

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and/or incivility due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, language, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the Reporting Bias (<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>) webpage.

### **Counseling and Psychological Services**

Students with academic concerns related to this course should contact the instructor in person or via email. Students also may occasionally have personal issues that arise while pursuing higher education that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing problems affecting your coursework, you are encouraged to talk with an instructor and to seek confidential assistance at the Penn State Behrend Personal Counseling Services at (814) 898-65004. For more information, visit the [Personal Counseling \(Penn State Behrend\)](#) webpage.

Erie Crisis Services at UPMC Western Behavioral Health (24 hours/7 days/week): 800-300-9558

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400

Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

### **Title IX**

Penn State is committed to fostering an environment free from sexual or gender-based harassment or misconduct. The Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response ensures compliance with Title IX, a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on the sex or gender of employees and students. Behaviors including sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, as well as retaliation for reporting any of these acts, violate Title IX and are not tolerated. The University is also committed to providing support to those who may have been impacted by incidents of sexual or gender-based harassment or misconduct and may provide various resources and support services to individuals who have experienced one of these incidents. For more information, visit [Penn State's Title IX](#) website or [Title IX Resource Information for Penn State Behrend](#).

### **I Stand for State.**

Because I know reducing the number of people on this campus who get hurt by interpersonal violence requires everyone doing their part, I pledge to be an active bystander, support survivors of violence and

proactively reinforce campus prevention activities. Ask me how you can get involved too. My classroom and office are safe places. Please know you will be supported and heard if you have experienced any form of violence. If you or someone you know experience stalking, partner violence, sexual assault, or other forms of power-based violence, please know you are not alone. There are resources that can help:

- Health and Wellness: 814-898-6217
- Personal Counseling: 814-898-6504
- Student Affairs and Residence Life: 814-898-6111
- Police Services: 814-898-6101 (non-emergency)
- Crime Victim Center: 814-455-9414
- SafeNet: 814-455-1774

### **Lion's Patry**

The Behrend Lion's Patry is a completely free and anonymous year-round resource for all students to access safe and nutritious food, hygiene items, and period products. Complete the online order form via the Penn State Go app or find it on the [Behrend Lion's Patry](#) website.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Faculty, staff, and students may need to evacuate campus buildings for several reasons (fire or alarm activation, discovery of a suspicious object, etc.). The following points provide guidance on emergency evacuations:

- Be familiar with evacuation maps posted within the building. Know the location of at least two exits and the corresponding evacuation routes from the classroom.
  - Exit the building as quickly and calmly as possible using the nearest safe exit if prompted to do so. Do not use any elevators.
  - Move to the building's "Designated Meeting Site", or another safe location outside the building.
  - Do not re-enter the building until you have been instructed to do so by public safety officials.
- The silencing of alarms does not necessarily mean that the emergency is over.

Any student who may require assistance when evacuating the building should notify the instructor so that arrangements can be made to ensure their safety during an emergency.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

Penn State does not have an official "policy" on inclement weather. Here are guidelines:

- Subscribe to the PSUTXT text-messaging system; it will tell you when Behrend is closed or delayed for weather conditions. You can complete this process at <https://psualert.psu.edu>. Make sure you select "Erie/Behrend" as your campus for alerts. Other alerts from other campuses are not applicable to you.
- For commuter students, please check your local TV stations and reliable websites on your computer during a storm to make sure it is safe to drive to campus. If you believe you would put yourself in danger by driving to campus, do not do so.

*This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class.*



**PSYCH 442 Tentative Schedules (1/2/2024 Version)**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Readings/Assignments</u>
1/8	Welcome to Class	Syllabus, Introduction to class
1/10	History of trauma studies	Herman Introduction, Ch. 1; van der Kolk Ch. 1
1/12	History of trauma studies	
1/15	<b>No CLASS – MLK Day</b>	<b>No Class</b>
1/17	History of trauma studies	
1/19	Trauma in context	Herman Ch. 4; Lopez-Levers Ch. 1; van der Kolk Ch. 2, Perry Ch. 4
1/22	Trauma in context	
1/24	Trauma in context	<b>Application #1 Due</b>
1/26	Acute reactions to trauma	Herman Ch. 2; van der Kolk Ch. 3 & 6; Perry Ch. 6
1/29	Acute reactions to trauma	
1/31	Acute reactions to trauma	<b>Journal #1 Due</b>
2/2	Classification and epidemiology	Herman Ch. 6, Hyatt-Burkhart & Lopez-Levers Ch. 2; van der Kolk Ch. 9
2/5	Classification and epidemiology	
2/7	Classification and epidemiology	<b>Application #2 Due</b>
2/9	Trauma types	Herman Ch. 5, van der Kolk Ch. 8; <b>Exam #1 Due</b>
2/12	Trauma types	
2/14	Trauma types	
2/16	Trauma types	
2/19	Vulnerability and Resilience	Herman Ch. 3; van der Kolk Chs. 4-5, 7; Perry Ch. 5 & 9; Bonanno & Mancini, 2010; SAMSHA Resiliency Page
2/21	Vulnerability and Resilience	
2/23	Vulnerability and Resilience	<b>Application #3 Due</b>
2/26	Memory and Cognition in Trauma	Gillihan, Cahill, & Foa, Ch. 9; van der Kolk Ch. 11-12; Perry Ch. 8
2/28	Memory and Cognition in Trauma	
3/1	<b>Trauma Conference</b>	<b>Planned Asynchronous Day</b> <b>Journal #2 Due</b>
3/4-3/8	<b>No CLASS – SPRING BREAK</b>	
3/11	Developmental issues in traumatic stress studies	Perry Ch. 1-2; van der Kolk Ch.10

3/13	Developmental issues in traumatic stress studies	
3/15	Developmental issues in traumatic stress studies	<b>Planned Asynchronous Day Application #4 Due</b>
3/18	Social and cultural issues in traumatic stress studies	Perry Ch. 3; Lopez-Levers & Buck Ch. 19 <b>Exam #2 Due</b>
3/20	Social and cultural issues in traumatic stress studies	
3/22	Social and cultural issues in traumatic stress studies	
3/25	Trauma Informed Care	Hamby et al., 2018; Grych et al., 2015; Maitlin et al., 2019; Walkley et al., 2013; Rich & Garza, 2020
3/27	Trauma Informed Care	
3/29	Trauma Informed Care	<b>Journal #3 Due</b>
4/1	Stages of Recovery	Herman Chs. 7-11; van der Kolk Ch. 13; Perry Chs. 2, 7, 10
4/3	Stages of Recovery	
4/5	Stages of Recovery	
4/8	Treatment for PTSD and Trauma-Related Disorders	ISTSS Treatment Guidelines; Division 12 PTSD Treatment Guidelines; van der Kolk Ch. 15; <b>Planned Asynchronous Day Application #5 Due</b>
4/10	Treatment for PTSD and Trauma-Related Disorders	
4/12	Treatment for PTSD and Trauma-Related Disorders	<b>Paper</b>
4/15	Treatment for PTSD and Trauma-Related Disorders	Expert Consensus on Treatment of Complex PTSD; Guidelines for Treatment of DID; van der Kolk Chs. 14 & 16-18 (optional 19-20);
4/17	Treatment for PTSD and Trauma-Related Disorders	
4/19	Treatment for PTSD and Trauma-Related Disorders	<b>Application #6 Due</b>
4/22	Self-Care	Jankoski Ch. 31
4/24	Self-Care	
4/25	Self-Care	<b>Journal #4 Due</b>
4/29	Finals Week	<b>Exam #3 Due</b>