

**TRAUMA & RESILIENCE**  
P275 ~ WINTER 2020  
Wednesday 12:00-2:50pm in SBSG 4323

**Instructor:** Alyson K. Zalta, Ph.D.  
**Alyson's office:** SBSG 4556  
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### **OVERVIEW**

This is a graduate seminar course designed for those with an interest in psychological trauma and resilience. Students will learn about the psychological impact of trauma, biopsychosocial factors that affect the development of traumatic stress, and treatment and preventive interventions for traumatic stress. We will explore important issues in the field such as how to define and measure resilience as well as controversial constructs including moral injury and posttraumatic growth. Because it is a seminar course, the classes will be highly interactive.

### **Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course the students will:

- become familiar with the ways that trauma and resilience are defined and studied in the literature
- critically evaluate the current research literature on trauma and resilience with an emphasis on controversial topics in the field
- broaden their knowledge of the biopsychosocial processes that affect mental health following trauma exposure
- recognize gold standard and novel intervention strategies to treat and prevent traumatic stress

### **Evaluation**

As a researcher, it is important to be able to critically evaluate the existing literature, identify important gaps in knowledge, design studies to fill these gaps, and communicate your ideas to others. The assignments in this class are designed to help you develop these important skills and apply them to the course topics.

10% Attendance and participation  
15% Class Presentation & Discussion  
30% Viewpoint / Commentary  
45% Research Proposal

#### **1) Attendance and participation (10%)**

Given that this is a seminar course, participation and attendance is key. To excel in this assessment domain, students should arrive on time, demonstrate that they have

completed the assigned readings, make quality contributions to class discussion, and show respect for other students and their ideas.

## **2) Class Presentation & Discussion (15%)**

Given the breadth of the trauma and resilience literature, it will be impossible to cover everything that may be of interest during the short 10 weeks of the quarter. The assigned readings are designed to give an overview of each topic. The class presentations will give students an opportunity to share a more in-depth look at a class topic that is of particular interest to them. You will be asked to sign up to present for one of the classes weeks 3-10. For the presentation, you will be asked to bring in a new perspective to shed light on the nuances of the topic for that day. These perspectives can include but are not limited to development / life span, biology, diversity, globalism, and special populations or trauma types (e.g., military, occupational exposure, refugees, mass trauma, etc...). The presentation is expected to last 15-minutes. For the presentation, identify a specific empirical article that you will review for the class and synthesize with the assigned readings. In your presentation, be sure to describe the study's methodological approach, highlight the study's strengths and weaknesses, and describe the key conclusions and how they inform our understanding of the class topic and assigned readings. You are then also expected to help guide the discussion of the assigned readings for that class. Exceptional performance in this assignment would include the student preparing cross-cutting themes and questions to frame the discussion and generating student enthusiasm and deeper appreciation for the week's content.

## **3) Viewpoint / Commentary (30%)**

Did you know that you can actually publish your scientifically-grounded opinions and ideas? Viewpoints and commentaries advance the research field by providing a forum for scientific discourse that challenges the current state of knowledge in a particular field. These are often brief articles (1,000-1,500 words) that allow investigators to present their ideas with the goal of driving the research forward in a new direction. The goal of this assignment is for you to demonstrate your understanding of the topic while offering an opinion and direction for future research. In the class, we will be exploring several "hot topics" that are ripe for conceptual development and contribution. However, you are welcome to select any topic related to trauma and resilience. This is a great opportunity for you to bring in your own knowledge and expertise from your specific area of interest to bring a new perspective to the course material. It is my hope that several of you in this class will actually choose to submit your assignment to a peer-review journal for publication. I will gladly assist you in this process if you are interested after the assignment is completed!

**The topic for your viewpoint / commentary is due by Wednesday January 29<sup>th</sup> at 10:00pm.** Your topic proposal will not be graded, this is purely for your benefit to receive feedback before you begin the writing process. You are welcome to submit your topic early and I will get feedback to you early.

**THE VIEWPOINT / COMMENTARY IS DUE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00PM.** Examples of Viewpoints and Commentaries and details for the assignment are posted on Canvas.

#### **4) Research Proposal (45%)**

In your viewpoint / commentary, you will be promoting a direction for future research. For your final paper, you will be designing a study that is meant to serve as an empirical test of your ideas. What do you see as the critical next step in moving the field forward and how would you test this empirically? This paper should be written much like a mini grant proposal. The paper should be a maximum of 6 single-spaced pages, not inclusive of references, in either Times New Roman or Arial 11-point font and 0.5” margins. This paper should include all aspects of study design including background and significance, aims and hypotheses, methodology, and proposed analytic plan.

**THE FINAL PAPER IS DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00PM.** If you have questions around the final paper assignment, please do think ahead and meet with me early during office hours. Specific instructions for the paper are posted on Canvas.

#### **Grades**

There are a total of 100 points possible in this class (1 point for each percent assigned above). See below for a table of how these points will correspond to your final letter grade in the class.

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Points</b>
A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	<60

#### **Course Policies**

**Emailing.** I will make every effort to respond to emails about the course within two business days, after which you are welcome to resend the email.

**Grading Decisions.** If you believe a grading error has been made, please feel free to email me about this concern within one week of receiving the graded assignment. I will

review your concern and reach a decision within two weeks of receiving your email about it. Aside from computational errors or oversight, grades are not negotiable.

**Technology.** You are welcome to use a computer or other device during class for taking notes, accessing course materials, and otherwise supporting your course engagement or fulfilling research obligations. Out of respect for your instructors, your classmates, and academic decorum, however, you are expected to refrain from using personal technology for reasons beyond engaging in the course or fulfilling research obligations. If attending to technology for other reasons (e.g., checking Facebook or Instagram, responding to texts or emails) compromises your engagement or risks doing so for your classmates, your final engagement grade may be reduced as a result. Please make sure notifications from cell phones and social media are turned to silent mode before each class begins.

**Late Submissions.** Late materials will be accepted only under extraordinary conditions (e.g., personal or family emergency, natural disaster). In order to receive an extension, you or someone on your behalf (e.g., classmate, labmate) must email me before the submission is due if at all possible. Late submissions will be penalized by 5% of the total number of points for each day late (e.g., 1 day late = -1.5 points for 30 point assignment or -2.25 points for 45 point assignment).

**Academic Integrity.** You are expected to act in accordance with the university's Academic Integrity Policy, available at <https://aisc.uci.edu/students/academic-integrity/index.php>. You are expected to review this policy and examples of academic misconduct available at <https://aisc.uci.edu/students/academic-integrity/definitions.php>.

**This means it is your responsibility to ensure that submitted papers are free of plagiarism.** If you have any questions about the university's Academic Integrity Policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please do not hesitate to let me know. All standard academic policies and consequences apply.

**Diversity, Civility, and Freedom of Speech.** In this course we will engage in significant discussion and debate regarding many, often controversial, issues. I encourage open discussion and will not censor anyone as long as comments are not violent, or intended to be insulting or demeaning of anyone or group. Please understand that your classmates will have many different backgrounds and personal experiences. We want the class discussions to foster our understanding of the topics while respecting our individual differences.

**Confidentiality.** Instructors and students may share personal experiences, stories, or anecdotes in this class as a way to connect with the material. We want to create a safe space for everyone. Please respect your fellow students by keeping these stories confidential and do not use them as gossip.

**Accessibility.** The university is committed to providing a barrier-free environment for students with documented temporary or permanent disabilities. If you have a disability and believe you would benefit from accommodations in this course, please contact the

Disability Services Center (DSC) or apply for services online at [www.dsc.uci.edu](http://www.dsc.uci.edu). Academic accommodations in this course will be provided for students who submit a Faculty Notification Letter from the DSC to me by email. If you begin the quarter eligible for academic accommodations, please submit the Faculty Notification Letter by Wednesday, January 22nd. All conversations will remain confidential, with DSC possibly consulted to ensure appropriate implementation.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Week	Date & Time	Lecture Activity / Topic
1	Wednesday Jan 8 <sup>th</sup>	Course overview / Defining Trauma and PTSD
2	Wednesday Jan 15 <sup>th</sup>	Theories of traumatic stress
3	Wednesday Jan 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Defining and measuring resilience
4	Wednesday Jan 29 <sup>th</sup>	Moral injury
Topic for Viewpoint / Commentary due Wednesday January 29 <sup>th</sup> by 10:00pm		
5	Wednesday Feb 5 <sup>th</sup>	Posttraumatic growth
6	Wednesday Feb 12 <sup>th</sup>	Trauma and health disparities
Viewpoint / Commentary due Friday February 14 <sup>st</sup> by 10:00pm		
7	Wednesday Feb 19 <sup>th</sup>	Trauma and the body
8	Wednesday Feb 26 <sup>th</sup>	Trauma and the mind
9	Wednesday March 4 <sup>th</sup>	Trauma and relationships
10	Wednesday March 11 <sup>th</sup>	Treatment and prevention of traumatic stress
Research Proposal due Friday March 20 <sup>th</sup> by 10:00pm		

## READINGS

All readings are posted on the course website. This course meets **only once** weekly for 3 hours. Although this course may appear to be reading intensive, I limited the readings to no more than 3 articles for each meeting, which is appropriate for a doctoral level course.

### 1) Defining trauma and PTSD

Friedman, M. J. (2013). Finalizing PTSD in DSM-5: Getting here from there and where to go next. *Journal of traumatic stress*, 26(5), 548-556.

Galatzer-Levy, I. R., & Bryant, R. A. (2013). 636,120 ways to have posttraumatic stress disorder. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 8(6), 651-662.

## **2) Theories of traumatic stress**

Ehlers, A., & Clark, D. M. (2000). A cognitive model of posttraumatic stress disorder. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 38(4), 319-345.

Foa, E. B., & Kozak, M. J. (1986). Emotional processing of fear: exposure to corrective information. *Psychological Bulletin*, 99(1), 20-35.

Hobfoll, S. E. (2001). The influence of culture, community, and the nested-self in the stress process: advancing conservation of resources theory. *Applied Psychology*, 50(3), 337-421.

## **3) Defining and measuring resilience**

Southwick, S. M., Bonanno, G. A., Masten, A. S., Panter-Brick, C., & Yehuda, R. (2014). Resilience definitions, theory, and challenges: interdisciplinary perspectives. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 5(1), 25338.

Bonanno, G. A., Romero, S. A., & Klein, S. I. (2015). The temporal elements of psychological resilience: An integrative framework for the study of individuals, families, and communities. *Psychological Inquiry*, 26(2), 139-169.

Hobfoll, S. E., Stevens, N. R., & Zalta, A. K. (2015). Expanding the science of resilience: Conserving resources in the aid of adaptation. *Psychological Inquiry*, 26(2), 174-180.

## **4) Moral injury**

Litz, B. T., & Kerig, P. K. (2019). Introduction to the special issue on moral injury: conceptual challenges, methodological issues, and clinical applications. *Journal of traumatic stress*, 32, 341-349.

Griffin, B. J., Purcell, N., Burkman, K., Litz, B. T., Bryan, C. J., Schmitz, M., ... & Maguen, S. (2019). Moral injury: An integrative review. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 32, 350-362

Held, P., Klassen, B. J., Hall, J. M., Friese, T. R., Bertsch-Gout, M. M., Zalta, A. K., & Pollack, M. H. (2019). "I knew it was wrong the moment I got the order": A narrative thematic analysis of moral injury in combat veterans. *Psychological trauma: theory, research, practice, and policy*, 11(4), 396.

## **5) Posttraumatic growth**

Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L. G. (2004). "Posttraumatic growth: Conceptual foundations and empirical evidence". *Psychological Inquiry*, 15(1), 1-18.

Infurna, F. J., & Jayawickreme, E. (2019). Fixing the Growth Illusion: New Directions for Research in Resilience and Posttraumatic Growth. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 28(2), 152-158.

Frazier, P., Tennen, H., Gavian, M., Park, C., Tomich, P., & Tashiro, T. (2009). Does self-reported posttraumatic growth reflect genuine positive change?. *Psychological Science*, 20(7), 912-919.

## **6) Trauma and health disparities**

Nurius, P. S., Uehara, E., & Zatzick, D. F. (2013). Intersection of stress, social disadvantage, and life course processes: Reframing trauma and mental health. *American Journal of Psychiatric Rehabilitation*, 16(2), 91-114.

Andrews, A. R., Jobe-Shields, L., López, C. M., Metzger, I. W., de Arellano, M. A., Saunders, B., & Kilpatrick, D. G. (2015). Polyvictimization, income, and ethnic differences in trauma-related mental health during adolescence. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, 50(8), 1223-1234.

Roberts, A. L., Austin, S. B., Corliss, H. L., Vandermorris, A. K., & Koenen, K. C. (2010). Pervasive trauma exposure among US sexual orientation minority adults and risk of posttraumatic stress disorder. *American journal of public health*, 100(12), 2433-2441.

## **7) Trauma and the body**

\*\*For this week, pick 3 of any of the readings below.

Wolf, E. J., & Morrison, F. G. (2017). Traumatic stress and accelerated cellular aging: from epigenetics to cardiometabolic disease. *Current psychiatry reports*, 19(10), 75.

Liberzon, I., & Abelson, J. L. (2016). Context processing and the neurobiology of post-traumatic stress disorder. *Neuron*, 92(1), 14-30.

Brennstuhl, M. J., Tarquinio, C., & Montel, S. (2015). Chronic pain and PTSD: evolving views on their comorbidity. *Perspectives in psychiatric care*, 51(4), 295-304.

Pace-Schott, E. F., Germain, A., & Milad, M. R. (2015). Sleep and REM sleep disturbance in the pathophysiology of PTSD: the role of extinction memory. *Biology of mood & anxiety disorders*, 5(1), 3.

Osório, C., Probert, T., Jones, E., Young, A. H., & Robbins, I. (2017). Adapting to stress: understanding the neurobiology of resilience. *Behavioral Medicine*, 43(4), 307-322.

Leclercq, S., Forsythe, P., & Bienenstock, J. (2016). Posttraumatic stress disorder: Does the gut microbiome hold the key?. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 61(4), 204-213.

## 8) Trauma and the mind

Barton, S., Boals, A., & Knowles, L. (2013). Thinking about trauma: The unique contributions of event centrality and posttraumatic cognitions in predicting PTSD and posttraumatic growth. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 26(6), 718-726.

Crespo, M., & Fernández-Lansac, V. (2016). Memory and narrative of traumatic events: A literature review. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 8(2), 149–156. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000041>

Bomyea, J., Johnson, A., & Lang, A. J. (2017). Information Processing in PTSD: evidence for biased attentional, interpretation, and memory processes. *Psychopathology Review*, 4(3), 218-243.

## 9) Trauma and relationships

Sippel, L., Pietrzak, R., Charney, D., Mayes, L., & Southwick, S. (2015). How does social support enhance resilience in the trauma-exposed individual?. *Ecology and Society*, 20(4).

Ullman, S. E., & Peter-Hagene, L. (2014). Social reactions to sexual assault disclosure, coping, perceived control, and PTSD symptoms in sexual assault victims. *Journal of community psychology*, 42(4), 495-508.

Platt, J. M., Lowe, S. R., Galea, S., Norris, F. H., & Koenen, K. C. (2016). A longitudinal study of the bidirectional relationship between social support and posttraumatic stress following a natural disaster. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 29, 205-213. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jts.22092>

## 10) Treatment and prevention of traumatic stress

**\*\*Read these two:**

Kearns, M. C., Ressler, K. J., Zatzick, D., & Rothbaum, B. O. (2012). Early interventions for PTSD: a review. *Depression and anxiety*, 29(10), 833-842.

Zalta, A. K. (2015). Psychological mechanisms of effective cognitive-behavioral treatments for PTSD. *Current psychiatry reports*, 17(4), 23.

**\*\*Pick one of the following:**

Held, P., Bagley, J. M., Klassen, B. J., & Pollack, M. H. (2019). Intensively Delivered Cognitive-Behavioral Therapies: An Overview of a Promising Treatment Delivery



Format for PTSD and Other Mental Health Disorders. *Psychiatric Annals*, 49(8), 339-342.

Zalta, A. K., Bravo, K., Valdespino-Hayden, Z., Pollack, M. H., & Burgess, H. J. (2019). A placebo-controlled pilot study of a wearable morning bright light treatment for probable PTSD. *Depression and anxiety*.

Sessa, B. (2017). MDMA and PTSD treatment: "PTSD: from novel pathophysiology to innovative therapeutics". *Neuroscience letters*, 649, 176-180.