

**The Impact of Trauma on the Individual and Society**  
**Honors Seminar 370**  
**Spring 2010**

Dr. Bethany Brand  
Office: Room 212 C  
Phone: (410)704-3067  
Email [bbrand@towson.edu](mailto:bbrand@towson.edu)

Office Hours:  
Mondays 6:50-7:50 pm  
Tuesdays 4:45-5:45 pm  
Wednesdays 1:45-2:45 pm

Course Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to provide theoretical understanding of the impact of psychological trauma at the individual and societal level. Students will become familiar with the impact and nature of a wide variety of traumas including: childhood abuse, violent crimes in adulthood, domestic violence, accidents, traumatic deaths, natural disasters, and war and genocide. In the first part of the course, students will participate in group discussions about the psychological disorders, interpersonal difficulties, and neurophysiological alterations associated with trauma. In preparation for these and later discussions, students will read case accounts of traumatized individuals, original professional journal articles, books written by trauma experts and movies that depict trauma. In the second part of the class, we will broaden our focus to the impact of trauma on society via political, philosophical, literary, musical, and artistic figures whose work and lives were influenced by trauma. In the last part of the class, students will present projects in which they share knowledge they have developed in self-directed explorations about the role of trauma on either well-known figures or people in their lives. To enhance our understanding of the impact of trauma, we will have guest speakers who are leaders in child protective services, therapists who specialize in treating trauma survivors, and trauma survivors. We will engage in experiential learning by attending a local play or movie about trauma, or by visiting the Visionary Art Museum as a class to investigate how trauma may have influenced some of the artists' works.

Course Readings:

Perry, B. (2006). *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog*. New York: Wiley.

Herman, J. (1997). *Trauma and recovery*. New York: Basic Books.

Alice Miller. (1991). *The Untouched Key: Tracing Childhood Trauma in Creativity and Destructiveness*. Anchor Books: New York. ISBN 0-385-26764-9

Brand, B.L., Classen, C.C., Lanius, R.A., Loewenstein, R.J., & McNary, S.W., Pain, C. & Putnam, F.W. (2009). A naturalistic study of dissociative identity disorder patients treated by community clinicians. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, & Policy*, 1, 153-171.

Kessler, R.C. (2000). Posttraumatic stress disorder: The burden to the individual and to society. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 61, 4-12.

Course Objectives: The following objectives have been identified as critical to understanding the impact of trauma and its treatment. They are consistent with the learning goals and outcomes of an undergraduate major in psychology, according to the American Psychological Association. The specific learning goals identified by the American Psychological Association's Board of Educational Affairs are noted in parenthesis after each objective.

1. Describe the symptoms, behavioral patterns, and underlying psychological and biological changes associated with child and adult psychopathology that are associated with trauma as identified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders-IV (APA Learning Goal 1: Theory and Content of Psychology).
2. Explain how the trauma related disorders have been conceptualized and treated over history (APA Learning Goal 1: Theory and Content of Psychology).
3. Encourage students to think critically about how cultural, historical and individual differences influence how individuals and society respond to trauma (Learning Goal 3: Thinking Skills in Psychology; Learning Goal 8: Sociocultural and International Awareness).
4. Develop students' awareness of the broad-ranging influence of trauma across history and cultures (Learning Goal 3: Thinking Skills in Psychology; Learning Goal 8: Sociocultural and International Awareness).
5. Help students build tolerance and understanding of those with trauma related difficulties through careful, balanced discussion of both the deficits and strengths of those afflicted by trauma-related conditions. (Learning Goal 5: Values in Psychology).

Grading:

Your grade will be determined by the number of points you earn in the semester out of a total possible of 500 points. Class participation will be a strong factor in determining borderline grades for the class. If you are going to be late or miss a class, I expect that you will notify me ahead of time by calling me or telling me in class the week before.

The exam will be a combination of essays. Students will need to bring blue examination books, available at the University bookstore, to the exam. I adhere to the University's policy on cheating and plagiarism. This course may be repeated only once without the prior permission of the Academic Standards Committee.

- A = 465-500 points
- A - = 448-464 points
- B + = 432-447 points
- B = 415-431 points
- B - = 399-414 points
- C + = 383-398 points
- C = 365-382 points
- D + = 349-364 points
- D = 333-348 points

D - = 317-332 points  
F = below 316

<u>Components of the Grade:</u>	<u>Points Possible</u>
Midterm	100 points
Reflection essays (5, each worth 20 points)	100 points
Trauma Project Class Presentation	200 points
Trauma Paper	<u>100 points</u>
	500 points

### Accommodations

If you need accommodation due to a disability, please make an appointment to see me, and bring a statement from Disability Support Services (4-2638) authorizing your accommodation.

### Assignments:

Reflection Essays: Throughout the semester, I will assign a reflection question for which you are to write a two page, double-spaced response based on your understanding and reactions to the readings. Some weeks the questions will be related to the content of the readings to ensure you adequately understand them. Other weeks I will ask your personal reflections and reactions to the readings. If your reflection is very well written (without grammar or spelling difficulties), and shows you read and successfully comprehended the readings, you will earn full credit (i.e., all 10 points). I will not accept any late reflections (unless you have written documentation of an unavoidable emergency). You need only do 5 of the offered reflections. I will not accept extra reflections. These will provide good review for the exam and for class discussions.

### Trauma Project Presented to Class

Through this self-directed project, I want to provide you with an opportunity to further delve into some aspect of the impact trauma that interests you. You will present a 15 minute class presentation in which you will share what you explored and learned. Some students will choose to use PowerPoint slides for their presentations while others might use other forms of media (e.g., playing music or video clips). I will provide class time to meet with each of you to hear about the topic you would like to pursue and to determine if your topic is acceptable. I will provide approval for topics that are feasible in scope and that have educational merit to the individual student as well as the class. The following topics are some ideas:

- investigate the long-term individual or societal impact of a well known trauma such as Hurricane Katrina, the Branch Davidians, Patty Hearst and Stockholm Syndrome, children raised in eastern European countries' orphanages, the impact of the Holocaust on different generations of survivors;
- analyze how trauma such as genocide has shaped a particular country or region of the world
- do a service project with trauma survivors and write a paper that synthesizes what you experienced first-hand with the material from class;

- present the work of a writer, artist, or musician that has been traumatized; discuss how trauma shaped their work

### Trauma Paper

You have two options regarding the paper.

- One option is to write a paper based on the trauma presentation you will present to class. You will present in written form the topic that you present to the class. If you chose this option, you need to use APA style and provide a reference list.
- The second option is to read an autobiography, biography, or some type of non-fiction documentary account of a person who experienced significant trauma. In your paper, analyze how the author's life and work was influenced by trauma. What ramifications did their trauma exposure have on others? Give particular attention to symptoms/problems as well as areas of resiliency/posttraumatic growth that may be related to their trauma. Discuss the historical, cultural, and intrapersonal variables contributed to the person's response over time to the trauma.

### **Emergency Statement** (TU Office of the Provost)

In the event of a University-wide emergency, including the impact of the H1N1 flu pandemic, course requirements, classes, deadlines and grading schemes are subject to changes that may include alternative delivery methods, alternative methods of interaction with the instructor, class materials, and/or classmates, a revised attendance policy, and a revised semester calendar and/or grading scheme. In the case of a University-wide emergency, **I will attempt to communicate with you via e-mail.**

For up-to-date information on the H1N1 flu, see the Dowell Health Center website at: <http://www.towson.edu/dowellhealthcenter/> and click on the "Flu Facts" link.

For more general information about any emergency situation, please refer to the following:

Web Site: [www.towson.edu](http://www.towson.edu)

Telephone Number: 410-704-2000

TU Text Alert System Sign-up at:

<http://www.towson.edu/adminfinance/facilities/police/campusemergency/>). This is a service designed to alert the Towson University community via text messages to cell phones when situations arise on campus that affect the ability of the campus - students, faculty and staff - to function normally.

**H1N1 Influenza Policy Statement** (TU Office of the Provost): "Students should not attend classes or other university events from the onset of flu-like symptoms until at least 24 hours after the fever subsides without the use of fever reducing medications. Such absences will be considered excused absences; however, students are responsible for the material covered during the period of their absence."

Please read assignments prior to each class meeting.

Week of	Topic	Reading
1/25	Introduction to the Course, Overview of Trauma & Its Impact: The Case of Tina	Perry pp. 1 - 80 <u>Reaction paper due Thursday:</u> Perry refers frequently to “use dependence” as one of the mechanisms that lead to neurophysiological changes related to trauma. Explain what he means.
2/2	The Impact of Early Trauma and Neglect on Children’s Brains and Behavior	Perry pp. 81 – 178. <u>Reaction paper due Tuesday:</u> Imagine that you are the director of a trauma clinic. You are asked to provide treatment to a girl who is 7 yet can’t talk or walk and is terrified of people due to extreme neglect. Describe the main aspects of the treatment you’d provide to her and your rationale for using these methods.
2/9	The Importance of Attachment	Perry pp. 179-250 <u>Reaction paper due Tuesday:</u> Perry uses Raven’s case to introduce dissociation, a defense used to ward off the impact of trauma. Discuss what dissociation is and how it can help someone survive trauma. Offer your opinion about whether dissociation is more protective or harmful of individuals as a long-term coping strategy.
2/16	Severe Deprivation and Early Chronic Terror: The Physiological Impact	Perry pp. 125- 246 <u>Reaction paper due Tuesday:</u> Summarize the biological impact of early trauma and neglect on a developing child.
2/23	Re-enactments and other ways in which trauma “costs” society.	Kessler, R.C. (2000). Posttraumatic stress disorder: The burden to the individual and to society. <i>Journal of Clinical Psychiatry</i> , 61, 4-12.  Herman pp. 1- 73 <u>Reaction paper:</u> A young woman was verbally abused and molested by her dad as a child; she currently dates men who treat her just as poorly as did her father. Using Herman’s text, explain why this dynamic is so common among abused people.
3/2	Terror and Disconnection; the Treatment of Trauma	Herman pp. 74-236 (skim the chapters on treatment, pp. 133-236)  Anda, R. The health and human impact of growing up with adverse childhood experiences: The human and economic costs of the status quo. Accessed from the ACE website at: <a href="http://www.acestudy.org/files/Review_of_ACE_Study_with_references_summary_table_2_.pdf">http://www.acestudy.org/files/Review_of_ACE_Study_with_references_summary_table_2_.pdf</a>

		<p><u>Reaction paper</u>; Based on what you've read in Herman and class discussions, why can't many trauma survivors "just get over it" and stop thinking and experiencing problems related to trauma?</p>
3/9	<b>Midterm</b>	
3/16	No class – Spring Break	
3/23	<p>Dissociation as an Escape from Severe Trauma</p> <p><b>Students meet with Dr. Brand to discuss class presentation projects</b></p>	<p>Brand et al. (2009). A naturalistic study of dissociative identity disorder patients treated by community clinicians. <i>Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, &amp; Policy</i>, 1, 153-171.</p> <p>Read the FAQs about dissociation at:  <a href="http://www.isst-d.org/education/faq-dissociation.htm">http://www.isst-d.org/education/faq-dissociation.htm</a></p>
3/30	Trauma in the Film and Media View and discuss a movie such as Monster or Mysterious Skin	Read for your paper and presentation.
4/6	Guest Speaker: Marc Nemeroff, Ph.D. to discuss the psychoanalytically informed treatment of a traumatized infant	TBA
4/13	<p>Class trip: see a play or movie as a group or visit Visionary Art Museum</p> <p><b>Papers Due on Tuesday 4/13</b></p>	Read for your paper and presentation.
4/20	<p>Guest speaker: A Survivor's Story</p> <p>Student Presentations begin this week</p>	Miller pp. TBA
4/27	<p>Trauma in Music, Film, Art and Literature</p> <p>Student Presentations</p>	<p>Miller pp. TBA</p> <p><u>Reaction Paper</u>: What has been most upsetting to learn or hear about this semester? How does it change you, the way you relate to others, and the way you view the world?</p>
5/4	<p>Historical and Political Figures Whose Lives Were Altered by Trauma: Hitler, Stalin</p> <p>Student Presentations</p>	Miller pp. TBA
5/11 & 13	Student Presentations	Miller pp. TBA

