

**The Psychology of Trauma**  
**Psychology 477**  
**University of Michigan**  
**Fall, 2015**

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**Course Description:**

This three-credit advanced undergraduate seminar in psychological science is focused on the study of traumatic stress and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. Using readings, lectures, clinical case presentations, films, and class discussions, we cover the history, etiology, theories, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of traumatic stress at different ages across the lifespan. Following the developmental psychopathology model, research on relevant risk and protective factors associated with traumatic stress is also presented. The course begins with discussion of a range of traumatic events and definitions of trauma symptoms and responses. Next, theoretical frameworks and models useful for understanding traumatic stress reactions are introduced, including developmental psychopathology, cognitive development, neuropsychology, and intergenerational systems theory. In addition, assessment, diagnosis, and the evidence for best intervention practices in treating traumatic stress are examined. Each week a didactic presentation is followed by a clinical case presentation, a film, and/or an invited speaker. Class activities, assignments and discussion center on assessing, explaining and diagnosing traumatic stress in films and readings. Full preparation and participation in discussion is expected at each class with questions given in advance. There will be weekly, required short essays responding to questions based on the reading and applied to in-class presentations or films. The final paper (approximately 10-12 pages) requires students to apply course concepts to a character in a novel (to be selected) by 1) identifying traumatic events, 2) diagnosing traumatic stress reactions, 2) evaluating both risk and protective features, 4) proposing a treatment plan, and 5) outlining a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention. Grades are based on the short essays (50%), the final paper (40%), and class discussion and preparation (10%).

All readings are located on the Ctools website:

**Overrides:** The class is limited in enrollment size to 30 spaces that are currently filled. Therefore no overrides will be given.

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. If, for ANY REASON, you know that you cannot be present for class sessions you should email me right away.

**Written Assignments:** Written assignments take the form of weekly reaction papers or essays and one final course paper. Assignments are due at the next class following each session. The essays are approximately two pages in length and typically consist of an assignment based on the reading or class presentation that week. The final paper is due at the end of the term. For this paper you will read an assigned novel and 1) identifying the traumatic events, 2) diagnose the main character's traumatic stress reactions, 2) evaluate both risk and protective features, 4) propose a treatment plan, and 5) outline a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention. The final paper is approximately 10-12 pages in length, double-spaced.

**Plagiarism:** During this course you will be asked to review and critically analyze the written work of psychologists and authors. It is a serious academic offense at the University of Michigan to plagiarize the

work of others (including the work of other students). That means, it is unlawful for you to use others' words as your own, to paraphrase or quote without proper credit (citation of the author and the work), to give credit in one part of a report but not in a different part of a report that uses someone else's words or ideas, or to take others' work and submit it as your own. If you are suspected of plagiarism, your case will be reviewed and investigated by the Academic Judiciary Committee of LSA, which determines the appropriate disciplinary action. In this course you will be working as part of a research team. Therefore, it is essential that you very carefully note parts of reports that reflect team effort and ideas and parts that reflect your individual contribution.

**Late Assignments:** A written assignment is handed out at each class session to be completed and handed in the following week. These assignments generally consist of your applying course concepts to the reading, presentations or films. Your thoughts are reported in a two-page paper. In deference to your classmates who turn in their assignments on time, there will be NO late papers or assignments accepted. This is not negotiable.

**Grades:** Grades are based on the following: short essays (50%), the final paper (40%), and class discussion and preparation (10%). A 100 point system reflects alphabetical grades as follows: 100-98 = A+; 97-93 = A; 92-90 = A-; 89-87 = B+; 86-83 = B; 82-80 = B-; 79-77 = C+; 76-73 = C; 72-70 = C-; 69-67 = D+; 66-63 = D; 62-60 = D-, below 60 = E.

**Feedback:** I look forward to teaching this course and providing you with an enriched class experience throughout the semester. I am very interested in your evaluation of this course and suggestions for improving the educational experience for you and for others. I will be soliciting your feedback at regular intervals throughout the semester via ratings, but also welcome emails and constructive comments at any time. While there are no set office hours, I am available to meet individually by appointment. If you would like to set up an appointment please do so via email.

## **September 9 Introduction: The Psychology of Trauma**

Introduction to the course

Film: Ordinary People – adolescent accident trauma

Written Assignment 1: Identifying traumatic events and symptoms in family members.

Readings for assignment #1:

Read, J.P., Ouimette, P., White, J., Colder, C., & Farrow, S. (2011). Rates of *DSM-IV-TR* trauma exposure and posttraumatic stress disorder among newly matriculated college students. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research Practice, and Policy*, 3(2), 148-156.

Duax, J.M., Bohnert, K.M., Rauch, S.A., Defever, A.M. (2014). Posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, levels of social support, and emotional hiding in returning veterans. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*. 51(4), 571–78.

DSM 5 Criteria for PTSD Diagnosis

Whiffen & Oliver (2004). The relationship between traumatic stress and marital intimacy. In Catherall D. R. (Ed.) *Handbook of Stress, Trauma and the Family*, Pp. 139-159, New York: Bruner-Routledge.

ALSO for next week's in-class discussion prepare to discuss the 4 questions at the end of the Zoe M case reading by Bernheim, Rescorla & Rocissano (1999). Posttraumatic stress disorder in an adolescent: The case of Zoe M. In *The Lanahan Case Studies in Developmental Psychopathology*. Pp. 60-66. Baltimore: Lanahan Publishers.

### **September 16 Identifying Traumatic Events and Traumatic Responses**

Discussion: Trauma and symptoms in adolescents and their families (film and Zoe case).

Film: Bowling for Columbine – Traumatic high school gun violence

Written Assignment #2: Traumatic events and symptoms in Columbine students.

Readings for assignment #2:

Vicary, A. M., & Fraley, C. (2010). Student reactions to the shootings at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University: Does sharing grief and support over the internet affect recovery? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 36(1), 1555-1563.

Fallahi, C. R., & Lesik, S. A. (2009). The effects of vicarious exposure to the recent massacre at Virginia Tech. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 1(3), 220-230.

Turunen, T., Haravuori, H., Pihlajamäki, J. J., Marttunen, M., & Punamäki, R. L. (2014). Framework of the outreach after a school shooting and the students' perceptions of the provided support. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 5.

Mills et al (2011). Assessing the prevalence of trauma exposure in epidemiological surveys. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 45, 407-415

Schildkraut, J., & Hernandez, T. C. (2014). Laws that bit the bullet: A review of legislative responses to school shootings. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 39(2), 358-374.

### **September 23 Theories Explaining Trauma Symptoms – Part I -Vulnerability**

Discussion of Columbine assignment: What can/should we do about gun violence?

Lecture: War and PTSD, Vulnerability to PTSD

Written assignment #3: Holocaust survivor

Readings:

Dekel, R., & Goldblatt, H. (2008). Is there intergenerational transmission of trauma? The case of combat veterans' children. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 78(3), 281-289.

Ehrensaft, M. K., Cohen, P., Brown, J., Smailes, E., Chen, H., & Johnson, J. G. (2003). Intergenerational transmission of partner violence: A 20 year prospective study. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71(4), 741-753.

Rowland-Klien, D. (2004). The transmission of trauma across generations: Identification with parental trauma in children of holocaust survivors. In Catherall D. R. (Ed.) *Handbook of Stress, Trauma and the Family*, Pp. 117-138, New York: Bruner-Routledge.

Leon, G. R. (1999). Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in a Concentration Camp Survivor. *Case histories of Psychopathology*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Pp. 109-124.

### **September 30 Theories Explaining Trauma Symptoms – Part II – Development & Neuroendocrine**

Discuss the holocaust survivor case in terms of intergenerational theory.

Lecture: The Developmental Theory and Traumatic Stress

3-4 Guest Presenter: Maria Galano, M.S., Child PTSD and Cortisol Stress Reactivity

Clinical Presentation: The Case of Sam

Written assignment #4: Give an explanation for the symptoms that Sam expressed following the death of his mother using developmental and neuroendocrine theories, and discuss whether and how these were addressed in the treatment.

Readings:

Scheeringa, M. S. (2006). Posttraumatic stress disorder: Clinical guidelines and research findings. In J. Luby (Ed.) *Handbook of Preschool Mental Health*, pp. 165-187. NY: The Guilford Press.

Stein, P.T., & Kendall, J. C. (2004). Chapter 3: PTSD: Biology impinging on behavior. *Psychological Trauma and the Developing Brain: Neurologically Based Intervention for Troubled Children*, pp. 73-96.

Bruce, J., Fisher, P.A., Pears, K.C., & Levine, S. (2009). Morning cortisol levels in preschool-aged foster children: Differential effects of maltreatment type. *Developmental Psychobiology*, 51, 14-23.

MacMillan, H.L., et al. (2009). Cortisol response to stress in female youths exposed to childhood maltreatment: Results of the youth mood project. *Biological Psychiatry*, 66, 62-68.

#### **October 7 Theories Explaining Trauma Symptoms – Part III – The Brain**

Discuss the developmental and hormonal theories and the case of Sam.

Lecture: Neuro-cognitive-psychological theories of trauma ????

3PM Guest Presenter: Rebecca Sripada, Ph.D. Neural Dysregulation in Adult PTSD

Written assignment #5: The Case of Luis P.

Readings:

Stein, P.T. & Kendall, J. C. (2004). Chapter 4: Complex PTSD in children: Brain and behavior. *Psychological Trauma and the Developing Brain: Neurologically Based Intervention for Troubled Children*, pp. 97-132.

Sripada, R. K., King, A. P., Welsh, R. C., Garfinkel, S. N., Wang, X., Sripada, C. S., & Liberzon, I. (2012). Neural dysregulation in posttraumatic stress disorder: Evidence for disrupted equilibrium between salience and default mode brain networks. *Psychosomatic medicine*, 74(9), 904-911.

Sadeh, N., Spielberg, J. M., Warren, S. L., Miller, G. A., & Heller, W. (published online, May 2014). Aberrant neural connectivity during emotional processing associated with posttraumatic stress. *Clinical Psychological Science*.

Bernheim, K. F., Rescorla, L., & Rocissano, L. (1999). Posttraumatic stress disorder in a younger child: The case of Luis P. In *The Lanahan Case Studies in Developmental Psychopathology*. Pp. 67-71. Baltimore: Lanahan Publishers.

#### **October 14 Theories Explaining Trauma Symptoms – Part IV - Culture**

Discuss the case of Luis P and questions at end of chapter

Coping, Culture and Traumatic Stress: Film: The Color Purple

Written assignment #6: The case of Celie – discuss cultural risk and protective factors

Readings:

Graham-Bermann, S. A., Devoe, E., Lynch, S., Mattis, J., & Thomas, S. (2006). Risk and protective factors predicting to traumatic stress symptoms in Caucasian and African-American children exposed to domestic violence. *Violence Against Women, 12*, 663-692.

Ford (2012). Ethnoracial and educational differences in victimization history, trauma-related symptoms, and coping style. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy, 4*(2), 177-185.

Hinton, D. E., & Lewis-Fernandez, R. (2011). The cross-cultural validity of posttraumatic stress disorder: Implications for DSM V. *Depression and Anxiety, 28*, 783–801.

Lilly, M. M. & Graham-Bermann, S. A. (2009). Ethnicity and risk for symptoms of posttraumatic stress following intimate partner violence: Prevalence and predictors of European American and African American women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 24*(1), 3-19.

### **October 21 Coping, Culture and Traumatic Stress- Theories IV- Intergenerational**

Discuss the case of Celie – trauma, cultural risk and protective factors

Hurricane Katrina – Added trauma of racism

Lecture: Intergenerational Transmission of PTSD: Culture & Coping with Traumatic Stress

3-4 Guest Presenter Hannah Clark, M.S.: American Indian Historical Trauma

Written assignment #7: Identify cultural risk and protective factors for coping with traumatic events following Hurricane Katrina

Readings: Begin to read one the assigned novels: *TBA*.

### **October 28 Group Therapy**

Discussion: Identifying cultural risk and protective factors following hurricane Katrina

Film: *The Trouble with Evan, Part I*

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of risk and protection

Assignment #8: Continue/finish reading the assigned novel, identify all of the traumas for the main character in the novel and apply assigned readings to the main character. DUE IN TWO WEEKS

Readings:

Spinazzola, J., Hodgdon, H., Liang, L., Ford, J. D., Layne, C. M., Pynoos, R., & ... Kisiel, C. (2014). Unseen wounds: The contribution of psychological maltreatment to child and adolescent mental health and risk outcomes. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, And Policy, 6*(Suppl 1), 18-28.

Anda, R. F., Felitti, V. J., Bremner, J. D., Walker, J. D., ... & Giles, W. H. (2006). The enduring effects of abuse and related adverse experiences in childhood. *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience, 256*(3), 174-186.

Graham-Bermann, S. A., Castor, L. Miller, L. E., & Howell, K. H. (2012). The impact of additional traumatic events to trauma symptoms and PTSD in children exposed to intimate partner violence (IPV). *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 25*(4), 393-400.

De Bellis, M. D. (2002). Developmental traumatology: a contributory mechanism for alcohol and substance use disorders. *Psychoneuroendocrinology, 27*(1), 155-170.

Carrion, V. G., Wong, S. S., & Kletter, H. (2013). Update on neuroimaging and cognitive functioning in maltreatment-related pediatric PTSD: Treatment implications. *Journal of Family Violence, 28*, 53-61.

#### **November 4 Therapy for Adolescents Traumatized by Abuse**

Film: *The Trouble with Evan, Part II*

In class exercise: Licensing parents

3-4 Guest Presenter: Sara Tischler, LLMSW, Therapy with a traumatized child

Assignment #8: Continue/finish reading the assigned novel, identify all of the traumas for the main character in the novel and apply assigned readings to the main character. DUE IN NEXT WEEK  
Readings from last week.

#### **November 11 Therapy for Children Traumatized by Violence**

Film: Bill Moyers Documentary

Presentation: The Kids' Club Program

Written Assignment #9: Using the case of Evan as example, show exactly how one of the evidence-based practices (e.g., TF-CBT or the Kids' Club Program) would be used for therapeutic intervention with Evan who was exposed to family violence and maltreatment and his parents.

Readings:

Graham-Bermann, S. A., Lynch, S., Banyard, V., DeVoe, E., & Halabu, H. (2007). Community-based intervention for children exposed to intimate partner violence (IPV): A longitudinal study. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 75*(2), 199-209.

Scheeringa et al. (2011). Trauma-focused cognitive-behavioral therapy for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in three- through six year-old children: A randomized clinical trial. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 52*(8), 853-860.

Graham-Bermann, S. A., Howell, K. H., Lilly, M. M., & Devoe, E. (2011). Mediators and moderators of change in adjustment following intervention for children exposed to intimate partner violence (IPV). *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 26*(9), 1815-1833.

Cohen, J. A., Berliner, L., & Mannarino, A. (2010). Trauma focused CBT for children with co-occurring trauma and behavior problems. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 34*, 215-224.

Jaycox, L. H., Cohen, J. A., Mannarino, A. P., Walker, D. W., et al. (2010). Children's mental health care following Hurricane Katrina: A field trial of trauma focused psychotherapies. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 23*(2), 223-231.

#### **November 18 Therapy for Traumatized Adults**

Presentation: The Moms' Empowerment Program: Intervention for Women Exposed to Violence.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcodyFKKdVM&NR=1>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugTeOz7rsgE&NR=1>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7v2LmM\\_FO-U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7v2LmM_FO-U)

Written assignment #10: Using Evan's mom as example, discuss what might have helped her in parenting Evan earlier in his life.

Readings: The novel and

Graham-Bermann, S. A., & Miller, L. E. (2013). Intervention to reduce traumatic stress following intimate partner violence: An efficacy trial of the Moms' Empowerment Program (MEP). *Psychodynamic Psychiatry, 41*(2), 327-348.

Taylor et al. (2003). Comparative efficacy, speed, and adverse effects of three PTSD treatments: Exposure therapy, EMDR, and relaxation training. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 71*(2), 330-338.

Wachen, J. S., Jimenez, S., Smith, K., & Resick, P. A. (2014). Long-term functional outcomes of women receiving cognitive processing therapy and prolonged exposure. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, And Policy*, 6(Suppl 1), 58-65.

Iverson et al. (2011). Cognitive-behavioral therapy for PTSD and depression symptoms reduces risk for future intimate partner violence among interpersonal trauma survivors. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71(2), 193-202.

Sautter, F. J., Glynn, S. M., Arseneau, J. R., Cretu, J. B., & Yufik, T. (2014). Structured approach therapy for PTSD in returning veterans and their partners: Pilot findings. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, And Policy*, 6(Suppl 1), 66-72.

### **November 25 What differentiates stressful reactions from traumatic ones? Assessment**

In-class activity: Differentiating between distress and trauma.

Assessment Protocol for Trauma Studies

Final Written Paper Assignment Handout

Readings: The novel.

### **December 2 Resilient Coping with Traumatic Events and Disasters**

Lecture: Understanding the psychological construct of resilience.

Transitioning from Trauma: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vf2vRcRcsE8>

Film: *Good Will Hunting* 126 minutes

Readings: The novel.

Bonanno (2012). Uses and abuses of the resilience construct: Loss, trauma, and health-related adversities. *Social Science and Medicine*, 74, 753-756.

Bonnano, G. A., Galea, S., Bucchiarelli, A., & Vhalov, D. (2007). What predicts psychological resilience after disaster? The role of demographics, resources and life stress. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 75(5), 671-682.

Howell, K.H., Miller, L.E., Barnes, S.E., & Graham-Bermann, S.A. (2015). Promoting resilience in children exposed to intimate partner violence through a developmentally informed intervention: A case study. *Clinical Case Studies*, 14(1), 31-46.

Prati, G., & Pietrantonio, L. (2009). Optimism, social support, and coping strategies as factors contributing to posttraumatic growth: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 14(5), 364-388.

Vishnevsky, T., Cann, A., Calhoun, L. G., Tedeschi, R. G., & Demakis, G. J. (2010). Gender differences in self-reported posttraumatic growth: A meta-analysis. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 34(1), 110-120.

### **December 9 Posttraumatic Growth**

Film: *Strong at the Broken Places* (38 minutes)

*Through a Child's Eyes* (33 minutes)

Final papers due.