

# PSYCH 488: Stress and Coping

Autumn 2018 • University of Washington

Instructor: Lauren Graham

---

## Overview

In this course, we will explore stress and its influence on the body, mind, and behavior. Course content will be most directly relevant to biological and clinical interests, but topics will span cognitive, developmental, and social perspectives of stress. Specific topics include theories and experimental measures of stress and coping, the biological mechanisms of the stress response, the relationships between stress and mental health, differences in stress resilience across individuals and social groups, and the efficacy and possible mechanisms of various stress management techniques.

## Course Goals:

By the end of this course, students should be able to â€

(1) â€ describe the biological features of the stress response and how it affects multiple physical and psychological systems. Assessment: exams, discussions, project

(2) â€ describe various stress management strategies and contrast them in terms of their efficacy and potential mechanisms of action. Assessments: exams, reflections, discussions, project

(3) â€ apply course content to the world outside of the classroom by: (a) identifying stressors in their own lives and making use of several coping and stress-prevention strategies, and (b) connecting course content to specific populations exposed to regular stressors. Assessments: reflections, discussions, service learning, project

## Role of Service-Learning in the Course

One of my hopes for students is that they connect course material out to different populations and contexts than they otherwise have access to from their own experience. These connections (encouraged through required written reflections and through regular in-class discussions) will deepen their understanding about the influences of stress and the ways in which people cope.

Students are also required to create a coping 'intervention' project, in which they propose a stress-management intervention targeted to a particular population. Although they're not required to use their own service-learning experience to directly inform their ideas, I expect that cross-student discussion of the various community organizations that already provide stress-management resources (practical and emotional) will help to both inspire new ideas and to ground them in terms of logistics of such interventions.

## Assignments Related to Service-Learning

For the graded portion of the class directly relating to their service-learning commitment, students will be required to submit two written reflections about their work with the organization and how what they're experiencing and observing connects with course content. Prompts for these reflections are in the last page of the syllabus.

## Carlson Leadership & Public Service Center

Center for Experiential Learning & Diversity • University of Washington

171 Mary Gates Hall • (206) 616-2885 • <http://exp.washington.edu/carlson>