

Psychology of Trauma

PSY 472/572 – Fall, 2004

*Note this syllabus may be updated --
check Blackboard for current version*

Overview: This course is designed to introduce students to the field of traumatic stress. We will review the history of the field, as well as current approaches to understanding trauma from cognitive, neuropsychological, developmental and clinical viewpoints. The course will combine research and applications from the growing field of traumatic stress, looking at responses to a variety of traumas including childhood trauma, adult sexual assault, combat, domestic violence, and natural disasters. An important focus of the course will involve considerations of how socio-political contexts affect trauma research, treatment and even thinking about trauma.

We will use current research to explore questions from a variety of perspectives, such as:

- *Developmental Psychology:* How does trauma affect children? How does lifetime development influence coping with trauma? What can we learn about treatment based on the developmental literature?
- *Social Psychology:* How do we respond when the social contract between people is violated through betrayal? How does social response to trauma impact victims? How do we as society take or avoid responsibility for traumas?
- *Cognitive & Neuro Psychology:* How can cognitive psychology and neuropsychology inform our understanding of how traumas are processed and remembered? What role does dissociation play in processing traumas? Are particular brain regions involved in distress after trauma?
- *Clinical Psychology:* What effects do traumatic experiences have on mental health? What is an appropriate response to trauma (and who decides)?
- *Interdisciplinary:* What dimensions best differentiate reactions to trauma? How do we apply research to prevention programs? How do people in the field of traumatic stress cope with secondary trauma? How does the use of a developmental framework influence the ways in which we define treatment success and healing?
- *Cultural:* How is our thinking about trauma and its effects determined by our culture? Are there other ways of thinking about trauma?

Instructor: Pam Birrell

Office: 205 Straub Hall

e-mail: pbirrell@darkwing.uoregon.edu

Phone: 346-4932

Office Hrs: See Staff Info on Blackboard

Teaching Assistant: Bridget Klest

Office: 353 Straub

e-mail: bklest@darkwing.uoregon.edu

Office Hrs: See Staff Info on Blackboard

Course Assistants (for office hours see staff information on blackboard):

Angela Binder	abinder@gladstone.uoregon.edu
Jennifer Toney	jtoney@gladstone.uoregon.edu
Daniel Friend	dfriend@gladstone.uoregon.edu
Regan R Filgas-Heck	rfilgash@gladstone.uoregon.edu
Paul Monson	pmonson@gladstone.uoregon.edu

Course Requirements

For 472 Students: The course requirements include doing the reading, attending class, writing 4 essays, reading an on-line electronic discussion, taking 3 exams, and completing a final project.

For 572 Students: The course requirements include doing the reading, attending class, writing 4 essays, reading an on-line electronic discussion, taking 3 exams (which will be similar to the exams for 472 but with some additional expectations), and completing a final project. The final project will be either a paper of length similar to that completed by 472 students plus a 20-30 minute oral presentation or instead a substantially longer (25-page) paper without the oral presentation. The final paper may be completed solo or with another 572 student. When we have in-class small-group activities, 572 students will be grouped together and we will expect graduate level discussions.

Contact Hours and Class Attendance

We will meet each Monday and Wednesday 2:00-3:20 in 146 Straub and your attendance is expected. *This is not a course to take if you anticipate missing more than one class meeting. Absences should be explained in a note to the professor.* During class meetings we will combine a variety of activities: lecture, documentaries about trauma or traumatic stress, and small group and class discussion. Films and documentaries are an important part of this class, as many aspects of trauma and traumatic stress are best communicated in a rich medium like film. Some of the documentaries and films that I will show are also available for viewing in the University media center, but the majority of the films I plan to show are not available to view outside of class meeting. Sometimes we will have a guest lecturer with expertise in a particular aspect of the psychology of trauma. You will be responsible for all of this material covered in class (it will be tested on the exams).

Required Readings

Readings are assigned on a weekly basis. Readings are to be completed BEFORE the Monday class meeting for which they are assigned.

On-line Readings

Some of the assigned readings will be available on-line. That is, you will be given a web address (URL) that leads you to the required article or web site to explore. In some cases when copyright permits readings will be available to download or print on the Blackboard site under Course Documents, Electronic Articles. On-line readings will be assigned as we go along. To find the on-line article assignment for the upcoming week, check the "Assignments"

section of Blackboard. There you will find a folder called "On-line reading assignments" with details about what you should read for the next week.

Books and Course Packet

In addition, two books are required for the course. These books can be purchased at the UO bookstore (they are each available in paperback, and there are many used copies at UO bookstore and Smith Family bookstore).

1. Freyd, J.J. (1996). *Betrayal trauma theory: The logic of forgetting childhood abuse*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
2. Herman, J.L. (1997). *Trauma and recovery*. New York: Basic Books.
3. Course packet, available at the bookstore

Grading Overview

Your grade will be computed by combining your scores in the following overall categories for a total of 200 points:

Points	Course Work
90	Take-home exams (3 exams each worth 30 points each)
60	Essays (4 essays worth 15 points each)
50	Final Project (Includes plan, project, self-evaluation)
200	Total
(EC)	Also up to 20 points extra credit potential

Final letter grades will be approximately determined from point totals as follows:

points	letter grade
180-200	A
160-179	B
140-159	C
120-129	D
Below 120	F

Based on the actual distribution of final grades, this criterion might be relaxed, but not stiffened. Plusses and minuses will be used for performance near the edge of a range.

Grading and Requirements - More Details

Exams 90 points

You will have three exams each worth 30 points. Exams will cover material from readings and in-class material and will be cumulative. Exams will require essay answers and will be used to evaluate your understanding and integration of class material.

Take Home exams: These exams are due in class. 5 points per day will be deducted for late exams (thus after 6 days you will automatically receive a 0). All exams must be typed; hand-written exams will not be accepted. You may use class material to answer the questions (including notes, books and course web pages); however, you may not consult with any person regarding the exam. Exam questions will be posted on the blackboard web site under "assignments."

Essays: 60 points

Four essays will be due. They must be typed and turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. If you absolutely cannot type your essay, you must write it very neatly on nice paper (e.g.: no pages written from a spiral notebook!). Each essay should show that you have put thought into the reading material. Think of the essay as an opportunity to think deeply about the readings and to reflect on the meaning of the material to you, your life, society, and scholarship. Essays will typically be about two typed pages. Each essay will be worth up to 15 points. A point will be subtracted for each day late. Topics for each essay will be posted on Blackboard.

Final Project: 50 points

The final project will be a research proposal, public policy proposal or trauma case study due on November 29. In addition you must turn in a one-page typed project plan by October 20 and you must turn in a self (& other) evaluation on November 29 . You will have points deducted from the final project if any of these required components are late.

The project will present material you have learned and synthesized about the Psychology of Trauma as well as your creative ideas for future research, public policy, or healing and diagnosis from trauma. If you choose the case study (either yourself, someone you know well, or a public figure) it must not be just personal opinion and experience (although that is important), it must be based in the readings and research from the term. Your sources of information can primarily be based on the assigned readings, although most likely A and B quality projects will incorporate some additional material you have found at the library or on-line. All sources must be properly cited using APA style.

You may choose the specific topic of your final project. It should be a topic that shows you have mastered important material within the field of the Psychology of Trauma and shows you can think creatively about this area of research and/or how to apply it. Your project should do at least one of the following:

- propose a new experiment or empirical study that would address a research question(s) you identify. This could be one in which you are testing a treatment or intervention, or researching a basic question about trauma. Your research proposal should make new predictions (or extend existing predictions).
- propose new public policy regarding trauma prevention or treatment or education. You should explore the public policy implications of the reading and propose new public policy based on the readings or research literature in psychology of trauma.
- write a detailed case study on trauma, its effects and actual or potential healing. You should include readings and research covered this term, as well as alternative ways of thinking about trauma, if appropriate.

Each student will have the choice of working alone on the final project, or, instead, with one other person. I encourage the teamwork approach, because working cooperatively is a challenge, and very educational in its own right. The projects will be graded on the same criteria whether produced by one or two people (thus it would really seem a good idea to work in teams!). The exception to this is, of course, the case study if it is on yourself or someone close to you. You could work in teams if you choose a public figure. If you decide you want to work with a partner, you may select your own partner, or you may ask the instructor to help you pair up with someone. Project partners must make a commitment to work together by October 20 (plan is worth 5 of the 50 points).

Your grade on the final project will be severely lowered if it or the evaluation is at all late. You may earn extra credit if you create a web page or do an optional in-class oral presentation based on your project.

Course Web Site and On-line Discussion

Key information, including updated assignments and grades, will be posted on the course web site. Plan on checking it at least twice a week.

We will have an electronic discussion as part of this course on the course web site. You are expected to read the on-line discussions. Posting your own messages is optional. You may earn extra credit for thought-provoking messages. However, in order to avoid having the on-line discussion become unmanageable, each student will also have a maximum number of posted messages (enforced if necessary) of 2 per week. Also any given message should be no longer than 50 lines of text.

Extra Credit: Up to 20 points

Extra Credit can be earned in a variety of ways up to 20 extra points total. If you make especially valuable contributions to class or on-line discussion, you may earn extra points. Or you can get extra credit for creating a web site based on your final project and/or giving an optional oral presentation on your project during the last class period. Some students may earn extra credit by writing an extra paper. In general, if you do something creative, special, contributive, and above-and-beyond the course requirements, you may earn extra credit.

Additional Notes

Using Blackboard

The web site for this course was constructed using "Blackboard" software. This allows the web site to be extensive and interactive. On the web site, you will find general announcements for the class, all documents for the course (including this syllabus), lecture notes, on-line discussions, links to relevant web sites, and more. We hope that this web site will be a useful tool for you in learning the material for this class, and in further exploring topics you find interesting. You can get to the course web site by going to <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu>. If you need help logging in or using Blackboard, see <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu/local/usingbb/>. Also you can get help starting by going to the library [Information Technology Center](http://libweb.uoregon.edu/kitc/faq/blackboard.html#help) (ITC) and/or see <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/kitc/faq/blackboard.html#help>.

Academic Honesty

All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. For the consequences of academic dishonesty, refer to the Schedule of Classes published quarterly. Violations will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. If you are in doubt regarding any aspect of these issues as they pertain to this course, please consult with the teaching assistant or the instructor before you complete any relevant requirements of the course. (Text adopted here as recommended from the UO web site regarding academic honesty at: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~conduct/>). Because some students are not entirely sure what counts as academic dishonesty, we encourage you to read the discussion of plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~conduct/sai.htm> .

Students with Directory Restricted Access

This course includes group and on-line participation. If you have restricted access to your directory information and wish to have special arrangements made for this course, please notify the instructor immediately.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with the instructor soon. Also please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability. [Disability Services: disabsrv@darkwing.uoregon.edu, 346-1155; <http://ds.uoregon.edu/>]

A Special Note about The Nature of Discussions in this Class

In this class we will be discussing issues which may have, at times, an intense personal significance for some members of the class. There are no taboos for discussion topics in this course. We will exercise and respect freedom of speech. At the same time, we must take responsibility to ensure that we are respectful of everyone's opinion and that we stay on topic. If you find you are troubled by material while taking this course, and need support or counseling, please be sure to pursue that external support by seeking out a supportive friend, counselor, and/or a social service.

A sample of counseling and social service resources follows. **Disclaimer: We do not assume any responsibility for the quality of services offered by the following organizations.**

Local Crisis Lines

University of Oregon Crisis Line	346-4488
Sexual Assault Support Services Crisis Line	343-7277
Whitebird Clinic Crisis Line	687-4000
Womenspace Crisis Line	485-6513

Local Counseling

University of Oregon Counseling Center	346-3227
Center for Community Counseling	344-0620
Options Counseling Services	687-6983
Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS)	484-9791

Center for Family Therapy 346-3296

Some Additional Campus Resources

UO Women's Center 346-4095

Office of Affirmative Action 346-3123

Student Advocacy 346-3722

Multicultural Center 346-4207

LGBT Educational and Support Services 346-1134

Weekly Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

Book chapter to reads are assigned in the weekly schedule list below (e.g when it says "Herman 3-4" that means Herman Chapters 3 and 4). Course packet readings are designated CP. On-line readings will be assigned as we go along, and designated as OL. To find the on-line article assignment for the upcoming week, check the "Assignments" section of Blackboard. There you will find a folder called "On-line reading assignments" with details about what you should read for the next week.

Date	Topic	Readings
September 27	Introduction	None Assigned
October 4	Response to Trauma: Cultural and Societal	Herman, chapters 1; Susko, CP ; Milburn and Conrad, <i>No, Really, I'm fine</i> , CP
October 11	Responses to Trauma: Individual	Herman, chapters 2, 3 & 4; Assignment: Essay #1 due on October 11
October 18	Child Abuse	Herman, 5; Terr, Childhood Traumas, CP Freyd, 1, 4, 5 Milburn and Conrad, <i>Hear No Evil</i> , CP Assignments: Exam #1 due on October 18; Final Project plan due October 20 (1 page description)
October 25	Betrayal Trauma	Freyd, 2, 3, 6
November 1	PTSD and War	Herman, 6; Martin-Baro, War and Mental Health, CP Bracken, Chapters 3 & 4, CP

		<p>Tick, Lost souls, CP</p> <p>Assignment: Essay #3 due on November 1</p>
November 8	Dissociation	<p>Witztum, et al., Combat induced dissociative amnesia, CP</p> <p>Assignment: Exam #2 due on November 3</p>
November 15	Cognitive and neuropsychological approaches	<p>Read before Class: Freyd 3</p> <p>Assignment: Essay #4 due on November 8</p>
November 22	Treatment	<p>Herman 7-9; Hartling, et al., Shame and Humiliation, CP</p> <p>Assignment: Final Project, Self and Other Evaluation due on November 24</p>
November 29	Putting it all Together	<p>Freyd 7, Herman 10-11 & Afterward Farmer, On Suffering and Structural Violence, CP Kleinman, Violence, Culture and the Politics of Trauma, CP</p> <p>Assignment: Exam #3 due on November 29. Optional extra credit project presentations in class on December 1.</p>