

Horizon Seminar: Disaster Mental Health
Service Learning

Course Syllabus

Course Number:	PSYC 4085 – 11
Credit:	4 semester hours
Semester:	Spring 2019
Instructor:	Tuesday and Thursday, 12:30 –1:50 Boyd Building, room 304 Larry Schor, PhD., LPC, CPCS
Office Hours:	Monday and Wednesday 8:00-12:00, Tuesday and Thursday 8:00-10:00, 2:30-3:30, and by appointment.
Contact:	678-839-0617, lschor@westga.edu

Course Description: An introduction to understanding the challenges of providing psychosocial services to people affected by trauma, disaster, and war. This course will not involve clinical training, but will serve as a foundation to students wishing to work in professional settings where they are likely to be faced with human suffering associated with disaster events and war, or other trauma. We will be working, in part, as consultants to the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to improve Georgia's DMH website www.georgiadisaster.info

Course Objectives: Through class discussions, readings, experiential exercises, lecture, and group projects we will focus our inquiry on questions like:

- What do we mean by disaster mental health and trauma counseling?
- Who should provide such services, with what training, and to whom?
- How are emergency psychological services mobilized and implemented?
- What models of intervention are effective and why?
- How have war and disasters affected the psychological fabric of our society?
- What should be done to prepare for such possibilities?
- How can the psychological effects of war be better addressed?
- How does working with trauma affect the lives of professionals?
- Why do the psychological effects of trauma vary so dramatically?

Specific Course Emphases:

1. This course will focus on the varied forms of human trauma ranging from personal experiences like rape, child abuse, and other forms of violence to collective experiences including; natural disasters, terrorist attacks, war, and the consequent anxiety associated with anticipating such occurrences.
2. A secondary focus will be a deepening of understanding the various models of providing effective and ethical professional services to persons affected.

Text: There is no formal text for this course. Journal articles, training manuals, and other readings will be provided without cost. Additional on-line resources will be used extensively.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

1. Participation in class discussions and activities: Because much of the course will involve class discussion and presentation of material that complements the readings, your *spirited* participation is essential and will require you to remain current with reading assignments. Students are expected to attend all class meetings and assume responsibility for missed work and assignments. There is a **CourseDen** component to this course. Students are expected to use this forum very frequently for collaborative research and sharing of ideas and information. **CourseDen** assignments will be given throughout the semester.

2. Journal: Keep a journal of your reflections on class discussions and readings, as well as your own relevant experiences (past or present). Include your observations, opinions, and thoughtful reflection of both ordinary and extraordinary experiences while noting insights, changing beliefs, and application of material from class. Try to integrate course content with *your* experiences. You will not be graded on the “right-ness” or “wrong-ness” of your ideas, but rather your exploration and articulation of observations and insights. You are expected to write in your journal nearly every day. You will be given several specific journal assignments throughout the semester.

3. Group Project / Presentation: Students will form work groups based on shared curiosity, research interests, and course objectives. Each group will work under the direction of a graduate student. Graduate students will be responsible for coordinating group work and community outreach projects. Each group will make a thirty-minute presentation to the class. The materials gathered will be included in your research portfolio.

4. Research Portfolio: Within your specific area of interest, you will compile research articles, resources and other information that contributes to the collective wisdom of the class. The information you provide will be central to the success of your group project. This assignment is intended to help you begin to develop expertise in both specific and general aspects of disaster preparedness, planning, mitigation, response, and recovery.

5. Reaction papers: There will be three or four brief (4-5 pages) reaction papers assigned. They will address such topics as; reading assignments, videos, ethics, public policy, family concerns, and personal values. Your own ideas and opinions are welcome, but they should be grounded in, and contrasted with perspectives presented in class and the assigned readings.

6. Research Paper: Each student will choose a specific topic based on personal interest and potential for enhancing self-understanding. You are free to choose any topic related to trauma, the experience of terror, or your beliefs about intervention. The research paper (max: 10 typed pages) will be due on the last day of class.

Grading Policy and Pedagogy:

We will learn the difference between *minimal compliance* and *best practices* and their consequent impact on policy and service. Reflecting this ethos, we should hold each other and ourselves to a high standard. Students are expected to find intrinsic motivation and inspiration from each other and the material. In a world increasingly dominated by points and content modules as evidence of competence, this course will instead offer the opportunity for collaboration, personal interaction, and discovering our individual and collective potential to relieve suffering. Therefore, evaluation will be qualitative. We will have access to each other’s work and opportunities for feedback throughout the semester. Students should feel free to seek such feedback and your instructor will be pleased to meet with you as frequently as you like.

- A** Consistently excellent effort in *all* aspects of the course.
- B** Good or very good effort in all aspects, perhaps excellent in one area, or fair in another.
- C** Satisfactory completion of all requirements, minimal effort in one area.
- F** Minimal effort in all or most areas.

UWG Service-Learning Course Identification

Definition: Service-Learning is a structured teaching and learning strategy within a course that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and address community priorities.

The Instructor is equipped with knowledge and resources to ensure that:

- The need is identified by the community being served.
- Students engage in critical reflection.
- The service is aligned with student learning outcomes for which the student receives academic credit.
- It is a mutually beneficial partnership that balances student learning with service to the community.

Criteria for Service Learning Courses

- A Service Learning course includes an out-of-class component that involves the students in an active ("doing") learning experience that complements and enriches the students' in-class learning experience. (Observing at a community event, for example, would not be considered "experiential learning" since it is essentially a passive activity.)
- The Service Learning component must be significantly linked to the course content and course goals/objectives.
- Descriptions of the course should include examples of the course goals, major readings, and major assignments—and should include examples of how these readings, activities, or assignments will relate to the “service” the students will be doing in this course. Through these assignments, each course should include purposeful reflection that calls for the student to connect the learning that occurs through the SL component of the course to the learning that occurs within the course’s academic realm. These courses should encourage students to draw connections between the different parts and aspects of their learning, while also encouraging them to connect their learning to their lives and to the world.
- To earn SL credit, the “service” must be embedded within a credit-bearing academic course. The designation is tied to a specific course (with a prefix and number), not an extracurricular activity and have a reflective component.

Students should review the following information each semester.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Accessibility Services: Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer

accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact [Accessibility Services](#).

Center for Academic Success: The [Center for Academic Success](#) provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or cas@westga.edu

University Writing Center: The [University Writing Center](#) assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6513 or writing@westga.edu

HONOR CODE

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student's conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student's account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the [Student Handbook](#).

UWG EMAIL POLICY

University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to check his or her email.

CREDIT HOUR POLICY

The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).

HB 280 (Campus Carry)

UWG follows University System of Georgia (USG) guidance:

http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information

You may also visit our website for help with USG Guidance: <https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php>

Mental Health Support:

If you or another student find that you are experiencing a mental health issue, free confidential services are available on campus in the [Counseling Center](#). Students who have experienced sexual or domestic violence may receive confidential medical and advocacy services with the Patient Advocates in [Health Services](#). To report a concern anonymously, please go to [UWGcares](#).