

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
PSYCHOLOGY OF EATING (GRADUATE LEVEL): 56:830:676
COURSE SYLLABUS
Spring 2020

Instructor:	Dr. Charlotte N. Markey	Lecture:	Tues 6-8:40pm
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Office Phone:	856.225.6332	Office hours:	Tues 2:30-4:00pm
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

Welcome to the Psychology of Eating!

This course focuses on understanding the psychological processes underlying humans' development of eating behaviors and the adoption of both healthy and maladaptive cognitions and behaviors concerning food, eating, and our bodies. Issues to be addressed include: food choice, the development of food preferences, motivation to eat, cultural influences on eating patterns, weight-regulation, body image, dieting behaviors, obesity, eating disorders, and treatment of unhealthy and clinical eating problems. The psychology of eating will be emphasized, and psychological problems associated with eating will be highlighted. This class will be taught as a graduate level seminar, with a focus on comprehension and application of information about the Psychology of Eating to daily life.

The learning objectives of this course are consistent with the goals of the department. Course activities are designed to assess these learning objectives. Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Identify key theories, concepts, and methods in the study of the psychology of eating.
- Critically analyze research in the field and distinguish it from popular (i.e., not empirically based) information about eating, weight management, body image, disordered eating, and obesity.
- Effectively communicate ideas related to the psychology of eating (orally and in writing).
- Increase personal awareness of your own eating-related attitudes and behaviors.

COURSE READINGS:

Please read all assigned readings BEFORE they are covered in class.

- 1) **REQUIRED and RECOMMENDED:** Articles and book chapters will be available on the course Sakai web page – consult the course schedule to determine when they should be read. Each week there is a primary topic we will discuss. There is a corresponding folder of articles about the topic on Sakai (under resources). Not all of the articles available are *required*.
- 2) **REQUIRED:** You will be asked to select a journal article to present and share with the class. You may also be asked to purchase or check-out a library book about dieting, depending on the presentation you choose to do (see below).

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1) ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION: Class attendance and participation is expected. Because this class is a seminar (i.e., I will not usually be lecturing, rather we will all discuss the relevant topics), much of the learning that will take place this semester will be *in the classroom*. I will keep track of attendance via class exercises that you complete. If you are not in class, there is no way to complete these assignments; make-ups will not be available. Thus, this component of your grade will be based on the following criteria: (1) Did you attend class? (2) Did you contribute to the intellectual climate in class (by listening to the professor and your classmates and participating in discussions and exercises)? and (3) Did you come to class prepared for assignments described on the class schedule?

2) READING REFLECTIONS AND QUESTIONS: Because each class will involve a discussion of the assigned readings, it is important that we all come to class prepared. In order to facilitate this preparation, you will be expected to turn in “evidence” that you have completed the readings in the form of reading reflections and questions (reflections should be approximately 2 pages long). Your reflections should focus on the themes indicated in the syllabus course schedule (and noted on Sakai) and should make it clear (using citations/page numbers) that you completed the readings for the week. As you read through the assignments, make note of questions you have that might be interesting for us to discuss as a class (you do not need to have the answers to these questions, rather think of issues that are provocative and important for us to discuss; these should NOT be yes/no questions or questions with answers easily identified in the readings). Please include **2** questions pertaining to the readings as a part of your reflections. These reflections and questions are due on Sunday evening at midnight prior to each week of class via the Sakai course web page. You are expected to submit 8 sets of reflections/ questions via Sakai. For your own benefit, having a copy of your reflection and questions in class is a good idea.

3) FOOD DIARY: In the first weeks of this course, we will be discussing food choice, nutrition, health and food, and food preferences. To contribute to your understanding of these topics, you will complete a “Food Diary.” This diary should be a complete record of everything you eat for 2 consecutive days (1 of these days should be a weekend day – Fri, Sat, or Sun, if possible). Please type your diary before turning it in and include a brief (approximately 2 pages) reflection on your eating behaviors during these 2 days. Some questions you may want to address in this reflection include: Based on the course readings and our class discussions, what is your appraisal of your eating behaviors? Did recording your eating behaviors influence what you ate? Did you eat more or less than you expected to? Are your eating habits “healthy” (consider psychological and physical health)? We will spend time discussing this assignment on the day that it is due in class; please submit via Sakai assignments.

4) ARTICLE PRESENTATIONS: During each class, 1-2 students will select a reading (typically a journal article) about the topic to be discussed and will be prepared to present the information from this article to the class using a brief power point slideshow (please have this on a thumb drive or email it to the instructor prior to class). Readings should be from the past 5 years (2015-2020) and must be approved by the instructor a week prior to the class in which they will be discussed. A PDF of the article should be emailed to the instructor so that she can post the articles on Sakai for the entire class to read. Student presenters should prepare one (just one! OK, maybe two?) slides with information about 1) the background and justification for the study, 2) the research questions addressed in the article, 3) the methods used, 4) the primary findings, and 5) why the article is interesting and a significant addition to research in the field. (So, that’s 10 slides AT MOST.) If you have difficulty selecting an article, contact the instructor for help.

5) “FINAL” PRESENTATIONS:

You have the option of completing one of the below presentations. Students will sign up for one of the two presentations in advance to ensure that approximately half the class does each presentation.

DIET BOOK PRESENTATION: We will spend most of one class discussing weight-management and dieting behaviors. There are many popular books (e.g., *The Keto Diet*, *The Carnivore Diet*, *The Plant Based Diet*, *The Obesity Code*, etc.) designed to help individuals achieve their weight-loss and weight-management goals. I would like each student in the class who signs up to do this presentation to bring in a different one of these books to share with the class (we will coordinate who will bring in what during class). You will be responsible for bringing the book to class and reading at least the introductory chapter to the book so that you can describe for the class the main gist of the book. A worksheet and additional instruction will be provided to help you complete this assignment. This presentation is intended to be brief and informal (you will NOT stand in front of the class but will remain seated; no slides, etc.).

MEDIA PRESENTATION: A second presentation option in this class is a critique of eating-related messages in the media. Additional information about this project will be forthcoming. Generally, you will be expected to collect 1 media message (e.g., YouTube clip, advertisements, T.V. commercials, etc.) about food, eating, body image, weight status, eating disorders, or any other relevant topic discussed in class that you present to the class along with leading some discussion and critique of the messages within the clip. You will be expected to use information from our course to help you relay whether or not these media messages are positive/ harmful/ helpful to people’s attempts to be healthy. This presentation is intended to be brief and informal (you will NOT stand in front of the class but will remain seated, no slides, etc.).

NOTE: If you have a history of disordered eating or concerns about your own eating behaviors or weight, please notify the instructor. If you believe that any of the readings or assignments required for this course may adversely affect your own efforts to maintain psychological and/or physical health, please notify the instructor and alternatives can be considered.

GRADING:

Grades will be computed as follows:

Attendance and participation	30%
Reading reflections	30%
Food diary	10%
Article presentation	15%
Presentation (diet book or media)	15%

Course Schedule

The following is a *tentative* schedule for this course. Dates may change slightly depending on our *actual* progress in covering the material. See separate reading list for readings that correspond with each topic.

Week 1 Tues, Jan 21	Introduction to the Psychology of Eating	
Week 2 Tues, Jan 28	Eating and Health	<i>Reflection 1: Do you believe that you have positive eating habits; why or why not? Do you think it matters whether or not you eat certain foods? How could you change your eating habits to benefit your health? (Be sure to turn in your own questions with your reflections.)</i>

Week 3 Tues, Feb 4	Food Choice	<i>Reflection 2: What determines your choices about what you eat? How are biological, cognitive, and developmental models of food choice relevant to the choices you make? (Be sure to turn in your own questions with your reflections.)</i>
Week 4 Tues, Feb 11	The Meaning of Food	<i>Food Diaries Due Today</i> (submit via Sakai)
Week 5 Tues, Feb 18	Body Image	<i>Reflection 3: Be honest with yourself; what do you think of people who are overweight? Where do these thoughts come from? What do you think of people who are underweight? Where do these thoughts come from? (Be sure to turn in your own questions with your reflections.)</i>
Week 6 Tues, Feb 25	Body Image	<i>Reflection 4; (turn in this week or next week): What would happen if men, women, boys and girls were suddenly satisfied with their bodies, no matter what size they were? (Be sure to turn in your own questions with your reflections.)</i>
Week 7 Tues, March 3	The Meaning of Size (and Shape) and Dieting	
Week 8 Tues, March 10	Dieting	<i>Diet Book Presentations</i>
Week 9 Tues, March 17	SPRING BREAK	
Week 10 Tues, March 24	Elevated Weight	<i>Reflection 5: What is the main contributor to increases in weight status in recent decades? Is there a difference between what most people view as the contributors to weight status and what scientists know about the contributors to weight?</i>
Week 11 Tues, March 31	Can Weight Be Lost? (revisited, aka “Obesity Treatment”)	<i>Reflection 6: After taking this class, what “treatment approach” would you recommend to a friend who wanted to lose weight?</i>
Week 12 Tues, April 7	Eating Disorders	<i>Reflection 7: Do you know someone who has or had an eating disorder? What factors do you think contributed to the development of this disorder? (to address this week or next)</i>
Week 13 Tues, April 14	Eating Disorders and Treatment	
Week 14 Tues, April 21	Eating Disorder Treatment <i>Begin Media Presentations</i>	<i>Reflection 8: Why are eating disorder patients so resistant to recovery? How do cultural messages regarding food, our bodies, and our weight contribute to the difficult task of treating these patients?</i>
Week 15 Tues, April 28	<i>Media Presentations</i> Wrap-up Class	<i>Reflection 9: What have you learned this semester? What are the public health policy implications of the topics we’ve discussed?</i>

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES:

- 1) This class will be most rewarding for you if you are an active participant in class and view this experience as a collaborative enterprise. To this end, throughout the semester you are encouraged to communicate with your professor (during class and during office hours) and are expected to keep up with all readings and assignments.
- 2) Additional information about this class, and a copy of the syllabus is available on the instructor's web page (<http://www.CharlotteMarkey.com>) and the course Sakai web page (sakai.rutgers.edu). Being unaware of course requirements and expectations is not an excuse for failing to complete any of the assignments in this course.
- 3) If you are in class, you will be expected to be attentive, participate, stay the entire class time, and be prepared for any activities and exams scheduled for that day. You will be asked to leave class if you do any of the following:
 - ~Talk on your cell phone (turn phones off!)
 - ~Text on your cell phone
 - ~Open your lap top computer or tablet
 - ~Pass notes to classmates
 - ~Sleep

You attendance in this course is voluntary. If you do not wish to be in class or prefer to do any of these activities instead of being in class, then you should leave.
- 4) If you miss a class, you are expected to obtain class notes from a classmate and to stay on top of any of the activities/ discussions missed. It is your responsibility to become informed of any announcements made in class. Further, while class exercises/reflections/assignments will not be accepted late, it will increase your understanding of class material (and help you to prepare for exams) if you complete them.
- 5) ***Power point slides presented in class will not be available*** except in class (i.e., these will NOT be posted on the web). If you miss class, you should obtain notes from a classmate and read the assigned readings. Power point slides are intended to organize our class but are not a replacement for class attendance.
- 6) Academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) cheating on exams and plagiarism. Students caught participate in academic dishonesty will receive a score of zero on the relevant assignment. In addition, instances of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Scholastic Conduct Committee. Sanctions for academic dishonesty range from failing an assignment to failing a course or expulsion from the University. For additional information about Rutgers' policies concerning academic integrity refer to: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>.
- 7) For disability accommodations, please call the Disability Services Coordinator Erin Leuthold, Rutgers-Camden Learning Center, (856) 225-6442 or Taryn Cooper tc738@camden.rutgers.edu. Additional information can be found here: <https://learn.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services>. Students who require special accommodations should also contact the instructor within the first few days of class.