CIEE Global Institute Copenhagen

**Course name:** Psychology of Health and Illness  
**Course number:** PSYC 3002 CPDK  
**Programs offering course:** Open Campus  
**Open Campus Track:** Global and Community Health  
**Language of instruction:** English  
**U.S. semester credits:** 3  
**Contact hours:** 45  
**Term:** Spring 2019

**Course Description**

Health psychology focuses on the relationship between behavior, health, and illness while trying to identify the predictors of health-compromising and health-enhancing factors. Through a dual focus on healthcare and psychology, students will examine illness identities in the national context. Special emphasis will be placed on cultural differences related to body image, quality of life, self-help, religious beliefs, alternative medicine, and rituals related to dying and death. Through an examination of the relevant literature, guest lectures and site visits, the course addresses philosophical questions about the perceptions and definitions of what it means to be ‘healthy’ or ‘unhealthy’ within the national context.

**Learning Objectives**

By completing the course students will:

- Evaluate the relationship between behavior, health and illness
- Examine the developments in behavioral patterns in relation to health over time and in various cultures, and in various ethnic and socio-economic groups in national society.
- Critically analyze the regional and national ways of targeting unhealthy lifestyle (diet, smoking, drugs etc): insight in the role of preventative medicine
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of psychological interventions for health promotion
- Appraise the non-rational, emotional side of coping with health and disease and the demand for alternatives for rational Western medicine: (religious) rituals, complementary medicine and self-help.
Course Prerequisites

Students should have completed a semester course in health studies, psychology, sociology, or medical anthropology.

Methods of Instruction

Among other techniques, the methodology used throughout this course will include: teacher presentations with student-teacher dialogue and discussion; active discussion in which students will be expected to prepare presentations to present to the group.

Assessment and Final Grade

- Presentation 15%
- Mid Term Exam 25%
- Health Promotion Campagin 15%
- Final paper 25%
- Participation 20%

Course Requirements

Presentations
Students must conduct a 15-minute presentation in groups on one of the themes discussed. It should show a good understanding of a selected topic and the ability to put it in perspective. The topic should be presented in a concise yet comprehensive manner. They may use audio-visual media such as a video or film if it adds value and is incorporated seamlessly.

Midterm Exam
All students will be required to take an essay based exam in order to measure their development midway through the course. Students will answer five short questions on topics covered.

Health Promotion Campaign
Students will design and develop a health promotion campaign highlighting the national context / health challenges. The project must be delivered as a Poster Session, with students demonstrating the key challenges facing the host country, and what messages and mediums of communication will be most effective.

**Final Paper**
A 1875-3750 words final paper is required. This paper must be an in-depth analysis of one of the topics discussed in class. All papers are research papers and must therefore have proper annotation.

**Participation**
Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

**Attendance Policy**
Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all unexcused absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, unexcused absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent and unexcused. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Unexcused absences will lead to the following penalties:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</th>
<th>Equivalent Number of Open Campus Semester classes</th>
<th>Minimum Penalty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>1 content classes, or up to 2 language classes</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 – 20%</td>
<td>2 content classes, or 3-4 language classes</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements; <strong>written warning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 20%</td>
<td>3 content classes, or 5 language classes</td>
<td>Automatic <strong>course failure</strong>, and possible expulsion</td>
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**Weekly Schedule**

NOTE: the following schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to take advantage of current experiential learning opportunities.

**Week 1**  
**Orientation Week**

Class 1:1  
**Introduction to class**

What is the field of health psychology? How to define health and disease or illness? Health and disease as social constructs. A biopsychosocial approach. Constructions of healthiness as morally superior to unhealthiness will be critically analysed and explored. This will be followed by an exercise where students consider their own preconceived notions of health and illness, their own positions in relation to health discourse and their experiences of health both personally and through their perceptions and experiences of others’ health. Important questions to consider will include: Is health important?, why?, do I try to stay healthy?, what does that mean?, what does it say about me as a person if I am healthy or ill?, how do I feel about others who are healthy and about those who are ill?

Online:
http://denmark.dk/en/lifestyle

Week 2

Class 2:1  Constructions of Health in a Danish Cultural Context

The students will learn about health, behavior and illness in a cultural perspective. International, cultural and historical comparisons of behavioral patterns concerning health and illness will be discussed, with a focus on Denmark.

Readings: men’s health in Denmark:
health disparities:
https://www.sst.dk/en/publications/2011/~/media/83A30419FB1B47C1BC0D725AE50E5A3C.ashx
ethical charter for modelling and examples
https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/talking-about-trauma/201705/denmark-declassifies-transgender-mental-illness

Class 2:2  Mental Health in Denmark

In a country where transgenderism is not classified as a mental disorder, what are the social constructs of disease and health? Topics such as body image, attractiveness, obesity and anorexia nervosa will be addressed from a Danish viewpoint. And what role play gender, race and class here?


Week 3

Class 3:1  Health Promotion in the Danish Healthcare System
The basic structure of the Danish healthcare system will be shown, with an emphasis on preventative health care. Which messages does the government want to come across to the Danish citizens? How to change unhealthy behavior? How to stimulate healthy behavior?

Online:
health promotion packages:

Class 3:2
The Lalonde Model

The model of Lalonde for health promotion will be explained, as will be the role of the media. Site visit: The Danish Health Authority

Online:
health promotion packages:

Mid Term Exam

Week 4
Class 4:1 Alternative Medicine, Self-help and Religion

This week deals with complementary methods of handling health issues. The flaws of the Western evidence based, rational use of medicine are explored. Patient autonomy, tailor-made-medicine and self-help will be adressed, both from a general Western perspective as from a more specific Danish perspective.

Health Promotion Campaign

Class 4:2 Alternative Medicine, Self-help and Religion II

Site visit: Medital Klinik Danmark. Specific attention will be paid to: the concept of self-help and the role of individual responsibility discourses in the experience of illness; the role of religion understanding and coping with disease.


Week 5

Class 5:1 Dying and Death

This class will focus on individual and institutional approaches to managing and coping with illness and death. Death and palliative care-instructions of aging and dying and approaches to facilitating effective end of life care. Rituals and traditions providing comfort and support in end of life situations, in historical and contemporary sickbeds.


Presentations

Class 5:2 Ritual and Palliative Care

Site visit: Urban hospice, Frederiksberg. Students will learn about rituals and traditions providing comfort and support in end of life situations, in historical and contemporary sickbeds.

Week 6

Class 6:1  Looking forward: A critical health psychology practice

Discussion will centre around how students can apply the skills and knowledge they have engaged with over the last few weeks to practical situations or interventions for the future in Denmark and for their own country of origin.


Class 6:2  Final Review

Prior to submitting the final essay, students will review the content of the course.

Final Paper

Readings

Borg, Vilhelm et al., “Social class and self-rated health: can the gradient be explained by differences in life style or work environment?”, Social Science and Medicine 51.7 (2000) 1019-1030. Print.


Online Resources

http://denmark.dk/en/lifestyle


https://www.sst.dk/en/publications/2011/~/media/83A30419FB1B47C1BC0D725AE50E5A3C.ashx


https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/talking-about-trauma/201705/denmark-declassifies-transgender-mental-illness


Recommended Readings


