STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY
Department of Psychology
Course leader: Anna Andreasson, Sandra Blomqvist
Examinator: Göran Kecklund

Psykologi II
Stress and health
VT 2025

Course instructions

STRESS AND HEALTH, 7.5 HP

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Course description

Welcome to the course ***Stress and health*!**
The aim of the course is to provide basic knowledge within the area of stress, health and recovery. The course focuses on current models, theories and concepts and current research in the field of stress and health from a psychobiological, psychosocial and recovery perspective. Topics within the course are: neurobiological, psychological and behavioural stress responses, methods for measuring stress, relationships between stress and (ill) health, the role of recovery and sleep in the context of stress and health, the role of psychosocial factors, individual differences and coping, approaches to prevent and treat negative consequences of (long-term) stress, clinical stress diagnoses and psychological stress treatment.
The course also includes a discussion of popular notions of stress in the media to encourage critical reflection.

Expected learning outcomes

After completing the course, the student should be able to:

1) Describe, apply and critically discuss key concepts, theories, models and methods in the field of stress and health.
2) Describe neurobiological and psychological responses to stress.
3) Give an account of health-related effects of stress and stress-related diseases and how they can be prevented and treated.
4) Describe, analyse and reflect on factors in society, working life and everyday life that can contribute to stress and stress-related ill health, as well as the influence of individual differences.
5) Present and discuss peer-reviewed research articles in the field of stress and health.

Educational activities and attendance

The course consists of lectures, seminars and Journal Clubs.
Educational activities with compulsory attendance are specified in the schedule. Absence from compulsory educational activities needs to be compensated for according to the instructions from the course leader. The course results cannot be finalized and reported until the student has participated in the compulsory educational activities or compensated absence according to the instructions. Attendance at non-compulsory educational activities is highly recommended, as it facilitates the reading of literature and provides an opportunity for in-depth discussion and learning. Both course literature and educational activities form the basis for the written examination. To make the best use of the educational activities, follow the reading instructions.

Journal Clubs
Journal Clubs are literature seminars where small groups summarize and analyse research articles that are linked to the area of stress and health, and prepare a presentation and discussion questions. The research articles are then presented and discussed at the Journal Clubs. Details about the choice of articles and presentation will be given during the course. Each group must also read at least one additional research article presented by another group and prepare discussion questions about this research article.

Participation in Journal Clubs is compulsory.

The purpose of the Journal Clubs is to give the student the opportunity to develop scientific skills such as training the reading of scientific literature and analysing current research, and to orally present and discuss research content.

Examination and course requirements

Requirements to pass the examination are:

i. attendance and active participation in compulsory educational activities (assessment regarding possible compensation assignments is made in each individual case)
ii. passing the Journal Club group work assignment (assessment regarding possible compensation assignments is made in each individual case)
iii. a passing grade on the written examination

Assessment and grading criteria

The final grade for the course is based on the results from the written exam. The written exam is based on all compulsory course literature as well as materials and discussions that have been dealt with at the educational activities.

The written exam is graded according to the seven-point grading scale (from A to F). The overall assessment is based on the following criteria.

A. Excellent
The student can independently connect key concepts, theories and models. The student argues and discusses independently in relation to the course literature and course material and integrates relevant principles and problematizations on a general theoretical level in a meritorious way. The student has earned at least 90% of the total of points in the written exam.

B. Very good
The student can in his / her own words account for differences and similarities between central concepts, theories and models and reason about the relevance, shortcomings and validity of key concepts. The student has earned at least 80% of the total of points in the written exam.

C. Good
The student can in his / her own words explain differences between key concepts, theories and models and can apply key concepts to own examples. The student has earned at least 70% of the total of points in the written exam.

D. Satisfactory
The student can explain key concepts, theories and models in his / her own words. The student has earned at least 60% of the total of points in the written exam.

E. Sufficient
The student can define key concepts and explain the main features of relevant theories and models. The student has earned at least 50% of the total of points in the written exam.

Fx. Insufficient
The expected learning outcomes have not been reached, compensatory work is required.

F. Fail
The expected learning outcomes have not been reached. The student has not earned at least 50% of the total of points in the written exam.

NOTE: The grade "Fx" does not apply for this course. If the student has not earned at least 50% of the total of points in the written exam, the whole written exam must be retaken, not only parts of it.

Plagiarism, cheating and unallowed cooperation

It is your responsibility as a student to be aware of the examination rules at Stockholm University. Detailed information is available both at the web pages of the Department of Psychology and Stockholm University (https://www.su.se/regelboken). Teachers are obliged to report suspicion about cheating and plagiarism to the principle and the disciplinary board. Plagiarism and cheating are always disciplinary matters and can lead to shutting off from studies. One example of plagiarism is to verbatim (word-by-word) or almost verbatim copy a text (also concerns occasional sentences) and not refer to the source of the text. This also concerns texts that you have yourself authored previously (self-plagiarism). For example, cheating includes having unauthorized aids, such as mobile phones, during examination. To be involved in study groups is developing and time efficient, but when it comes to examination tasks you will need make sure that you are working on your own (if nothing else is instructed) in order not to risk that any collaboration will be considered unallowed.

Use of AI tools

Any use of AI tools in written assignments must be disclosed.

Schedule and teachers

see Athena. Check the schedule regularly, as changes may occur during the course.

Literature

Book (ebook available via Stockholm University library)

Anisman, H. (2015). Stress and Your Health: From Vulnerability to Resilience (chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20)

Book chapters and articles

Åkerstedt, T., Perski, A., & Kecklund, G. (2017). Sleep, Occupational Stress, and Burnout *Principles and Practice of Sleep Medicine* (pp. 736-741.e734).

Allen, A. P., Kennedy, P. J., Cryan, J. F., Dinan, T. G., & Clarke, G. (2014). Biological and psychological markers of stress in humans: Focus on the Trier Social Stress Test. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews, 38*, 94-124. doi:10.1016/j.neubiorev.2013.11.005

Berkman, L., Kawachi, I., & Theorell, T. (2014). Working Conditions and Health. In L. F. Berkman, I. Kawachi, & M. M. Glymour (Eds.), *Social Epidemiology* (Vol. Second edition, pp. 153-181). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Carskadon, M. A., & Dement, W. C. (2017). Normal Human Sleep *Principles and Practice of Sleep Medicine* (pp. 15-24.e13).

Crum, A. J., Salovey, P., & Achor, S. (2013). Rethinking stress: The role of mindsets in determining the stress response. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 104*(4), 716-733. doi:10.1037/a0031201

Eriksen, H. R., Hellesnes, B., Staff, P., & Ursin, H. (2004). Are subjective health complaints a result of modern civilization? *Int J Behav Med, 11*(2), 122-125. doi:10.1207/s15327558ijbm1102_9

Geurts, S. A., & Sonnentag, S. (2006). Recovery as an explanatory mechanism in the relation between acute stress reactions and chronic health impairment. *Scand J Work Environ Health, 32*(6), 482-492. doi:10.5271/sjweh.1053

Kinnunen, U., & Mauno, S. (2008). Work–family conflict in individuals' lives: prevalence, antecedents, and outcomes. In J. Hellgren, K. Naswall, & M. Sverke (Eds.), *The Individual in the Changing Working Life* (pp. 126-146). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kivimäki, M., & Steptoe, A. (2018). Effects of stress on the development and progression of cardiovascular disease. *Nature Reviews Cardiology, 15*(4), 215-229. doi:10.1038/nrcardio.2017.189 ***available on Athena***

Lindsäter, E., Axelsson, E., Salomonsson, S., Santoft, F., Ejeby, K., Ljótsson, B., . . . Hedman-Lagerlöf, E. (2018). Internet-Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Chronic Stress: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, 87*(5), 296-305. doi:10.1159/000490742

McEwen, B. S. (2000). Allostasis and Allostatic Load: Implications for Neuropsychopharmacology. *Neuropsychopharmacology, 22*(2), 108-124. doi:10.1016/S0893-133X(99)00129-3

Meerlo, P., Sgoifo, A., & Suchecki, D. (2008). Restricted and disrupted sleep: Effects on autonomic function, neuroendocrine stress systems and stress responsivity. *Sleep Medicine Reviews, 12*(3), 197-210. doi:10.1016/j.smrv.2007.07.007

Park, C. L., & Iacocca, M. O. (2014). A stress and coping perspective on health behaviors: theoretical and methodological considerations. *Anxiety Stress Coping, 27*(2), 123-137. doi:10.1080/10615806.2013.860969

Pienaar, J. (2008). Skeleton key or siren song: is coping the answer to balancing work and well-being? In J. Hellgren, K. Naswall, & M. Sverke (Eds.), *The Individual in the Changing Working Life* (pp. 235-257). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sandi, C. (2013). Stress and cognition. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science*, *4*(3), 245-261. https://doi.org/10.1002/wcs.1222

Siegrist, J. (2017). The Effort–Reward Imbalance Model. In C. L. Cooper & J. C. Quick (Eds.), *The Handbook of Stress and Health* (pp. 24-35).

Taris, T. W., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2015). The Job Demands-Resources Model. In S. Clarke, T. M. Probst, F. Guldenmund, & J. Passmore (Eds.), *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of the Psychology of Occupational Safety and Workplace Health* (pp. 155-180).

Ursin, H., & Eriksen, H. R. (2004). The cognitive activation theory of stress. *Psychoneuroendocrinology, 29*(5), 567-592. doi:10.1016/s0306-4530(03)00091-x

Material for the seminar "Stress in media and in the clinic": will be made available on Athena

Note – Updates in Athena

As the schedule and course instructions may change, please refer to Athena for the latest update. In the event of differences between the present document and a newer one at Athena, the latter applies.