

PSY 362 | Trauma and the Remaking of the Self Spring 2025

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Course Description

People and groups in crisis may experience intense trauma and can be incredibly resilient. This course explores the psychological impact of different types of trauma, including war, accidents, life-threatening events and interpersonal violence. We will discuss the psychological theories used to explain and treat symptoms associated with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Cultural differences when dealing with trauma and gender issues will also be covered in this course. There will be a focus on the refugee crisis, since Greece is currently hosting approximately 50,000 refugees. Finally we discuss ways of reformation following a traumatic event, such as post-traumatic growth and resilience.

Course Approach

This course offers an evidence-based, student-centered approach that is filled with ideas and practices for maximizing student learning and personal growth.

Lectures on course topics are designed to be as interactive as possible by combining different modes of learning. You will read, analyze and interpret book chapters, journal articles and films/ videos. You will work and think with others and you will write. Below we describe our explicit goals for your engagement with each of these types of learning.

Reading: You will read chapters of books and journal articles.

Analyzing and interpreting: You will watch, analyze and interpret a documentary and various Ted talks delivered by trauma professionals and trauma survivors.

Working and thinking with others: You will participate in small group discussions.

Written and Audio work: You will write one paper, two assignments and you will record a podcast.

Presentations: You will present in pairs a journal article about resilience and post-traumatic growth.

Field Trips: Everyone is expected to attend the Field Trips.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Define trauma and distinguish between types of trauma
- Understand and compare different psychological theories that explain trauma
- Consider factors such as age, gender and culture when talking about trauma
- Reflect on the meaning of the material to you, your life and your studies
- Utilize the course material and traumatic stress literature to suggest ways for education to be more trauma-informed.

Note: Many students may have personally experienced trauma or know people who have been exposed to traumatic events. That is why all students should engage in this course respectfully and empathically. No one should feel pushed to discuss their own traumatic experiences, and those who wish to share theirs must choose appropriate ways to self-express. Also, students should keep in mind that the purpose of this course is not to be a self-help guide or to provide counseling to students regarding their own psychological challenges.

Course Requirements

Participation: It is expected that students will come to class ready to actively and respectfully contribute to discussions of the topics listed on this syllabus and to abide by CYA academic policies while completing assignments. Students are also encouraged to maintain active and open communication with me regarding any concerns or questions. Participation in field trips is also essential.

Readings: Book chapters, journal articles and websites are assigned in the weekly schedule list below. Some articles & websites might be assigned as we go along in order to keep up with the most recent developments in the field of Trauma psychology.

Home Assignments: You will be asked to complete three home assignments during the course.

1st Assignment. Research and discuss the existence, activities, actions and implications of an organization in Athens that works with Trauma survivors. Write a short assignment of approximately 2 pages (double-spaced) and submit it on Moodle on the due date.

2nd Assignment. Research an artist or other creative (author, musician, etc.) who attempted to deal with their trauma through their art. Create a 3-4 minutes podcast about them and submit it on Moodle before the Trauma in Art Lecture.

3rd Assignment. You are asked to watch the documentary "Paper Tigers" and then write a review about it. The length of the review should be approximately a page (double-spaced) and you need to submit it on Moodle before the Education and Trauma Lecture.

Presentation:

Students are asked to prepare in pairs a brief presentation of a journal article that focuses on Resilience or Post-Traumatic Growth. The presentation should be in a PowerPoint format. The students will have the opportunity to present their presentations to the rest of the students.

In relation to the presentation try to:

- Use 10-12 slides.
- Use bullets to manage the material presented on the slide and pay attention to the quantity on each slide. Use audio-visual material but not extensively.
- Clarity, precision, expression flow: try to be simple as it is an oral presentation and not an essay
- Maintain visual contact and interaction with the audience
- 10±2 minutes duration
- Reference the sources you have used (e.g. books, movies, youtube-video, etc.) following the APA referencing system.

Paper:

You will be asked to write a midterm paper. The paper must be uploaded onto Moodle by the due date. It needs to be five typed (double-spaced) pages in addition to a title page.

Writing Standards. APA is used for submission of all assignments. An excellent resource for APA style is: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>. You can also use [http:// libraryguides.vu.edu.au/apa-referencing](http://libraryguides.vu.edu.au/apa-referencing).

Please be aware that writing is a critical part of CYA expectations and that students should work diligently toward acquiring and improving their writing skills.

There will be no exams for this class.

The mid-term grade will be based on your mid-term paper grade taking into account participation and attendance in class.

Class Field Work and CYA Field Study: Field work will serve as the platform to understand the context within which trauma occurs. Greece currently hosts approximately 50,000 refugees, most of whom will remain in the country. The effects of long-term trauma is often addressed within programs that operate to support refugees and we will attempt to understand how these programs work.

Class Field Work

Depending on the current situation we may visit a formal refugee camp and an organization that offers services to refugees, where they can share experiences, be listened to and be understood. Being part of that for a day will help the students understand and reflect on refugee trauma.

Evaluation and Grading

Your grade for this course will be based on the following distribution:

Percentages (and any breakdowns)

Assignment 1 - 10%

Assignment 2 - 10%

Assignment 3 - 10%

Mid-term paper - 30% Presentation - 30%

Participation: 10%

Evaluation Criteria - Course Assignments

Midterm paper: Select a topic of your interest on a specific area of traumatic events (such as physical/emotional abuse, natural disaster, war-related crimes) and their impact on a specific population (age, gender, religion etc.) in USA or Abroad. You need to select TWO research articles from published psychology journals. You will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Criteria 1: Thesis
- Criteria 2: Structure
- Criteria 3: Evidence
- Criteria 4: Analysis
- Criteria 5: Mechanics
- Presentation: Prepare a brief presentation of your chosen journal article that talks about resilience or Post-Traumatic Growth. The presentation should be in a PowerPoint format. You will be assessed based on the following criteria:
- Criteria 1: Structure
- Criteria 2: Content
- Criteria 3: Communication
- Criteria 4: Use of Media
- Criteria 5: Time management

CYA Regulations and Accommodations Attendance Policy

CYA regards attendance in class and on-site (in Athens or during field study trips) as essential. Absences are recorded and have consequences.

Academic Accommodations

If you are a registered (with your home institution) student with a disability and you are entitled to learning accommodation, please inform the Office of Academic Affairs and make sure that your school forwards the necessary documentation.

Policy on Original Work

Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own original work. Any ideas taken from the work of others must be clearly identified as quotations, paraphrases, summaries, figures etc., and accurate internal citations and/or captions (for visuals) as well as an accompanying bibliography must be provided.

Use of Laptops

In-class or onsite use of laptops and other devices is permitted if this facilitates course-related activities such as note-taking, looking up references, etc. Laptop or other device privileges will be suspended if devices are not used for class-related work.

Class Schedule

Class Day	Topic / Readings / Assignments Due
1	Overview of the course. We will discuss what this course is about, what we will learn and what to expect as a take away message. In-class activity: What would YOU like to learn from this course? Reading for next lecture: Friedman, M. J., Keane, T. M., Resick, P. A. (Eds.). (2014). Handbook of PTSD. New York: The Guilford Press. Pages 3-7, 38-55.
2	History of Trauma. We will have a brief historical overview of the notion of Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress as a diagnosis. In-class activity: The example of Henry IV and Herodotus Reading for next lecture: Friedman, M. J., Keane, T. M., Resick, P. A. (Eds.). (2014). Handbook of PTSD. New York: The Guilford Press. Epidemiology of Trauma and PTSD by Fran H. Norris and Laurie B. Slone. Page 100 until end of chapter.
3	Types of Trauma. We will discuss the various types of trauma from sexual assault and domestic violence, to traumatic loss and natural disaster. Reading for next lecture: Friedman, M. J., Keane, T. M., Resick, P. A. (Eds.). (2014). Handbook of PTSD. New York: The Guilford Press. Pages 13-17, 21-27, 369-390.
4	How do we identify trauma? How do we differentiate stressful reactions from traumatic ones? PTSD diagnosis according to DSM-5 and ICD-11. Acute Stress Disorder. Complex PTSD.

	Reading for next lecture: Friedman, M. J., Keane, T. M., Resick, P. A. (Eds.). (2014). Handbook of PTSD. New York: The Guilford Press. Chapter 9, Psychological Theories of PTSD by Seth J. Gillihan, Shawn P. Cahill, and Edna B. Foa. Page 166-181.
5	Psychological Approaches to Trauma I. We will go through the main psychological theories explaining trauma. Reading for next lecture: 1. Brewin, C. Re-experiencing traumatic events in PTSD: new avenues in research on intrusive memories and flashbacks. <i>European Journal of Psychotraumatology</i> . 2. Robjant, K and Fazel, M. The emerging evidence for Narrative Exposure Therapy: A review. <i>Clinical Psychology Review</i> .
6	Psychological approaches to trauma II. This will be a follow-up class covering the existing psychological theories and therapies on trauma. Reading for next lecture: Friedman, M. J., Keane, T. M., Resick, P. A. (Eds.). (2014). Handbook of PTSD. New York: The Guilford Press. Chapter 7, Child Traumatic Stress: Prevalence, Trends, Risks and Impact (page 121 until the end of chapter). Suggested Additional Reading: Herman, J.L. (1997). <i>Trauma and recovery</i> . NY: Basic Books, chapter 5, Child Abuse
7	Childhood Trauma. Children who suffer from trauma and how it manifests in their lives will be the focus of this class. Reading for next lecture: Friedman, M. J., Keane, T. M., Resick, P. A. (Eds.). (2014). Handbook of PTSD. New York: The Guilford Press. Pages 351 until end of chapter.
8	Older adults and Trauma. Geriatric populations and how they deal with trauma will be our main concern during this class. Reading for next lecture: Friedman, M. J., Keane, T. M., Resick, P. A. (Eds.). (2014). Handbook of PTSD. New York: The Guilford Press. Gender Issues in PTSD. Pages 313-330.
9	Gender and Trauma. Are there gender differences when we cope with trauma or there is just one, human way to deal with it? Reading for next time: Friedman, M. J., Keane, T. M., Resick, P. A. (Eds.). (2014). Handbook of PTSD. New York: The Guilford Press. Pages 522 until the end of chapter.
10	Culture and Trauma. Here we will discuss the significance of culture when conceptualizing and treating trauma. Reading for next week: Polizzi, C., Lynn, S.J., Perry, A. (2020). Stress and Coping in the Time of COVID-19: Pathways to Resilience and Recovery. <i>Clinical Neuropsychiatry</i> , 17 (2), 59-62.
11	Covid-19 related Trauma. We will discuss how this global pandemic has traumatized certain groups or individuals. We will also talk about previous pandemics and what kind of research data they have provided us with in order to support us with this most recent global health crisis.
12	Field trip to a formal refugee camp. We will visit the unofficial camp of Piraeus that was active between May and July 2016. Reading for next week: von Knorring, AL., Hultcrantz, E. Asylum-seeking children with resignation syndrome: catatonia or traumatic withdrawal syndrome?. <i>Eur Child Adolesc Psychiatry</i> 29, 1103-1109 (2020). hVps://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-019-01427-0
13	Refugee Trauma. We will discuss the definition of refugee, the refugee trauma and the circumstances under which refugees can experience re-traumatization.
14	Field Visit to the NGO Solidarity Now. Solidarity Now provides mental, legal and social support to the most vulnerable ones, including refugees, migrants and people without income.
15	Vulnerability among Trauma Survivors. This class is dedicated to the concept of being vulnerable. We will discuss the definition of vulnerability under the lens of trauma. Reading for next week: Friedman, M. J., Keane, T. M., Resick, P. A. (Eds.). (2014). Handbook of PTSD. New York: The Guilford Press, Resilience, page 590 until end of chapter.
16	Resilience. The concept of resilience is often associated with Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. During this class we will examine the parameters of developing and sustaining resilience.
17	Students' Presentations. Students will present their ppt presentations to the rest of the class.
18	Students' presentations. Students will present their ppt presentations to the rest of the class Reading for next week: Kashdan, T. B., & Kane, J. Q. (2011). Post-traumatic distress and the presence of Post-traumatic growth and meaning in life: Experiential avoidance as a moderator. <i>Personality and individual differences</i> , 50(1), 84-89. hVps://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.08.028
19	Post-traumatic Growth: What is post-traumatic growth? Can we measure it? Can we talk about post-traumatic growth in children?
20	Trauma in Art: The case of Yayoi Kusama. Yayoi Kusama is a Japanese artist, who is famous for her dots' works. She is also a childhood abuse survivor. Reading for next week: Herman, J. (2015). <i>Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence—from domestic abuse to political terror</i> . Basic Books. Chapter 7. The Healing Relationship.
21	Field Visit to Gennadius Library. Gennadius Library is one of the oldest and most beautiful libraries in Athens. We will have an on-site activity in the library's meeting room, where we will research and identify Trauma in the modern literature.
22	Education and Trauma, Part I. This lecture is dedicated to Trauma that occurs within the school community and how the system addresses it.
23	Education and Trauma part II. A guest lecturer with experience in the educational system of Greece will share with us

	their knowledge and insight.
24	End Discussion. This final class will serve as the platform to reflect on what we have learned and how we can use this knowledge to move forward.

Books, Course Materials, Moodle

Below I suggest a list of course readings that will facilitate your participation in the classroom.

Books

- Friedman, M. J., Keane, T. M., Resick, P. A. (Eds.). (2014). Handbook of PTSD. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Herman, J.L. (1997). Trauma and recovery. NY: Basic Books

Journal Articles

- Brewin, C. Re-experiencing traumatic events in PTSD: new avenues in research on intrusive memories and flashbacks. European Journal of Psychotraumatology.
- Kashdan, T. B., & Kane, J. Q. (2011). Post-traumatic distress and the presence of posttraumatic growth and meaning in life: Experiential avoidance as a moderator. Personality and individual differences, 50(1), 84–89. [hVps://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.08.028](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.08.028)
- Polizzi, C., Lynn, S.J., Perry, A. (2020). Stress and Coping in the Time of COVID-19: Pathways to Resilience and Recovery. Clinical Neuropsychiatry, 17 (2), 59-62.
- Robjant, K and Fazel, M. The emerging evidence for Narrative Exposure Therapy: A review. Clinical Psychology Review.
- von Knorring, AL., Hultcrantz, E. Asylum-seeking children with resignation syndrome: catatonia or traumatic withdrawal syndrome?. Eur Child Adolesc Psychiatry 29, 1103–1109 (2020). [hVps://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-019-01427-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-019-01427-0)