



## Childhood Trauma and Adversity Psychology 341K

### Course Details

**Class number:** PSY 341K

**Day of the week:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday

**Time:** 11:00 am – 11:50 pm

**Inclusive dates:** August 23rd 2022 to December 5th 2022

**Semester:** Fall 2022

**Classroom:** BUR 134

**Modality:** Face-to-face

**Course email:** [childhood.trauma.adversity@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:childhood.trauma.adversity@austin.utexas.edu)

### Instructor Details

**Instructor:** Dr. Adela Timmons

**Pronouns:** She/her/hers

**Department:** Psychology

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm or by appointment

**Office:** SEA 4.234

### Teaching Assistant Details

**Teaching Assistant:** Sierra Walters

**Pronouns:** She/her/hers

**Department:** Psychology

**Office Hours:** Mondays 10:00 am – 11:00 am or by appointment

**Office:** SEA 5.130

**Teaching Assistant:** Nicki Benamu

**Pronouns:** She/her/hers

**Department:** Psychology

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm or by appointment

**Office:** SEA 5.130

### Course Description

Welcome to my class! I am excited to have you. In this class, we'll be learning about the complex and multifaceted impacts of childhood trauma on development across the lifespan. This class is divided into four sections: (1) Trauma in All Things, (2) Trauma You Can't See, (3) Cracks of Gold, and (4) The Antidotes. Section 1 examines how childhood trauma affects all aspects of our lives, including our relationships, thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and biology. Section 2 explores the insidious and systematic forms of trauma, including how oppression and discrimination affect our mental and physical health and result in health disparities. Section 3 examines how trauma can promote growth, adaptation, and resiliency. Section 4 explores how we can collectively combat the negative impacts of trauma on society and includes topics related to prevention, intervention, and advocacy. Class will include a variety of formats, such as lectures, discussion, vignettes, videos, and in-class activities. Class is more fun for everyone when you contribute. I encourage you to ask questions and actively participate in the discussion about these important issues!

### **Course Objectives:**

- (1) Obtain foundational knowledge about the field of childhood trauma and adversity
- (2) Understand the multifaceted impacts of trauma on development over the lifespan
- (3) Learn how insidious and systematized forms of trauma contribute to health disparities
- (4) Examine how trauma intersects with issues relating to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice
- (5) Learn how trauma can promote growth, adaptation, and resiliency
- (6) Obtain knowledge on ways to prevent, treat, and mitigate the negative impacts of trauma

### **Class Policies**

- **Syllabus changes:** The information on this syllabus, including the class schedule, is subject to change by the instructor. Any changes will be posted online and announced in class. Students are responsible for staying informed of these changes.
- **Contacting the instructor and teaching assistants:** Please email us for all course-related questions or concerns at: [childhood.trauma.adversity@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:childhood.trauma.adversity@austin.utexas.edu). We maintain a course email account to stay better organized and more efficiently respond to students. We aim to answer student emails within two business days.
- **Office hours:** The instructor and teaching assistants each hold two half-hour office hour timeslots per week (three hours and six slots total). We can meet with you in person or via Zoom. Please schedule appointments using our automated calendar, which is available at: <https://calendly.com/childhood-trauma-adversity>. If you are unable to attend during our regularly occurring office hours, please email us at the course email address listed above to schedule an appointment at an alternative time. We have found that 6 slots per week is typically plenty to meet student need. However, if there are not sufficient slots to meet with us in a timely manner or if your request is time sensitive, please email us at the email address above so that we can set an alternative appointment. If needed, we can expand the number of available slots each week--please let us know if this is needed.
- **Student conduct:** The University of Texas at Austin is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and to demonstrate the quality of their learning. All students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the university. All students are deemed by the university to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the academic misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.
- **Services for students with disabilities:** In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the University of Texas at Austin provides appropriate accommodations and support services to qualified applicants and students with disabilities. These include, but are not limited to, auxiliary aids/services such as sign language interpreters, assistive-listening devices for hearing-impaired individuals, extended time for proctoring of exams, and registration assistance. Accommodations and types of support services vary and are specifically designed to meet the disability-related needs of each student based on current, verifiable medical documentation. Arrangements for auxiliary aids/services are available only through the Disability and Access office. Requests for accommodations **must** go through this office. Please initiate these requests at the start of the semester.
- **Late and incomplete assignments:** Assignments are due by 11:00 am (start of class) on the date stated in the syllabus. Please turn in your assignments online via Canvas. You may turn in late assignments for half credit up until the last day of classes (12/5/22 at 11:00 am). Student

Assignments that do not adhere to page length requirements will receive point deductions off the total score in proportion to what is turned in. If an emergency prevents you from turning in your assignment on time, we will accept a late assignment for full credit **if** you supply us with a Notification Form obtained via Student Emergency Services within two weeks of the due date. To protect your privacy, **we do not collect emergency documentation directly.** You can obtain the Notification Form at this website:

<https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/absencenotificationrequest.php>.

- **Absences:** I encourage you to attend class! Class is much more fun for everyone when students are present and engaged. I do not formally take or grade attendance. However, students will receive participation points for completing in-class activities and turning in in-class worksheets. The schedule of these activities will not be announced ahead of time. We understand that life happens and sometimes emergencies, illnesses, or other concerns can interfere with your ability to attend class. That is why we have included **five built-in absences** into your participation grade. That is, there will be fifteen total in-class activities, but only ten will count toward your final grade. Because you have five built-in absences that do not negatively impact your grade, you will not need to make up participation points or provide documentation for your absences (unless you miss a paper, reading reaction, or exam). Thus, we do not allow you to make up participation points that are missed due to class absences. If you need to miss more than five classes because of a chronic or ongoing problem that interferes with your ability to attend class regularly, please reach out to Student Emergency Services per the instructions above to obtain a Notification Form to excuse additional absences. We are also happy to meet with you to discuss any concerns that interfere with your ability to attend class on a consistent basis.
- **Lecture recordings:** This class is using the Lectures Online recording system. This system records the audio and video material presented in class for you to review after class. Links for the recordings will appear in the Lectures Online tab on Canvas page. You will find this tab along the left side navigation in Canvas. To review a recording, simply click on the Lectures Online navigation tab and follow the instructions presented to you on the page. You can learn more about how to use the Lectures Online system at: <http://sites.la.utexas.edu/lecturesonline/students/how-to-access-recordings/>. You can find additional information about Lectures Online at: <https://sites.la.utexas.edu/lecturesonline/>.
- **Please note that I am a mandated Title IX reporter** and am obligated to make a report to the UT Austin Title IX Office if I am informed of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, interpersonal violence, including dating and domestic violence, stalking, or discrimination on the basis of pregnancy. *This does include past events and events that occurred in childhood.* I will also make reports to the UT Behavior Concerns and Covid-19 Advice line (BCCAL) and/or the UT Police Department if I learn of a threat of harm to self or others or if I learn someone is being abused. Other topics not listed here may also require me to make a report.
- If you are experiencing any mental health symptoms, please reach out to the UT Austin Counseling and Mental Health Center. This website is <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/>. They are open Monday-Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. Their phone number is 512-471-3515. Their crisis line is 512-471-2255.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

- **Modules:** Each week, I will unlock a Canvas Module for you to complete. It will include several components, such as readings and lectures. You should complete the materials for each module

by Monday at 11:00 am that week. The content of the modules is explained in further detail below.

- **Readings:** Read the assigned readings for each week by the following Monday at 11:00 am. The lecture material for the week will generally relate to and reinforce the readings. Approximately 20% of questions on the exam will relate to the readings. Readings will include some scientific journal articles, essays, commentaries, and book chapters from various sources. Readings for each week are posted on Canvas.
- **Reading reactions:** You will be required to turn in a reaction to the readings from the prior week on Canvas most weeks by Monday at 11:00 am. Each reading reaction should be one page doubled spaced with one-inch margins and Times New Roman font. It can include anything from the assigned readings for the week that caught your interest or intrigued you. You will earn full credit if you write one page on a topic relevant to the readings. If you write less than one page, you will receive a deduction in proportion to the percentage of the length requirement you completed. If, based on your response, it is unclear whether you have read the readings or if it appears you are not meaningfully engaging with the reading material, you will receive half credit. There will be ten reading reactions total, each worth two points. Keep in mind, each one is worth 2% of your grade, so they are important to complete each week.
- **In-class activity participation:** 20% of your grade will be based on in-class activity worksheet participation. This includes turning in the in-class activity worksheet to the instructor at the end of class. Please do not forget to put your name on the worksheet! These worksheets will be entered into Canvas as your participation grade. Each worksheet is worth 2% of your grade. Worksheets that are partially completed will receive partial points in proportion to the amount of the worksheet completed. If you earnestly participate and answer all questions on the worksheet, you will receive full credit. The schedule of these activities will not be announced ahead of time. We understand that life happens and sometimes emergencies, illnesses, or other concerns can interfere with your ability to attend class. That is why we have included **five built-in absences** in your participation grade. That is, there will be fifteen total in-class activities, but only ten will count toward your grade. Because you have five built-in absences that do not negatively impact your grade, you will not need to make them up or provide documentation for your absences (unless you missed a reading reaction, paper, or exam). Thus, we do not allow you to make up your participation points missed due to absences. If you need to miss more than five classes due to a chronic or ongoing problem that interferes with your ability to attend class regularly, please reach out to Student Emergency Services per the instructions listed above to obtain a Notification Form to excuse additional absences. We are happy to meet with you to discuss any concerns that interfere with your ability to attend class on a consistent basis.
- **Papers:** You will have two papers each worth 15% of your grade. The papers will require you to integrate concepts from the class and reflect and provide commentary on important topics related to childhood trauma and adversity. Instructions and grading rubrics will be posted on Canvas at least two weeks prior to the paper due date. Papers should be four to six pages long. They should be double spaced in Times New Roman font and have one-inch margins.
- **Exams:** The exams will be approximately one hour long and will be in short essay format. The study guide will contain approximately example 40 essay questions. You will be tested on six essay questions. You will have approximately ten minutes per essay question. Each short essay question will be approximately 1/2 page long. Exam questions will primarily relate to the lecture materials (approximately 20% of exam questions will relate to the readings, including at least one concept not covered in the lectures). The midterm will be 15% of your grade. If scores are

low on the exams, I will curve the exam grades upward (I will never curve grades downward). I will also look at the exam questions and throw out any that are bad (i.e., incorrect for 90% of the class). If you get that question correct, you will receive extra credit. Study guides will be posted on Canvas at least two weeks prior to the exam. I will hold a review one week before the exam. The final exam is non-cumulative.

- **Extra credit:** You will have the opportunity to earn up to three points of extra credit (3% of your grade). You can earn extra credit by (1) following my research lab, @tieslab\_utaustin on Instagram, (2) following my account, @DrAdelaTimmons, on Twitter, and (3) sharing a post from either account. You can turn in your extra credit assignments by following the directions Canvas under the Assignments tab. As part of the assignment, you will provide your Instagram and/or Twitter handle and screenshot evidence.
- **Odds and ends:** All course assignments should be submitted on Canvas by 11:00 am on their due date. Further details and specific grading guidelines for all assignments will be provided under the Announcements tab on Canvas and in class the week before the due date. **Rubrics for papers are also provided on Canvas.** Assignments that do not adhere to page length requirements will receive deductions off the total score in proportion to what is turned in. You will not be penalized for going over page limits. We strive to answer emails and return grades as promptly as possible. In general, please allow us two business days to reply to emails, one week to grade reading reactions and extra credit assignments, and two weeks to grade papers and exams.

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS, DUE DATES, AND POINT BREAKDOWNS			
Assignment	Due Date(s)	Points	Percentage
Reading Reactions	Most weeks	20	20%
In-class Activity Worksheet Participation	Announced in class	20	20%
Paper 1	9/14	15	15%
Midterm Exam	10/7	15	15%
Paper 2	11/2	15	15%
Final Exam	12/5	15	15%
Extra Credit	Any time before 12/5	3	3%

GRADE BREAKDOWN	
Grade	Points
A	93.00% - 100.00%
A-	90.00% - 92.99%
B+	87.00% - 89.99%
B	83.00% - 86.99%
B-	80.00% - 82.99%
C+	77.00% - 79.99%
C	70.00% - 76.99%
D	67.00% - 60.00%
F	59.99% or less

**OVERVIEW OF CHILD TRAUMA TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

<b>W*</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Lecture Topic</b>	<b>Read By</b>	<b>Assignment Due By</b>
<i>Section 1. Trauma in All Things: Relationships, Thoughts, Emotions, Behaviors, and Biology</i>					
<b>1</b>	1	8/22	Introduction and Syllabus		
	2	8/24	What Is Trauma?	Syllabus	
	3	8/26	Trauma at Its Core		
<b>2</b>	4	8/29	Our First Relationships	W1 readings	W1 reading reaction
	5	8/31	How We Think		
	6	9/2	How We Feel		
<b>3</b>		9/5	<i>No class. Happy Labor Day!</i>		
	7	9/7	How We Behave	W2 readings	W2 reading reaction
	8	9/9	Trauma in Our Bodies		
<i>Section 2. Trauma You Can't See: Identity, Discrimination, Systematized Trauma, and Disparities</i>					
<b>4</b>	9	9/12	Trauma in Many Forms	W3 readings	
	10	9/14	Social Identities		Paper 1
	11	9/16	The Self and the World		
<b>5</b>	12	9/19	Bias and Lived Experiences	W4 readings	W4 reading reaction
	13	9/21	Discrimination / the Isms 1		
	14	9/23	Discrimination / the Isms 2		
<b>6</b>	15	9/26	Discrimination / the Isms 3	W5 readings	W5 reading reaction
	16	9/28	Discrimination / the Isms 4		
	17	9/30	Systematized Trauma		
<b>7</b>	18	10/3	Legacies and Health Disparities	W6 readings	W6 reading reaction
	19	10/5	Midterm Exam Review		
	20	10/7	Midterm Exam		
<i>Section 3. Cracks of Gold: Growth, Adaptation, and Resiliency</i>					
<b>8</b>	21	10/10	Cracks of Gold	W7 readings	
	22	10/12	Resiliency		
	23	10/14	Trauma Enforcers		
<b>9</b>	24	10/17	The Abuser and the Abused	W8 readings	W8 reading reaction
	25	10/19	Stories They Tell Us		
	26	10/21	Stories We Tell Ourselves		
<b>10</b>	27	10/24	What Is Adaptive Anyhow?	W9 readings	W9 reading reaction
	28	10/26	Contextual Understanding		
	29	10/28	Compassionate Boundaries		
<i>Section 4. The Antidotes: Prevention, Intervention, Subversion, Advocacy, and Daring</i>					
<b>11</b>	30	10/31	Trauma Therapies 1	W10 readings	
	31	11/2	Trauma Therapies 2		Paper 2
	32	11/4	Trauma and The System		
<b>12</b>	33	11/7	Cultures of Trauma	W11 readings	W11 reading reaction
	34	11/9	Subversion and Advocacy		
	35	11/11	Call Out or Call In?		
<b>13</b>	36	11/14	Burn Out and Overwhelm	W12 readings	W12 reading reaction
	37	11/16	Writing Our Own Stories		
	38	11/18	Alternative Realities		
<b>14</b>		11/21	<i>No class. Have a great break!</i>		

		11/23			
		11/25			
<b>15</b>	39	11/28	Courage and Daring	W13 readings	W13 reading reaction
	40	11/30	End-of-Semester Synthesis		
	41	12/2	Final Exam Review		
<b>16</b>	42	12/5	Final Exam		

\*W = week