

SYLLABUS

1. Program details

1.1 Higher education institution	West University of Timișoara
1.2 Faculty / Department	Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences
1.3 Department	Psychology
1.4 Field of study	Psychology
1.5 Cycle of studies	Bachelor's study
1.6 Study program / Qualification	Psychology-Cognitive Science

2. Discipline details

2.1 Discipline name	Cognition and Health						
2.2 Tenured teacher - course activities	Assist. Prof. Gianina LĂZĂRESCU, Ph.D. Student						
2.3 Tenured teacher – seminar / laboratory activities	Assist. Prof. Gianina LĂZĂRESCU, Ph.D. Student						
2.4 Study year	3rd	2.5 Semester	1	2.6 Type of assessment	Exam	2.7 Discipline regime	DOP
2.5 Google Classroom code	pdhbwts5						

3. Estimated total time (hours per semester) of teaching activities

3.1 Number of hours per week	4	Of which: 3.2 course	2	3.3 seminar/laboratory	2
3.4 Total hours from the curriculum	56	Of which: 3.5 course	28	3.6 seminar/laboratory	28
Time fund distribution:					Hours
Study based on the textbook, course material, bibliography, and notes					20
Additional documentation in the library, on specialist electronic platforms / in the field					14
Preparing seminars/labs, homework, papers, portfolios, and essays					22
Tutoring					1
Examinations					2
Other activities					10
3.7 Total hours of individual study	69				
3.8 Total hours per semester	125				
3.9 Number of credits (ECTS)	5				

4. Prerequisites (where necessary)

4.1 for curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No prerequisite necessary, however basic knowledge in Cognitive Psychology is recommended.
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4.2 for competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No prerequisite necessary. Please note the course will be held in English
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5. Conditions (where necessary)

5.1 for conducting the course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at lectures: minimum 50% (at least 7 attendances)
5.2 for conducting the seminar/laboratory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at seminars: minimum 70% (at least 10 attendances)
5.3 Technical requirements for access and participation All course and seminar materials will be uploaded to Google Classroom. Students must register on Google Classroom using the course code and their institutional email address.	

6. Course objectives – expected learning outcomes supported by the completion and successful passing of the course

Knowledge	<p>The student/graduate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> logically and coherently describes the basic principles underlying the science of psychology, within the context of current professional practice. appropriately identifies the main characteristics associated with mental health and psychological well-being, with typical and atypical functioning and development, as well as their prerequisites, within the interaction with the beneficiaries of psychological services. distinguishes the main theories and models of communication required in the relationship with the client. relates the main theories of social relationships/interactions relevant for client interaction. appropriately uses the language and terminology specific to the field in interactions with the beneficiary of psychological services, ensuring that the conveyed message is clearly understood.
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Skills	<p>The student/graduate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adapts psychological terminology in communication with different socio-professional categories targeted as clients, as well as according to the type of diagnosis and intervention. • adequately calibrates their behavior when interacting with clients in different emotional states. • carries out the necessary steps for interviewing, listening to, and observing the client during interactions. • critically analyzes information from scientific literature, medical/educational/organizational documents, stakeholder analyses, and other available sources when providing psychological services to clients. • negotiates tasks/objectives and the necessary resources with clients and other significant persons in the context of providing psychological services
Responsibility and autonomy	<p>The student/graduate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistently applies specific norms, standards, and methodologies in designing psychological assessment procedures • demonstrates professionalism by formulating relevant questions to understand the client's behavior and the interpretation of events in which they are involved during interactions. • shows interpersonal openness by being responsive to the client's needs and objectives within the relationship. • empathizes with the client by seeking to understand their situation and by sharing the feelings experienced by the client within the psychologist-client relationship. • demonstrates collaborative openness when working with clients and other individuals, in a relational manner based on respect for the "other."

7. Contents

7.1 Course	Teaching methods	Observations
C1. Health Psychology and Cognition: A Biopsychosocial framework	Interactive lecture and discussion	<p><i>To read:</i> Brannon, L., & Updegraff, J. A., & Feist, J. (2022). <i>Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health</i>. Cengage Learning, Chapter 1: pages 1-22 Sanderman, R., & Morgan, K. (2025). <i>The Routledge International Handbook of Health Psychology: Global and Contemporary Issues</i>. Taylor & Francis, Chapter 3: pages 48-67</p>
C2. Cognitive models of health beliefs and risk perception	Interactive lecture and discussion	<p><i>To read:</i> Brannon, L., & Updegraff, J. A., & Feist, J. (2022). <i>Health psychology: An introduction to</i></p>

		<p><i>behavior and health</i>. Cengage Learning, Chapter 4: 65-94</p> <p>Sanderman, R., & Morgan, K. (2025). <i>The Routledge International Handbook of Health Psychology: Global and Contemporary Issues</i>. Taylor & Francis, Chapter 2: pages 22-47</p>
C3. Stress appraisal and cognitive coping	Interactive lecture and discussion	<p><i>To read:</i></p> <p>Brannon, L., & Updegraff, J. A., & Feist, J. (2022). <i>Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health</i>. Cengage Learning, Chapter 5: pages 95-114</p> <p>Taylor, S. E. (2018). <i>Health Psychology</i>. New York: McGraw Hill Education, Chapter 6: pages 114-136</p>
C4. Resilience and positive cognition in health	Interactive lecture and discussion	<p><i>To read:</i></p> <p>Brannon, L., & Updegraff, J. A., & Feist, J. (2022). <i>Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health</i>. Cengage Learning, Chapter 5: pages 114-129</p> <p>Sanderman, R., & Morgan, K. (2025). <i>The Routledge International Handbook of Health Psychology: Global and Contemporary Issues</i>. Taylor & Francis, Chapter 37: pages 623-634</p> <p>Taylor, S. E. (2018). <i>Health Psychology</i>. New York: McGraw Hill Education, Chapter 7: pages 137-157</p>
C5. Cognition and pain perception	Interactive lecture and discussion	<p><i>To read:</i></p> <p>Brannon, L., & Updegraff, J. A., & Feist, J. (2022). <i>Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health</i>. Cengage Learning, Chapter 7: pages 155-184</p> <p>Sanderman, R., & Morgan, K. (2025). <i>The Routledge International Handbook of Health Psychology: Global and Contemporary Issues</i>. Taylor & Francis, Chapter 22: pages 362-378</p> <p>Taylor, S. E. (2018). <i>Health Psychology</i>. New York: McGraw Hill Education, Chapter 10: pages 199-216</p>
C6. Cognition and health-compromising behaviors I: Tobacco use	Interactive lecture and discussion	<p><i>To read:</i></p> <p>Brannon, L., & Updegraff, J. A., & Feist, J. (2022). <i>Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health</i>. Cengage Learning, Chapter 12: 305-335</p> <p>Sanderman, R., & Morgan, K. (2025). <i>The Routledge International Handbook of Health Psychology: Global and Contemporary Issues</i>. Taylor & Francis, Chapter 13: pages 222-242</p> <p>Taylor, S. E. (2018). <i>Health Psychology</i>. New York: McGraw Hill Education, Chapter 5: pages 101-110</p>

C7. Cognition and health-compromising behaviors II: Alcohol use	Interactive lecture and discussion	<p><i>To read:</i> Brannon, L., & Updegraff, J. A., & Feist, J. (2022). <i>Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health</i>. Cengage Learning, Chapter 13: 335-367 Sanderman, R., & Morgan, K. (2025). <i>The Routledge International Handbook of Health Psychology: Global and Contemporary Issues</i>. Taylor & Francis, Chapter 13: pages 222-242 Taylor, S. E. (2018). <i>Health Psychology</i>. New York: McGraw Hill Education, Chapter 5: pages 94-101</p>
C8. Cognition and health-compromising behaviors II: Eating, obesity and body image	Interactive lecture and discussion	<p><i>To read:</i> Brannon, L., & Updegraff, J. A., & Feist, J. (2022). <i>Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health</i>. Cengage Learning, Chapter 13: 367-396 Sanderman, R., & Morgan, K. (2025). <i>The Routledge International Handbook of Health Psychology: Global and Contemporary Issues</i>. Taylor & Francis, Chapter 14: pages 242-256 Taylor, S. E. (2018). <i>Health Psychology</i>. New York: McGraw Hill Education, Chapter 5: pages 79-94</p>
C9. Cognition, sleep, and self-regulation	Interactive lecture and discussion	<p><i>To read:</i> Brannon, L., & Updegraff, J. A., & Feist, J. (2022). <i>Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health</i>. Cengage Learning, Chapter 15: 407-409 Sanderman, R., & Morgan, K. (2025). <i>The Routledge International Handbook of Health Psychology: Global and Contemporary Issues</i>. Taylor & Francis, Chapter 29: pages 495-507 Taylor, S. E. (2018). <i>Health Psychology</i>. New York: McGraw Hill Education, Chapter 4: pages 64-78</p>
C10. Cognition and chronic illness management	Interactive lecture and discussion	<p><i>To read:</i> Brannon, L., & Updegraff, J. A., & Feist, J. (2022). <i>Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health</i>. Cengage Learning, Chapter 11: 275-303 Sanderman, R., & Morgan, K. (2025). <i>The Routledge International Handbook of Health Psychology: Global and Contemporary Issues</i>. Taylor & Francis, Chapter 24: pages 395-431 Taylor, S. E. (2018). <i>Health Psychology</i>. New York: McGraw Hill Education, Chapter 11: pages 218-237</p>
C11. Cognitive approaches to terminal illness and dying	Interactive lecture and discussion	<p><i>To read:</i> Sanderman, R., & Morgan, K. (2025). <i>The Routledge International Handbook of Health Psychology: Global and Contemporary Issues</i>. Taylor & Francis, Chapter 23: pages 379-394</p>

		Taylor, S. E. (2018). <i>Health Psychology</i> . New York: McGraw Hill Education, Chapter 12: pages 239-257
C12. Attachment, cognition, and health outcomes	Interactive lecture and discussion	<i>To read:</i> Sanderman, R., & Morgan, K. (2025). <i>The Routledge International Handbook of Health Psychology: Global and Contemporary Issues</i> . Taylor & Francis, Chapter 16: pages 277-285; Chapter 17: 285-301; Chapter 18: 322-337
C13. Psychoneuroimmunology: cognitive pathways to immunity and autoimmune diseases	Interactive lecture and discussion	<i>To read:</i> Brannon, L., & Updegraff, J. A., & Feist, J. (2022). <i>Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health</i> . Cengage Learning, Chapter 6: 129-152
C14. Cognitive interventions for health and wellbeing	Interactive lecture and discussion	<i>To read:</i> Freeman, A., Felgoise, S.H., & Davis, D.D. (2008) <i>Clinical Psychology – Integrating Science and Practice</i> . Wiley, pages 281-318 Taylor, S. E. (2018). <i>Health Psychology</i> . New York: McGraw Hill Education, Chapter 3: pages 45-56 Trull, T.J., Prinstein, M.J. (2013) <i>Clinical Psychology</i> . Belmont, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, pages 309-456.
<p>References:</p> <p>Brannon, L., & Updegraff, J. A., & Feist, J. (2022). <i>Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health</i>. Cengage Learning</p> <p>Freeman, A., Felgoise, S.H., & Davis, D.D. (2008) <i>Clinical Psychology – Integrating Science and Practice</i>. Wiley.</p> <p>Sanderman, R., & Morgan, K. (2025). <i>The Routledge International Handbook of Health Psychology: Global and Contemporary Issues</i>. Taylor & Francis.</p> <p>Taylor, S. E. (2018). <i>Health Psychology</i>. New York: McGraw Hill Education</p> <p>Trull, T.J., Prinstein, M.J. (2013) <i>Clinical Psychology</i>. Belmont, Wadsworth Cengage Learning</p>		
7.2 Seminar / laboratory	Teaching methods	Observations
S1. Health psychology and cognition: A biopsychosocial framework	Presentation, activity in small groups, case studies, debate	<i>Required reading: same as lecture C1.</i> Students will work in small groups on a clinical case (e.g., a patient with cardiovascular disease). Each group will analyze the case through one dimension (biological, psychological, or social). Then the groups will integrate their perspectives and present how cognition mediates between these factors.
S2. Applying cognitive models to health behaviors	Pair activity, debate, role-play, case studies and class discussions	<i>Required reading: same as lecture C2.</i> Students will be given a short scenario (e.g., a person refusing vaccination). Working in pairs, one acts as the „patient” and one as the „health professional”. They apply the Health Belief Model or Theory of Planned Behavior to explain and challenge the decision. After the role-play, the class will discuss how cognitive models help predict and change health behavior.

S3. Stress appraisal and cognitive coping in practice	Activity in small groups, case studies, role-play and class discussions	<i>Required reading: same as lecture C3.</i> The seminar will begin with short vignettes of stressful events. Students, in groups, will identify primary and secondary appraisal in each vignette. Then, they will suggest examples of problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidant coping strategies. The session ends with a role-play where a student acts as counselor helping someone reframe a stressful situation.
S4. Building resilience and positive cognition	Activity in small groups, role-play and class discussion	<i>Required reading: same as lecture C4.</i> Students will practice cognitive reappraisal exercises in pairs: one presents a difficult situation, and the other helps to reframe it more positively. The seminar will also include a guided discussion on optimism, self-efficacy, and sense of coherence, with students asked to connect these to specific health outcomes.
S5. Cognition and pain perception	Activity in small groups, role-play, case studies and class discussion	<i>Required reading: same as lecture C5.</i> Students will analyze a case of a patient with chronic pain. They will identify catastrophic thinking and maladaptive beliefs. In groups, they will role-play therapist and patient, practicing CBT techniques such as identifying distorted thoughts and replacing them with adaptive cognitions.
S6. Cognitive biases in smoking	Debate, role-play and class discussion	<i>Required reading: same as lecture C6.</i> The seminar will include a debate: „Does smoking really relax people?” Students will deconstruct common smoking-related expectancies. They will then perform role-plays of motivational interviewing, where one plays a smoker and the other a counselor, focusing on challenging cognitive biases and reinforcing healthy decisions.
S7. Alcohol use and cognitive distortions	Activity in small groups, debate and class discussion	<i>Required reading: same as lecture C7.</i> Students will explore how alcohol advertisements shape beliefs and expectations about drinking. The session begins with the class analyzing several real ads, identifying the cognitive expectancies they promote, such as the idea that alcohol makes people more sociable, more attractive, or more confident. After this discussion, students are asked to work in small groups to design counter-advertisements that challenge these distorted cognitions using concepts from cognitive and health psychology. Each group will use an AI tool (for slogans and messages, or an image generator for visual content) to create their campaign. At the end, the groups will present their AI-assisted counter-ads to the class, followed by a short reflection on how cognitive expectancies can

		be reshaped not only in theory but also in practical health promotion campaigns.
S8. Eating, obesity and body image	Activity in small groups and class discussion	<i>Required reading: same as lecture C8.</i> Students will analyze a clinical vignette of an adolescent with an eating disorder. They will discuss the role of social comparison, body image, and objectification. In groups, they will identify distorted cognitions in the vignette and propose cognitive-behavioral strategies to address them.
S9. Sleep, cognition, and self-regulation	Activity in small groups, role-play and class discussion	<i>Required reading: same as lecture C9.</i> The seminar begins with a class discussion on common dysfunctional beliefs about sleep (e.g., „If I don't sleep 8 hours, I will fail tomorrow”). Students are divided into small groups and each group is asked to identify such distorted cognitions and then propose alternative, more realistic thoughts that could reduce anxiety and improve sleep, a process of cognitive restructuring. A role-play exercise will follow, with one student as therapist guiding a patient with insomnia.
S10. Cognitive adaptation to chronic illness	Activity in small groups, case studies, role-play and class discussion	<i>Required reading: same as lecture C10.</i> Students will be presented with a case of a patient with diabetes or cancer. In small groups, they will identify illness representations (cause, consequences, control, timeline). After that, they will simulate conversations between patient and health psychologist focusing on improving adherence and self-management through cognitive change.
S11. Cognitive approaches to terminal illness and dying	Activity in small groups, role-play and class discussion	<i>Required reading: same as lecture C11.</i> Students imagine the thoughts of a patient facing terminal illness and those of the patient's family. In pairs, they will role-play counselor and patient dialogues focusing on meaning-making, acceptance, and reframing cognitive distortions about dying.
S12. Attachment, cognition and health outcomes	Activity in small groups, role-play, case studies and class discussion	<i>Required reading: same as lecture C12.</i> Students will complete a short attachment style questionnaire. In groups, they will analyze how attachment-related cognitions influence health outcomes. Role-plays will simulate patient and therapist interactions with different attachment styles (anxious, avoidant) and their implications for treatment adherence.
S13. Psychoneuroimmunology and cognitive pathways	Activity in small groups, case studies, debate and class discussion	<i>Required reading: same as lecture C13.</i> A clinical vignette of a patient with an autoimmune disease will be discussed. Students will identify how stress appraisal and perceived control affect immunity. Groups will brainstorm and present

		possible cognitive-behavioral interventions to reduce stress and improve immune functioning.
S14. Practicing cognitive interventions for health	Activity in small groups, debate and class discussion	<i>Required reading: same as lecture C14.</i> The seminar will take the form of a mini-workshop. Students, in pairs, will practice simple CBT and mindfulness techniques for health-related problems. Each pair will present their intervention to the class, and the group will discuss the strengths and limitations of each approach.
<p>References:</p> <p>Brannon, L., & Updegraff, J. A., & Feist, J. (2022). <i>Health psychology: An introduction to behavior and health</i>. Cengage Learning</p> <p>Freeman, A., Felgoise, S.H., & Davis, D.D. (2008) <i>Clinical Psychology – Integrating Science and Practice</i>. Wiley.</p> <p>Sanderman, R., & Morgan, K. (2025). <i>The Routledge International Handbook of Health Psychology: Global and Contemporary Issues</i>. Taylor & Francis.</p> <p>Taylor, S. E. (2018). <i>Health Psychology</i>. New York: McGraw Hill Education</p> <p>Trull, T.J., Prinstein, M.J. (2013) <i>Clinical Psychology</i>. Belmont, Wadsworth Cengage Learning</p>		

8. Correlation of discipline contents with the expectations of the representatives of the epistemic community, professional associations and representative employers in the field related to the program

The course enables the student to apply the theoretical knowledge acquired regarding the structure and the functioning of the human cognition, to a wide set of ecological settings and clinical conditions. Therefore, a particular attention is given to the applicative perspectives deriving from the discipline, thus contributing to the development of both a particular sensitivity to cognition and health in a wide perspective, and to specific professional skills (in terms of assessment and intervention). Finally, the course supports the development of critical thinking when reading the relevant scientific literature in the field, a capacity that is fundamental for the professional profile of a psychologist.

9. Assessment

Activity type	9.1 Assessment criteria	9.2 Assessment methods	9.3 Weight of final mark
9.4 Course	Exam	Course assessment will consist of a written exam at the end of the semester. The exam will include two parts. The first part will be a multiple-choice test that covers the main theoretical concepts discussed in the lectures. The second part will be a short applied section in which students will be presented with a brief case vignette and will have to answer some open questions. These questions will require them to apply cognitive health psychology concepts to analyze the case.	60%
9.5 Seminar / laboratory	Test	In week 7, students will receive a short vignette based on the topics covered in the first six seminars.	40%

		In week 14, they will receive a second vignette, this time focused on the content of seminars seven to thirteen. Each evaluation will be very brief: a short case description followed by three or four guiding questions. The questions will ask students to analyze the situation from a health psychology and cognition perspective, for example by identifying relevant cognitive processes or by suggesting adaptive strategies and possible interventions. Both evaluations will be written individually in class. Each evaluation will count for 20%, and the average of the two will represent the seminar grade, which makes up 40% of the final grade for the course.	
<p>Within this course, the use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Copilot, etc.) is permitted only under the conditions set by the course/seminar instructor and in compliance with academic integrity regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitted uses: brainstorming ideas, support for writing and structuring, translations, linguistic revisions, generation of images, graphs, diagrams, illustrations, video or audio materials, avatars, and other digital objects, exclusively for educational purposes. • Prohibited uses: the full generation of assignments (essays, reports, projects) or presenting content created by generative AI as exclusively personal work. <p>For any written assignment (essay, portfolio, project, etc.), students are required to complete a transparency declaration form (available on the course platform). This document must specify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the tool used and its version, • the type of support provided by generative AI, • how the content was verified and integrated. <p>Failure to declare the use of generative AI will be considered a violation of academic integrity regulations and will be treated in accordance with UVT regulations.</p> <p>Students are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verifying the accuracy and relevance of the generated content, • respecting confidentiality and copyright, • critically and personally integrating the results obtained with generative AI. <p>The details of these usage conditions will be presented and discussed during the first course and seminar session.</p>			
9.6 Minimum performance standard			
<p>Entry condition for the exam: completion of the seminar tasks, at least 70% attendance at seminars, and at least 50% attendance at lectures.</p> <p>Exams will be held in person.</p> <p>For the grade improvement exam, students will be assessed on the lecture material.</p> <p>Passing the seminar with a minimum grade of 5 (five) is a mandatory condition for participation in the exam, both in the regular session and in retake exams. Failure to pass the seminar requires re-enrollment in the course.</p> <p>Both the exam and the seminar must be passed with a minimum grade of 5 (five).</p>			

Meeting the minimum attendance requirement is a condition for entry to the exam both in the first session and in retake exams. If students do not meet this condition, they will be required to complete additional tasks (such as solving case studies, preparing summaries of the specialized literature, etc.).

The final mark will be a composite score derived by the mean of the grades obtained at the two assessments, taking into consideration the weight of each task on the final mark.
The final mark must be at least 5 (five) to pass this course.

Date of completion:
15.09.2025

Tenure teacher:
Gianina LĂZĂRESCU, Ph.D. stud.
Assist. Prof

Date of approval in the department

Head of Department:
Delia VÎRGĂ, Ph.D.
Professor