
Military Psychology

Psych 480 – Spring – 2023

Eric A. Zillmer, Psy.D.

Zillmer@drexel.edu

Class Meetings: Tuesday/Thursday 9:30-10:50 am

Classroom: Media Room, Room # 023, Daskalakis Athletic Center

Office Hours

Tuesdays 11:00 am - 1:00 pm or by appointment

Office: Main Administrative Suite 100B, Department of Athletics, Daskalakis Athletic Center

Text

Kennedy, C. H., & Zillmer, E. A. (2022).

Military Psychology Third Edition – Clinical and Operational Applications New York City: Guilford.

Optional Text: Kennedy, C.H. (2020). *Military Stress Reactions: Rethinking Combat Stress and PTSD*, New York: Guilford.

This optional text takes a deep dive into military cultural competence in the context of military stressor and trauma. It is a key text if you will be working with service members and/or veterans.

Course Description

Military Psychology introduces students to psychological information relevant to the armed forces, the law enforcement setting, as well as the intelligence and national security community. Best practices are reviewed for conducting fitness-for-duty evaluations, treating frequently encountered clinical problems, including PTSD, responding to disasters, and promoting the health and well-being of all military and law-enforcement personnel. New information regarding the role the military mental health professional plays in enhancing operational readiness, hostage negotiation, concussion management, military sexual assault, and security clearance evaluations are also covered.

Course Objectives

- The intent of Military Psychology is to provide a discussion of the psychology of the armed forces.
- To facilitate a dynamic understanding the course will focus on an integration of applications and theory, process, case examples, and research.
- To challenge the student to examine the field of military psychology as a framework for behavior.
- To acquire a deeper understanding of the basic theoretical and practical issues in Military Psychology.
- To examine critically the assumptions and practical applications underlying Military Psychology.

Course Goals

The specific goals are for the student to gain an understanding of:

- The History of Military Psychology
- What is a Fitness-for-Duty Evaluation?
- Identifying Essential Psychological Attributes of High-Risk Operational Personnel
- What is Combat Stress on the Battlefield?
- Define, Assess, and Treat Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
- The role of Clinical Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine in Military Healthcare Settings
- Post-disaster Management in Mental Health
- Neuropsychological Practice in the Military
- Suicide Prevention in the Military
- Substance Abuse Services and Gambling Treatment in the Military
- Crisis and Hostage Negotiation
- Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) Training: Preparing Military Members for the Demands of Captivity
- Ethical Dilemmas in Military Environments

Course Expectations

It is expected that the student is familiar with common psychological concepts, research methodology, and mental health disorders. In addition, students should be familiar with basic research and scientific principles in psychology. Furthermore, it is expected that students come prepared to class to participate in the activities and discussion.

Evaluation

The following activities need to be successfully completed to obtain a grade in the course:

1. In class-project (two-page summary of a textbook chapter of your choice of one of the assigned chapters for the course). An example will be handed out in class. This assignment will be graded for completion, with a focus on clarity, organization, and content. You are asked to review one of the chapters assigned and “make it your own” by preparing a two-page, 10-point font, two-column, .5 inches margin, document of the most important aspects of the chapter (i.e., outline and summary). Chapters will be assigned in class and are due the class before the chapters are discussed. (25%)
2. Final project. Due finals week (opinion-editorial paper) (75%; Paper = 50%, Final Presentation = 25%)
The final project will consist of two parts. The first part, worth 50%, is a 500-700 word typed op-ed (opinion-editorial piece) on a popular and relevant topic related to the armed forces as it applies to military psychology. In this op-ed piece you will express your own thoughts and opinion in a logical manner on a current topic of military psychology. You will be asked to support and substantiate your thoughts with information from the class text. Examples of op-ed pieces will be handed out in class. The topic to be addressed is decided by the students themselves but needs to be approved by the professor. The topic will be based on a current, popular issue facing the military, which is being covered by the international news media, as it applies to one of the textbook chapters.

The second part of the final project is a TED talk, that is a 7-minute-presentation of this opinion paper (25%). The presentation and preparation of the material is the students' responsibility. The student needs to demonstrate in-depth mastery of the material, meaning that they need to demonstrate a solid understanding of the issues involved from both a theoretical and personal point of view. Students will be required to deliver a formal 7-minute presentation on their project at the end of the term without visual aids. The presentation will be graded. Grading guidelines are presented below.

How to Write an Op-Ed Piece

Here's a checklist to keep your op-ed on track:

- Focus tightly on one issue or idea --- in your first paragraph. Be brief.
- Express your opinion, then base it on factual, researched, or first-hand information.
- Be timely, controversial, but not outrageous. Be the voice of reason.
- Be personal and conversational; it can help you make your point.
- Be humorous, provided that your topic lends itself to humor.
- Have a clear editorial viewpoint - come down hard on one side of the issue. Don't equivocate.
- Provide insight, understanding to educate your reader without being preachy.
- Near the end, clearly re-state your position and issue a call to action. Don't philosophize.
- Don't ramble or let your op-ed unfold slowly, as in an essay.
- Use clear, powerful, direct language.
- Emphasize active verbs.
- Avoid clichés and jargon.
- Appeal to the average reader. Clarity is paramount.
- Write 500-700 double-spaced words.
- Include a brief bio, along with your phone number, email address, and mailing address at the bottom.
- Examples (Zillmer) –

<http://www.cnn.com/2012/03/13/opinion/zillmer-afghanistan-killing/>

<https://edition.cnn.com/2015/03/27/opinions/zillmer-germanwings-co-pilot/index.html>

<https://nation.time.com/2013/03/25/plumbing-the-quantico-killings/>

Guide for grading presentation.

Categories

Verbal Skills (50 points) – Articulation, Volume, Inflection, Pace, Noise, Clarity

General (50 points) – Structured, Transitions, Organized, Prepared, Content, Knowledge, Questions, Fear Control, Creative, Enthusiastic

Guide for grading final paper.

Control, Creative, Relevance, Organization, Flow, Opinion, Creativity

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is required and will be taken. Missing two classes will result in an extra assignment to receive a grade. Missing three classes will result in an extra assignment and your final grade will be lowered by half a grade point. Missing 4 classes will result in an extra assignment and a full final grade point deduction. Missing 5 classes or more results in failing the course.

Grading

In-class chapter assignment: 25%

Final project: 75%

Grade Calculation

A+ = 97 – 100 points

A = 93 – 96 points

A- = 90 – 92 points

B+ = 87 – 89 points

B = 83 – 86 points

C+ = 77 – 79 points

C = 73 – 76 points

C- = 70 – 72 points

D+ = 67 – 69 points

D = 63 – 66 point

B- = 80 – 82 points

F = < 63 points

Academic Honesty

It is expected that you are fully aware of and understand the university policies as they relate to academic honesty as outlined in the Drexel University Student Handbook.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Students with documented disabilities who need accommodations, have emergency medical information, or require special arrangements for building evacuation should contact the instructor within the first two weeks of classes. Verification of special arrangements need to be made through the Office of Disability Services, Room 215 Creese Student Center, 215-895-2506. For further information see also:

www.drexel.edu/studentlife/disability.

Dropping and Withdrawing from Class

Please be aware of all Drexel University policies governing dropping or withdrawing from this course. Consult with the professor when making decisions beyond the first two weeks of class regarding your continuation in the class.

Quarter Outline - Week of:

Week 1

Syllabus - Course Introduction, Hand-outs Time.com

<http://nation.time.com/contributor/eric-a-zillmer/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/alpha-blog-charlie/202311/the-evolution-of-clinical-military-psychology>

CHAPTER 1. A History of Military Psychology.

Week 2.

CHAPTER 2. Military Fitness-for-Duty Evaluations.

CHAPTER 13. Assessment and Selection of High-Risk Operational Personnel: Key Competencies of High-Risk Operators

Week 3

CHAPTER 3. Military Stress Reactions.

<http://www.cnn.com/2012/03/13/opinion/zillmer-afghanistan-killing/>

CHAPTER 4. Evidence-Based Treatments of Common Psychological Health Disorders in the Military.

Week 4

CHAPTER 5. Behavioral Health Services within Primary-Care Clinics.

CHAPTER 6. Managing Military-Specific Concussion for the General Practitioner.

Week 5

CHAPTER 7. Substance Use Disorder Services and Gambling Treatment in the Military.

CHAPTER 8. Military Sexual Assault.

Week 6

CHAPTER 9. Suicide Prevention and the Military Psychologist.

CHAPTER 10. Embedded and Expeditionary Mental Health Practice in the Military.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/alpha-blog-charlie/202301/military-embedded-psychology>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/alpha-blog-charlie/202309/military-embedded-psychology-in-action>

Week 7

CHAPTER 11. Military Applications of Disaster Mental Health.

CHAPTER 12. Introduction to Operational Psychology.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/alpha-blog-charlie/202306/what-is-military-operational-psychology>

Week 8

CHAPTER 11. Crisis and Hostage Negotiation
CHAPTER 12. Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) Training: Preparing Military Members for the Demands of Captivity

Week 9

CHAPTER 14. Security Clearance Evaluations
CHAPTER 15. Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape Training: Preparing Military Members for the Demands of Captivity.
<http://www.ericzillmer.com/guantanamo.htm>

Week 10

CHAPTER 16. Crisis Negotiations in a Military Context
CHAPTER 17. Ethical Dilemmas in Clinical, Operational, Expeditionary, and Combat Environments.
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/alpha-blog-charlie/202209/can-a-military-service-member-get-confidential-mental-health-care>

Finals Week

Final project due.
Final project presentations during finals week.

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