

## Extra Credit Assignment

Due date: Wed, 5 March 2008

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

You can earn up to 3 points of extra credit (i.e., 3 points added on to the total of your three highest exams, before the letter grade is assigned) by performing this extra credit assignment, which has two parts:

1. Determining your blood pressure and heart rate, and evaluating them; and
2. Answering questionnaires related to health, stress, and coping that are on the web page.

The goal of this assignment is three-fold. First, it is designed to make you aware of some important health-related information that is specific to you – your blood pressure, level of stress, etc. Second, the assignment will give you a good sense of how some Health Psychology research is conducted. Third, the assignment will generate data on the health of the students in this class. This information will be used in aggregate fashion only, for the last lecture of the quarter. That is, no individual's responses will be displayed, only means for the group (and subgroups, like men and women).

**Extra Credit Part 1: Blood pressure (worth 2 points).**

Measure your blood pressure on two separate occasions. The first occasion should be during the next week, when your experience of stressors is likely to be somewhat low. The second occasion should be during the week of the second Midterm exam, at a point when you are likely to be experiencing greater stress. If these times are not the correct ones for you (based on your own schedule of classwork, job, etc.) feel free to select times that correspond to 'low stress' and 'high stress' conditions of your experience. **Regardless of when you do your readings, try to do your 'low stress' reading first!!**

**Procedure:** There are sphygmomanometers (devices used to measure BP) available at the Long's Drugs in East Davis (1550 E. Covell Blvd., at the corner of Pole Line Road), at the Long's in West Davis (the Marketplace mall), at the Rite Aid on Russell (655 Russell Blvd), and at most other large pharmacies. They are free of charge, and are usually located near the pharmacists' area. **PLEASE TREAT THE EQUIPMENT GENTLY; IT IS A SENSITIVE INSTRUMENT!!**

1. Bring this handout with you to record your information both times when you go to read your BP.
2. Take three readings, each one being one minute apart. Record the date, time, both systolic and diastolic pressure, heart rate, and your weight in the chart below. Answer the questions in Part A (LOW STRESS CONDITION) below at the time you take your readings.
3. During a week when you have midterms, return to the \*same\* location at approximately the \*same\* time of day, and follow the same procedure as in (2) above. Answer the questions in Part B (HIGH STRESS CONDITION) below at the time you take your readings.
4. After you have taken BOTH sets of readings, log onto the website (<http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/capitanio/courses/psc126/>) and select the "Extra Credit Questionnaires" link, then at the new page select the 'Blood Pressure' option, and transfer your information into the database.

Note, you can log on and fill in the blood pressure information separately from the other part of the assignment.

5. Answer the questions in Part C about your blood pressure readings ON THIS HANDOUT in the space indicated.
6. Hand in this entire packet, **including this cover sheet, your BP/HR numbers written on the form, and the answers to all questions,** by Wed, 5 March 2008.

**Extra Credit Part 2: Stress, coping, and health questionnaires (worth 1 point).**

Fill out four questionnaires that are available on-line on the class web page at:  
(<http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/capitanio/courses/psc126/>)

Questionnaire 1: The first is a questionnaire that is almost identical to the one used in one of the earliest and most famous epidemiological studies of health, the Alameda County study. This survey was administered by mail to thousands of residents of Alameda County in 1965, and the data it generated have been reported in dozens of articles and books. It is a survey meant for a general audience, so some of the questions may not be relevant to you. Answer the questions as best you can, however.

Questionnaire 2: The second questionnaire is designed to examine how your health has been since the start of Fall Quarter (October 1) 2007.

Questionnaire 3: The Hassles questionnaire is a bit long, so it is given in 10 sections. Be sure your answers for each section are correct before you press the 'Continue' button. You must answer each question, or you'll be given an error message.

Questionnaire 4: This is a questionnaire that will assess your Coping style in response to a specific stressful event.

After you fill out Questionnaires 3 and 4, you will see a screen that indicates the scores for you, and explains the scoring. For each of the four questionnaires, you will receive an email indicating that you have successfully completed the questionnaire. Please keep these "receipts". For Questionnaires 3 and 4, the information about your own scores for Hassles and Coping will also be included in that email.

You don't have to fill out the four questionnaires in one sitting, you can fill one out at a time, if you like. They should not take long, however, perhaps 20 minutes altogether. You do need to fill out all 4, though, to receive the extra credit point.

The database will be locked at 5 PM on 5 March 2008. No part of this assignment will be do-able after that time.



Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Part C questions (1 paragraph each). You should take a look at sections of Ch. 2 (pp. 24-25) and Ch. 13 (pp. 358-364) for help with some of these questions:

1. What is blood pressure? What do the two numbers refer to?

2. How did your readings differ between the low- and high-stress conditions? Based on what you know about coping styles (from lecture and your reading in Chapter 7), how did you cope during your 'high stress' period? How might that have helped (or not, as the case may be) explain the difference in your readings?

3. What is your health risk for cardiovascular disease based on your own BP readings? Use the following chart in your discussion. Is there a history of cardiovascular disease in your family? How might dietary factors contribute? What about other lifestyle factors? Anything else?

	normal	mild	moderate	high
systolic	139 or less	140 - 159	160 - 179	180 or higher