Psychology 390
Special Topics: Digital Mental Health
Allegheny College

Spring 2022, Module 1
MTWThF 9:30AM-12:30PM
Hybrid: Carnegie 112 and Zoom

Instructor: Sarah Stanger, Ph.D.
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I check emails between 8am-5pm (M-F), though you may not receive an answer on the same day. If you have not heard from me after 24 hours (M- F), feel free to send me a kind reminder email.

Office hours (preferred method of contact): Wednesdays 12:30-2:30PM
Please sign up for a 20-minute office hours slot through google calendar (linked here). Please email me if there are no slots available or if none of the times work in your schedule.

There is no required textbook. All required content will be available on Canvas.

Course Overview, Objectives, and Learning Outcomes

Course Description: An exploration of current research and theory on tech-based prevention and intervention programs for psychological disorders. Students investigate the burgeoning field of digital mental health, examine the evidence-base of specific digital mental health programs, engage in critical analysis of relevant literature comparing in-person to digital mental health services, and consider ethical issues for current tech-based programs including privacy and accessibility. Experiential and project-based learning is emphasized through a community-engaged learning component in which students test, research, and recommend app-based mental health promotion programs for the Allegheny community.

Objectives & Learning Outcomes:
- Understand the breadth and depth of the clinical psychology sub-field of digital mental health and be better prepared for their careers/continuing education and citizenship.
- Investigate the benefits and limitations of digital mental health tools as replacements and/or complements to traditional mental health research and services.
- Appreciate the real-world importance of digital mental health through exploration and evaluation of specific mental health apps for college students and collaboration on a community-engaged learning project designed to benefit the Allegheny student community.
- Recognize and analyze ethical aspects and current controversies in digital mental health and research.
- Demonstrate and strengthen communication skills through peer collaboration and individual and group presentations.
- Integrate, apply, and extend research from course to new areas of digital mental health.

This course does not satisfy any of the college distribution requirements.

Course Components

Components	# of points/ % of Final Grade
Class Participation/Discussion (1pt per day)	15
Reading Responses (1pt per day)	10
Reflection Journals (2, 10pts each)	20
Group Presentation (Allegheny Apps Project)	15
Final Group Contribution (Allegheny Apps Project)	15
Final Research Paper	25
Total	100

Class Preparation/Participation/Discussion (1pt per class day; 15%): Each class day counts for roughly one week of class in a "normal" semester. Therefore, attendance, preparation, and participation are vital each day. Additionally, this is a discussion-based course and whether this course is interesting and productive depends on **all** of us! I will provide a rubric by which I evaluate class contributions. Primarily, I ask that you are respectful, empathic, and curious. You will be responsible for a Reading Response on most class days, and it will be helpful to have that response in front of you during class. *If you feel like you did not contribute as much as you would have liked in a particular class, were not able to discuss something you wished to discuss, or your internet was cutting out, etc. feel free to email me with your comments/questions after class.*

Reading Responses/Discussion Preparation (1pt per response; 10%): You will turn in (on Canvas) a reading response on most class days (any day of class that has assigned readings; you can find the schedule for these both at the end of the syllabus and on Canvas under Reading Responses within Assignments). There is a structured form for the responses that will largely be the same each day – this is designed to keep you on track with the readings and help me see how you are processing the material. Additionally, different students will be assigned different readings (there are two reading "groups" - you can find your group assignment on Canvas under "People"), and so your reading response will help you be prepared to share the main points of your article with students who read something different. A reading response grading rubric is posted on Canvas. **Reading responses are due on Canvas by 7AM the morning of each class period in which those readings will be discussed**. We will use your responses to help guide our class discussion. *Late reading responses will receive a maximum of 0.5 points and will not be accepted at all after they are 48 hours late.* **You get 1 free pass – skip one, no questions asked, or I will drop your lowest response grade at the end of the course.**

Reflection Journal (10 points each; 20%): These should be approx. 2-3 pages, double-spaced reactions to your experience using the apps and connecting those experiences to at least 2 of the assigned course readings. You are welcome to include outside readings, as appropriate, to support and/or extend your reflections. Reflections will be submitted on Canvas. These reflections should **not** simply be summaries of class readings. Instead, they should be a set of well organized comparisons (e.g., between multiple digital/in-person approaches), reactions, critiques, and/or questions prompted by certain aspects of the readings that shows me that you have read, thought critically, and spent time writing about your thoughts. **Your experiences with your assigned app (or experiences with other apps from class) is**

required as part of your first reflection (and welcome in the second reflection), and should be connected to concepts from the readings, lectures, and/or discussions. Class discussion can also be brought into your reflections, but please give credit to others for their ideas when applicable. The reflection should be yours—that is, they should encompass what *you* think about the app(s) and readings (and this is separate from your group work this semester but can be influenced by large and small group discussions). A grading rubric for reflection papers is provided on Canvas and I expect them to be in APA format with citations when appropriate and a reference section **for non-class sources**.

> **Journal deadlines and extensions**: Late reflections will result in a deduction of one full letter grade per 24 hours (=1 point per day). Because the course is so compressed, you will get **one 24-hour extension** (no questions asked) to be used on one of the two reflection journals.

Final Research Paper (25%): This paper will be either a research proposal or a literature review about a topic of your choice related to a digital mental health topic covered in this course, for example tech-based interventions or prevention programs for a specific population or specific behavior/disorder/ medical condition, tech-based behavioral monitoring, tele-therapy, an ethical or privacy controversy, etc. The paper should be 5-7 pages long (excluding references) and formatted in APA style. You will create an outline of your paper due on the last day of class and you will discuss your outline/idea in small groups (this outline/discussion will account for 5 of the 25 points of your grade on this assignment. The rubric used to grade this assignment will be provided, along with more in-depth instructions*. Late final papers will not be accepted.*

Allegheny Mental Health Apps Project: After our first day of class, all students will download and spend 10 minutes trying out each of the 8 apps. Then, students will submit their top 3 preferences for which apps they would like to evaluate further (I can't guarantee everyone will get one of their top 3, but I will try my best). All students will be assigned an app with 2 other students (groups of 3) on the third day of the course (the 2 apps with the least interest will be eliminated after this first period, since there will be 6 groups). Students will experiment with using the app on their individual phones for about a week while simultaneously researching the history of the app and its effectiveness as a group. Staff from the CPDC will come to class to discuss the project at some point during the first week of class.

Group Presentation (15%). All 6 groups will present on Tuesday, Jan. 25th. Presentations will be approx. 10-15 minutes, with a few minutes for questions following, and are all about the functionality of your app for Allegheny students. Presentations will focus on (1) DEVELOPERS: who developed the app (i.e., was it psychologists, researchers, a startup, another company, tell us a bit about them, their previous work/mission, etc.) and is it being kept up to date (when was last update), (2) PRIVACY/ETHICS: is there a clear/transparent/accessible privacy policy for your app, is it clear if the app is collecting your data and for what purpose, any other ethical concerns you noticed/read about/experienced, (3) INTENDED PURPOSE: what is the intended purpose of the app and what are the main features of the app, (4) EVIDENCE BASE: what is the research evidence supporting the app at improving it's intended targets and was the research completed by the company who made the app or by independent researchers (highlight any research done on college populations, since that is our target population), (5) GROUP EXPERIENCE/USABILITY: your group's experience using the app, pros and cons that you all noticed, ease of use, etc. and (6) FINAL ARGUMENT: your group's argument for whether or not we should consider putting your app forward to the college. More instructions will follow in class and are provided on Canvas. Note that presentations are expected to include a visual/powerpoint presentation and all

group members are expected to speak during the presentation. Additionally, students will complete a google form documenting their contributions and their peers' contributions to the presentation, which will contribute to grades on the presentation.

After the presentations, students will have 3 days to try out the other apps. On Thursday, Jan. 27th, everyone will complete a survey about which apps they think we should put forward to the college. Depending on the results of the survey, we may put forward one app (for example, if there is a clear winner) or multiple. On Friday, Jan. 28th, we will have a full group discussion on the results of the survey to make sure the class is on the same page about what we move forward with.

Final Group Contribution to Class Portfolio (15%). Our class will compile materials for the recommended apps. These materials will include, (1) a presentation to the CPDC about our process in selecting the recommended apps, (2) an info sheet (to be used as flyers on campus and to be added to the CPDC website) for each recommended app that includes main features of the app, target symptoms, research support, tips for use, and a QR code to download the app, (3) a social media ad for each recommended app for the CPDC to promote on their social media accounts, (4) an info sheet comparing the privacy policies of each recommended app (to be put on the CPDC website), and (5) an info sheet with recommendations for what to look for/what to look out for when choosing your own mental health app (to be put on the CPDC website). Specific instructions for each group will be provided once we choose the final app(s). *We will present these materials to the CPDC on Friday, Feb. 4 and provide this portfolio (info sheets + promotional materials) to the CPDC at the end of the course.*

Final Grade Percentage Equivalents (please note, *I do not round grades*)

Final Grade Designations	% Range	Final Grade Designations	% Range
A	94-100	C+	77-79.99
A-	90-93.99	C	74-76.99
B+	87-89.99	C-	70-73.99
B	84-86.99	D+	67-69.99
B-	80-83.99	D	64-66.99

Hybrid Policies

Attending Class Remotely

If you test positive for COVID or have COVID symptoms, you will attend class virtually by Zoom. **Please communicate with me prior to class if you will need to attend virtually.** The Zoom link will always be the same and is posted on the Canvas page - you should never need to ask me for a link to the class Zoom. Participation is still expected even if you are attending remotely. You will be graded on the same participation criteria and should generally use the Raise Hand function in Zoom to contribute to the group discussion.

Camera Use

Everyone has the choice whether to have their camera on. **Having your camera on will**

improve your engagement and experience in the class. Please turn your camera on if you are able. I will always have my camera on. I know that everyone's situation and comfort levels are different - that is ok. What I ask – if you really don't want to have your camera on, please have a picture or bitmoji of yourself as your icon on Zoom so that if your video is not on, we can still see a picture of those in attendance.

Missing Class Altogether

Because each day of this class is the equivalent of one week of the semester, any missed class is significant. If you need to miss class, please communicate with me. If you miss more than 2 class days, we need to have a 1:1 discussion. If you are too sick to attend class virtually for many days, we will need to discuss options for completing the class - such as an Incomplete.

Additional Expectations for Students

1. **Read the assigned materials before we meet**. The readings are *not* optional, they are essential for your understanding of the material. Class discussion cannot focus on everything and it cannot replace the readings: your learning and success depends on both!
2. **Attend class and participate**. Being present (either in person or virtually) is a good start, **but it's not enough**. Active participation is key to your understanding of the material. Your thoughtful contributions enrich the class in many ways!
3. **Take the assignments seriously**. Complete them on time, proofread them, and put thought into them. It is fairly easy to tell a polished, proofread, and thoughtful paper from one that was thrown together at the last minute, and it will usually be reflected in your grade. The assignments are meant to give you an opportunity to process and apply the material as well as articulate new insights.
4. **Take charge of your education**. Speak up if you don't understand something, see me during office hours, and make use of the many resources Allegheny College provides to you (e.g., library, Learning Commons, Writing Center, etc.).

Additional Expectations for Instructor

1. Provide a safe, challenging, and supportive environment for you to develop ideas, ask questions, make mistakes, and process the material.
2. Use class time to discuss and explain the main points, provide examples, offer applications and activities.
3. Make class interesting and engaging!
4. Be available to you as a resource, support, mentor, and guide: you can contact me before class/after class, preferably via email. Please note that office hours may be canceled on short notice due to illness or other unforeseen events. I will contact you to make appointments to make up for those canceled times, should they happen.

Additional Course Policies

Academic Accommodations

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at (814) 332-2898 (https://sites.allegheny.edu/disabilityservices/). Do this as soon as possible to ensure that such

accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Religious Holidays

If you need to miss class or assignment due dates because of a religious observance, please let me know in advance so we can make arrangements to cover material and/or assignments from those days.

Statement of Community

Allegheny students and employees are committed to creating an inclusive, respectful and safe residential learning community that will actively confront and challenge racism, sexism, heterosexism, religious bigotry, and other forms of harassment and discrimination. We encourage individual growth by promoting a free exchange of ideas in a setting that values diversity, trust and equality. So that the right of all to participate in a shared learning experience is upheld, Allegheny affirms its commitment to the principles of freedom of speech and inquiry, while at the same time fostering responsibility and accountability in the exercise of these freedoms. This statement does not replace existing personnel policies and codes of conduct.

Academic Integrity

The Honor Code represents your commitment to scholarship, honesty, and integrity. When students do not abide by the Code they cause harm to our community. Remember that when you turn in materials the new pledge is as follows: **"I do honest work. The work is mine unless otherwise cited."** The Honor Committee would like students to write this on assignments that are turned in along with their signature. The Honor Committee believes that by writing these sentences students show their commitment to the values represented by the Honor Code.

Student Wellbeing

A range of experiences can create barriers to optimal learning, such as strained relationships, health issues, substance use, anxiousness, and feeling down. These concerns or other stressful events may lead to difficulty with daily functioning and decreased academic performance. If you find yourself in difficult circumstances that interfere with your ability to prepare for this class and to complete assignments, please inform me immediately so we can **develop a plan together**. Do not wait until the last day of class to ask for exceptions to what is stated in this syllabus. You may also find it helpful to contact the campus Counseling and Personal Development Center (https://sites.allegheny.edu/counseling/, 814-332- 4368).

Title IX

Allegheny College prohibits sexual misconduct. Under our college policies, I am considered a "Responsible Employee." **This means that if you tell me about a situation involving discriminatory or sexual harassment, sexual assault or other forms of sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking, I must report the information to the Title IX Coordinator** (Gilly Ford, gford@allegheny.edu, 814-332-3085). This procedure is in place to ensure that Allegheny College provides a safe environment for everyone in our community and provides assistance, support, resources, and interim measures to anyone who has been subjected to inappropriate behaviors. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options and control about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. The goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need. Additional information about Allegheny's Title IX policies and resources can be found at

http://sites.allegheny.edu/titleix/.

Below is a list of resources for confidential reporting (i.e., resources who are **not** by law required to report any assault that may have already occurred):

- College Counseling Center (814-332-4368)
- Winslow Health Center (814-332-4355)
- (off-campus) MMC ER (814-333-5500)
- (off-campus) Women's Services (814-333-9766)

Course Outline

Date	Topic	Read/Do	Due
Jan. 18 (T)	Go over syllabus, introductions, expectations, and goals Briefly introduce app options		
Jan. 19 (W)	Overview of Digital Mental Health	• *Textbook Ch.1* - Onken & Shoham (2015) • Torous & Haim (2018)	Reading Response 1 Due
Jan. 20 (Th)	Digital Interventions for: • Anxiety/Depression • General stress/well-being	• *Textbook Ch.5* – Schueller, Chokshi, & Mohr (2015) • Melcher & Torous (2020) • van Rooij et al. (2016)	Reading Response 2 Due Complete survey with app group preferences
Jan. 21 (F)	Digital Interventions for: • Serious Mental Illness • Health Behaviors •	Serious Mental Illness (Group 1): • Ben-Zeev et al. (2018) Health Behaviors (Group 2): • Dingwall et al. (2021)	Reading Response 3 Due
Jan. 24 (M)	Digital Interventions for: • Substance Use Problems	• *Textbook Ch. 4* – Campbell, Muench, & Nunes (2015) • Complete the E-CHUG assessment	Reading Response 4 Due Reflection Journal 1 Due
Jan. 25 (T)	*Allegheny App Project: Group Presentations*	No reading	Group Presentations Due

Jan. 26 (W)	Ethical Considerations: • Commercialization • Privacy	Commercialization: • Hill & Krolik (2020) • Hull & Mahan (2017) Privacy • Parker et al. (2019) • O'Loughlin et al. (2019)	Reading Response 5 Due
Jan. 27 (Th)	Tele-therapy (live phone, video, or texting)	• Ewbank et al. (2020) • Stiles-Shields et al. (2014)	Reading Response 6 Due
Jan. 28 (F)	Tech for: • Behavioral monitoring • Momentary assessments • Passive mobile sensing *Allegheny App Project:*	• Group 1: Jacobson, Summers, & Wilhelm (2020) • Group 2: DaSilva et al. (2019)	Reading Response 7 Due Complete survey to vote for app(s)

	Discuss and finalize which apps made the cut to move forward		
Jan. 31 (M)	Disseminating Digital Mental Health	Healthcare Settings: • Group 1: Palermo et al. (2020) • Group 2: Quanbeck et al. (2018)	Reading Response 8 Due Reflection Journal 2 Due
Feb. 1 (T)	Reducing Mental Health Disparities	• Burns et al. (2013) • Fleming et al. (2017)	Reading Response 9 Due
Feb. 2 (W)	Impact of Screen Time on Development	• *AAP Policy Statement: Media and Young Minds* (2016) Pick 1 to read: • Madigan et al. (2019) • Sanders et al. (2016) • Radesky et al. (2014) • Kim et al. (2020)	Reading Response 10 Due
Feb. 3 (Th)	Impact of Social Media on Mental Health	• *Optional: Watch Social Dilemma on Netflix* • NPR Article on Social Media	Reading Response 11 Due

Feb. 4 (F)	*Allegheny App Project: Groups present app materials to class and CPDC* *Course Evaluations* *Small group brainstorm on final project ideas*	No reading	Group Contributions to Class Portfolio Due
Feb. 7 (M)	*Final Paper consultations* *Wrap up!*	No reading	Outline of Final Research Paper Due
Submit **Final Research Paper** to Canvas ***no later than* 8am on Thursday, Feb 10, 2022**			