

Course Syllabus: Resilience Building Strategies

Updated 7/25/26

Course Information

- Course Title: Strategies for Building Personal and Organizational Resilience
- Instructor: Sonia Alvarez-Robinson, PhD
- Course Number: 92519 - PSYC 2803
- Class Dates/Times: Tuesday and Thursday 5 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.
- Location: Instructional Center 111
- Credits: 3
- Format: Highly interactive with short lectures, guest presentations, gamified lessons, scenario enactment, case studies, small group discussions, and a final project.
- Reading:
 - Variety of peer-reviewed journals articles, online media, and music catalogs.
 - Textbook: Van der Kolk, B. A. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Viking.

Course Description

Resilience is the ability of an individual, organization, or community to survive, adapt, grow, and thrive through acute shocks and chronic stressors. This course, Resilience Building Strategies, introduces skills, strategies, and tools to prepare for, respond to, and recover from both life-altering events and daily challenges. Grounded in the foundations of personal, social, and organizational psychology, this course uses short lectures, guest presentations, gamified lessons, scenarios/case studies, small group discussions, and a final project. The goal is for every student to become an authority on the topic of resilience in their own lives as they complete the course with a customized resilience plan to navigate adversity, challenges, and change in their lives. This course is open to all GT students.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand individual, team, and organizational resilience, grounded in evidence-based research.
2. Make meaning of the relationship between early life experiences and resilience through the lifespan. Gain strategies to reprogram thinking and behaviors that do not serve us well.
3. Identify individual, team, and organizational strengths and practices to effectively cope, adapt, and thrive through acute shocks and chronic stressors.
4. Explain body and mind connections in human resilience, such as the neurophysiological stress response.
5. Explore the potential for emerging from traumatic experiences with a deeper sense of meaning and joy.
6. Practice individual strategies for responding to and recovering from adverse events.
7. Experiment with cognitive and behavioral tools to build resilience through daily life practices.
8. Establish team and organizational-level resilience strategies based on principles of organizational psychology (such as psychological safety).

Assessments

Presence and Participation (In-Class Discussions, & Activities) – 20%

Assignments – 10%

Quizzes (3) – 30%

Final Project: Personal Resilience Plan 20%

Presentation – 10%

Final Exam: 10%

DRAFT Weekly Schedule (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

WEEK	TOPICS
Week 1 8/25 & 8/27	Foundations of Resilience - Course overview and expectations/agreements - Resilience: Definitions and Demonstrations - Phases: Readiness, Response and Recovery - Domains: Individual, Organizational, Community, Ecological - Practices: Head, Heart, Hand - The Resilience F.I.R.S.T. Model
Week 2 9/1 & 9/3	Factors that Shape Resilience - Navigating L.U.C.K. – Loss, Uncertainty, Change, and Kinfolk - Self-efficacy - Adaptability - Emotional Regulation - Locus of Control - Heuristics - Adverse Childhood Experiences
Week 3 9/8 & 9/10	Leveraging Individual and Collective Strengths - Clifton Strengths
Week 4 9/15 & 9/17	Body & Mind Connections: Part 1 - Brain functions and chemistry - Neurological responses - Physical implications and strategies
Week 5 9/22 & 9/24	Body & Mind Connections: Part 2 - Polyvagal Theory - Meditation - Focused Breathing - EFT Tapping
Week 6 9/29 & 10/1	The Heart: Emotional Intelligence and Beliefs - Self-Compassion - Gratitude - Positive Psychology - Savoring - Optimism/Hope - Post-traumatic growth - Resilience Portfolio Model
Week 7 10/6 (fall break-no class) 10/8	The Hand: Physical Strategies - Social Connection - Resourcefulness - Creativity - Self-Care
Week 8 10/13 & 10/15	Resilience in Practice Guest Presenters: Alumni Panel
Week 9 10/20 & 10/22	Resilience Strategies - Managing Energy - Positive Spirals
Week 10 10/27 & 10/29	Group Resilience - Understanding the Collective Context of Resilience: Group, Organization, Community - Crisis Management - Psychological Safety - Group Efficacy - Cultural Adaptability

Week 11 11/3 & 11/5	Resilient Organizations - Managing Organizational Change - Vision/Alignment - Institutional Trust - Crisis Communications
Week 12 11/10 & 11/12	Resilient Teams - Psychological Safety - Collective Efficacy - Mutual Support - Open Communication - Inclusivity - Trust in Leadership
Week 13 11/17 & 11/19	Final Resilience Plan Presentations
Week 14 11/24 & 11/26 (Thanksgiving-no class)	Resilience in Practice Guest Presenters: Alumni Panel
Week 15 12/1 & 12/3	Course Review and Reflection (Interactive Group Activity)
Week 16 12/8 & 12/10	Prep for Final (12/8) Final Exam (12/10 or 15)
Week 17 12/15 or 12/17	End of Course Celebration Date depends on finals scheduling