

Course manual
Joint Master's Programme in
International Humanitarian Action

University of
Groningen

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Psychology

Semester 1

Module coordinator:**Prof. Dr. Theo K. Bouman**

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Guest lecturers:

Djoen Besselink, M.Sc.

Prof. dr. Judith K.. Daniels

Credits awarded:

3.5 ECTS, equivalent to 98 work hours (1 ECTS = 28 hours)

Period:

First semester, block 1

Venue & hours:

See programme below

1. Introduction

The module is part of the second component (Core Course, 25 ECTS) / third component (Orientation Period, 30 ECTS) of the NOHA Joint Master's Degree in International Humanitarian Action to be completed during the first semester. It forms a recognised part of the curriculum and is a requirement for obtaining the NOHA Master's degree.

This module aims at providing insight into psychological factors that play an important role in many aspects of humanitarian disasters. The effects disasters have on their victims as well as on aid workers are often tremendous. Victimisation and traumatisation of these actors are the important issues in this module. The people involved can be described as group members, but also as unique individuals experiencing various reactions to extreme situations. Knowledge about stress, stress management and problem solving in general is therefore important for humanitarian aid workers. Findings from clinical and social psychology are used to give the students insight into psychological mechanisms related to humanitarian disasters, to recognise normal and abnormal reactions to trauma, and to give guidelines for tackling both individual and group related problems.

2. Learning outcomes

Participants in this Psychology module should achieve the following learning outcomes by the end of the module:

- Knowledge and understanding of the basic elements in the discipline of psychology and other supporting disciplines required for the identification and analysis of acute and chronic mental health problems.
- Knowledge and understanding of mental health problems from mild to severe manifestations and the capacity to interpret mental health problems from an individual and interpersonal perspective as well as being aware of the psychological factors involved in humanitarian action.
- Awareness of the physical, psychological and interpersonal health risks of relief workers themselves in the field.



- Development of a flexible thinking style in order to acquire various perspectives to existing and emerging humanitarian and related problems.
- Awareness of psychological social, cultural, religious, ethical and gender aspects in mental health.
- Capability to reflect in a critical way on mental health programs and scientific research related to humanitarian action.
- Ability to recognize the psychological and interpersonal consequences of changing and challenging circumstances and to adequately adapt to these circumstances.

3. Course material

Each lecture is accompanied by literature on the specific topic. The literature has been made available to the students via Nestor, and should be read before each lecture (see below). Nestor also contains recommended literature and websites. Although the latter material is not considered compulsory reading, it provides important information on many of the issues discussed. It also may be used as an initial set of literature for the purpose of writing the final psychology paper (see below).

4. Teaching and learning methodology

1. Homework assignments

Some individual or group homework assignments will be given to promote active involvement in the topics presented. Homework is compulsory and should be sent to the coordinator by e-mail before Monday 17.00 hrs. (unless otherwise indicated).

Homework assignments are graded as 'passed' (i.e. completed and delivered according to instructions), or 'failed'. In the latter case the coordinator will give an alternative assignment that should be handed in the subsequent week.

2. Psychology paper

This module ends with the completion of a paper in which psychological perspectives, relevant information, and considerations of the students are integrated in a clear argumentation. The final paper is therefore based upon (1) material presented during the sessions, (2) the course literature, and (3) a specific literature search carried out by the students themselves. The paper's aim is to reach a deeper and actively acquired understanding of one of the areas presented during the module.

As a first step in the writing process students are required to submit a half page *synopsis* of the paper in which the research question is formulated and presented in broad outline. One can start with the actual literature search and writing after approval from the coordinator.

Paper content

The theme of the paper should relate to the broad area of *mental health in humanitarian action*. Therefore, a more specific focus is needed for which the students are encouraged to choose from a combination of any of the following elements and perspectives:

- humanitarian aid workers vs. beneficiaries
- individual vs. community level
- prevention, risk factors, effects/symptoms, treatment
- conflict or disaster
- a specific setting, region, era, group of people

A more detailed explanation will be given during the first lecture.

Paper format requirements

The paper should contain about 10 pages (i.e. 4000 words +/- 500 words; including literature references). The conventional structure should be observed, i.e. departing from an explicit research question, extending the argumentation, using references, leading to one or more conclusions. The paper should reflect an academic level, implying a corresponding writing style, structure, use of references, and quality of sources. In addition to the module's compulsory literature, at least 7 new references should be obtained from scientific (e.g. psychological or psychiatric) books and/or journals. The use of popular internet sources and organizational reports is discouraged.

Regarding its lay-out, the paper should have a separate cover page with relevant information on the title, author information, module, lecturer, and date. The hard-copy should consist of A4 pages with a staple in the upper left-hand side.

5. Programme and training activities

Week 1

Lecture: Introduction to psychology and to this module

Time: Friday 16 September; 14.00 - 17.00 hrs.

Venue: Harmonie Building H1313 0338

Lecturer: prof. dr. T.K. Bouman

Description: The first part of this introductory lecture aims for the students to become acquainted with each other, the psychology module, and its purpose. Various exercises are used to foster experiential learning. Secondly, a brief overview is given of a psychological perspective on human functioning. In particular information processing and learning psychological approaches are highlighted and illustrated. The relevance of these approaches for humanitarian is stipulated.

Paper: The procedure with regard to the choice, the preparation, and the evaluation of the psychology paper will be explained.

Assignment: (See Nestor for specific instructions.) This assignment pertains to an exercise exploring the nature of reasoning biases and implicit associations

Week 2

Lecture: Intra- and intergroup relations, and cultural factors

Time: Friday 23 September; 14.00-17.00 hrs.

Venue: Harmonie Building H1313 0338

Lecturer: prof. dr. T.K. Bouman

Description: Since humans are social creatures, groups play a pivotal role in their existence. A clear understanding of group phenomena is essential in the field of humanitarian action. In this session the main concepts and dynamics within groups and between groups are introduced and illustrated with examples. Next, the students own experiences within groups are discussed and analysed. A specific instance of intergroup behaviour and interaction can be seen between cultures. An in-class exercise intends to promote cultural awareness. Finally, the implications for humanitarian aid workers are highlighted.

Literature: - Dixon, J., Tropp, L.R., Durrheim, K., & Tredoux, C. (2010). "Let them eat harmony": Prejudice-reduction strategies and attitudes of historically disadvantaged groups. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 19, 76-80.

- Dovidio, J.F., Saguy, T., & Shnabel, N. (2009). Cooperation and conflict within groups: bridging intragroup and intergroup processes. *Journal of Social Issues*, 65, 429-449.
- Figueiredo, A., Valentim, J. P., & Doosje, B. (2015). Theories on intergroup relations and emotions: A theoretical overview. *Psychologica*, 57(2), 7-33.

Week 3

- Lecture:** **Stress, stress management, and problem solving**
- Time:** Friday 30 September; 14.00-17.00 hrs.
- Venue:** Academie Building A902
- Lecturer:** prof. dr. T.K. Bouman
- Description:** An introduction will be given in the backgrounds and principles of stress and stress management in an occupational context, with special reference to the situation of the humanitarian aid worker. The focus is on the stressors that are met in humanitarian field, and ways of coping with them on an individual, group, and organizational level.
In addition, a general problem-solving model that belongs to the standard tools of many psychologists will be outlined. It will be demonstrated how this approach can be applied to various levels of problems, ranging from simple individual predicaments to complex international situations.
- Literature:**
- Ager, A., & Loughry, M. (2004). Psychology and humanitarian assistance. *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*.
 - Connorton, E., Perry, M. J., Hemenway, D., & Miller, M. (2012). Humanitarian relief workers and trauma-related mental illness. *Epidemiologic reviews*, 34(1), 145-155.
 - McFarlane, C.E. (2004). Risks associated with the psychological adjustment of humanitarian aid workers *The Australasian Journal of Disaster and Trauma Studies*. (E-journal)
- Assignment:** (See Nestor for specific instructions.) With this assignment the students explore their personal responses to stressors and their ways of dealing with these.

Week 4

- Lecture:** **Posttraumatic Stress Disorder**
- Time:** Wednesday 5 October; 14.00-17.00 hrs.
- Venue:** Marie Loke Exposition Room
- Lecturer:** prof. dr. T.K. Bouman ; prof. dr. J.K. Daniels
- Description:** The main aim is to make the students aware of the nature, the dynamics and the consequences of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The clinical picture will be illustrated with video examples. Psychological mechanisms of this disorder will be presented. In addition, attention will be focused on secondary traumatization as a potential threat to HA-workers. In subgroups various aspects of PTSD as presented in the video cases will be discussed and the students will seek to understand the psychological mechanisms involved.
- Literature:**
- American Psychiatric Association (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders. (5th Edition)*. Arlington VA: APA. Chapter on 'Trauma- and stressor related disorders'. Accessible via: <http://psychiatryonline.org.proxy-ub.rug.nl/>
 - Ehlers, A. & Clark, D.M. (2000). A cognitive model of posttraumatic stress disorder. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 38, 319-345.

- Schnyder, U., Bryant, R. A., Ehlers, A., Foa, E. B., Hasan, A., Mwititi, G., ... & Yule, W. (2016). Culture-sensitive psychotraumatology. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 7, 1-10.

Assignment: (See Nestor for specific instructions.) In small groups the students design a leaflet aimed at raising awareness of humanitarian aid workers for posttraumatic stress disorder.

Paper synopsis: Students are required to hand in the synopsis for their psychology paper.

Week 5

Lecture: Psychosocial programmes in humanitarian action

Time: Monday 10 October; 11.00 -14.00 hrs.

Venue: t.b.a.

Lecturer: D. Besselink, M.Sc.

Description: Humanitarian action very often requires mental health programmes on a community level. In this lecture the basic principles will be highlighted and the reasons why effective coordination and advocacy are much needed will be discussed. As an example Community Based Psychosocial Support (CBPS) advocated and organized by the Church of Sweden, will be presented in more detail.

Literature: - Wessells, M. & Van Ommeren, M. (2008). Developing inter-agency guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings. *Interventions*, 6, 199-218.
- Inter Agency Standing Committee (2011). *Advocacy package*. New York: Unicef.
- ACT alliance (2011). *Community Based Psychosocial Support for ACT Alliance Programmes. Guiding Principles*.

Week 6

Lecture: Psychology as a social science

Time: Wednesday 19 October; 14.00-17.00 hrs.

Venue: Marie Loke Exposition Room

Lecturer: prof. dr. T.K. Bouman

Description: The basics of research in psychology (and social sciences in general) will be introduced in order to promote understanding of the basis of making assumptions and drawing conclusions about the human condition in a humanitarian arena. Preparatory reading will enable students to grasp the key concepts. In an in-class exercise in small groups, the papers of Igreja et al. (2004) and Seedat et al. (2004) will be dissected to detect the main elements of psychological research, its merits, and limitations.

Literature: *Two papers to be carefully read in preparation of this lecture*

- Igreja, V., Kleijn, W.C., Schreuder, B.J.N., Van Dijk, J.A., & Verschuur, M. (2004). Testimony method to ameliorate post-traumatic stress symptoms. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 184, 251-257.

- Seedat, S., Nyamai, C., Njenga, F., Vythilingum, B., & Stein, D.J. (2004). Trauma exposure and post-traumatic stress symptoms in urban African schools. Survey in Capetown and Nairobi. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 184, 169-175.

- Selected Sections from:

http://psychology.about.com/od/researchmethods/psychology_research_methods.htm



'Introduction to research methods' (5 webpages) and 'Steps of the scientific method' plus steps 1 -4.

Week 7

Lecture: Useful tools to assess people

Time: Wednesday 26 October; 14.00-17.00 hrs.

Venue: Marie Loke Exposition Room

Lecturer: prof. dr. T.K. Bouman

Description: In this lecture the most frequently used data collection methods and instruments in social science are discussed and illustrated with examples. In particular the emphasis will be on self-report questionnaires, (semi-structured) interviews, and observations. After a brief introduction into the background of these data collection methods, and their role as operationalization of theoretical constructs, each method will be discussed. The general format, the pros and cons of their use, and strategies for instrument development are highlighted. Cultural issues related to the application of these instruments are addressed.

Literature: - CCD program evaluation resources: briefs 13-20.
From: www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/resources.htm
- <http://managementhelp.org/businessresearch/interviews.htm#anchor566521>
- Taylor-Powell E. (1998). *Questionnaire Design: Asking questions with a purpose*. University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension (17 pp.)

Exam week

Deadline

Wednesday 02 November 2016; 17.00 hrs.: paper submission and deadline for all homework assignments.

The paper should be sent by e-mail to the coordinator, and a hard copy should be delivered in his post-box at the department of psychology (see address above).

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Deadline

Wednesday 25 January 2017; 17.00 hrs.: revised paper submission.

The paper should be sent by e-mail to the coordinator, and a hard copy should be delivered in his post-box at the department of psychology (see address above).

6. Workload

The average workload for this module is about 11 hrs. weekly, including classes.

7. Assessment methods

Papers will be graded by the coordinator on a scale from 1 to 9. In addition to this grade students will receive individual feedback in the form of a checklist (see appendix).

Final marking: The module will be completed when a student (a) has passed the individual paper, and (b) has fulfilled all homework assignments.

8. Assessment criteria

The final qualification 6 (i.e. passed the exam) or higher will be given if the required structure has been followed, if the content sufficiently represents the module's psychological perspective, and if a reflection has been given on the selected literature. In broad outline, the marking is as follows:

- ≤ 4: The paper is insufficiently written with respect to content, style, and structure
- 5: The paper is lacking basic quality, e.g. by sticking to listings of information, rather than integrating these into a coherent picture.
- 6: The paper is of a rather basic quality without elaborations.
- 7: The paper is of a quality that can be expected from an academic non-psychologist.
- 8: The paper possesses a broader subject or a combination of subjects that has been elaborated in a coherent way.
- 9: The paper has the potential of being submitted to a scientific journal without too many alterations.

9. Appendix

See next page



Evaluation and feedback NOHA Psychology Paper 2016/2017

University of Groningen
Prof. dr. Theo K. Bouman

Student's name:
Paper key words:

Final mark:

A	Presentation and lay-out	OK	+/-	not OK
	Cover page with title, author information, etc.			
	Organization of paper (chapters, sections, paragraphs)			
	Quality of English language (spelling and grammar)			
	Academic writing style			
	Paper size (10 pages / 4000 words)			
B	Introduction			
	Explanation of background and relevance of topic			
	Psychological perspective throughout paper			
	Explicit and clear research question			
C	Method and results			
	Description of method, type of data, sources			
	Relation between findings and research question			
	Sufficient coherence; not mainly listing of topics			
D	Discussion			
	Conclusion(s) related to research question			
	Discussion of findings (incl. strengths and limitations)			
E	References			
	At least 7 additional scientific references			
	Adequate use of references in text (APA style)			
	Adequate use of references in literature list (APA style)			
	No use of footnotes or endnotes			

Additional comments:

