NON-CREDIT ELECTIVE TITLE
Exploring the Mind-Body Interface
Through Cases in Psychiatry

COURSE NUMBER
PSYC 0901

LOCATION
RWJMS Piscataway/
New Brunswick

ELECTIVE DIRECTOR(S)
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ELECTIVE FACULTY
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BLOCKS AVAILABLE
Academic Year

DURATION/WEEKS
N/A

HOURS PER WEEK
N/A

STUDENTS
N/A

LECTURES/SEMINARS
Yes

OUTPATIENT
N/A

INPATIENT
Yes

HOUSESTAFF
N/A

NIGHT CALL
N/A

WEEKENDS
N/A

EXAM REQUIRED
No

OVERALL EDUCATIONAL GOAL:
To provide opportunities for first- and second-year medical students to learn more about the field of psychiatry, and to offer
guidance and mentorship to third- and fourth-year medical students interested in pursuing psychiatry as a career; to raise
awareness of issues regarding psychology and psychiatric health through events

OBJECTIVES
To promote awareness of psychiatry as a potential career and educate future physicians on the importance of mental
illness diagnosis and treatment

I. Patient care – By shadowing psychiatrists and attending lunch lectures, students will learn how psychiatric histories
are taken, and thus begin to integrate their knowledge of mental illness into patient assessment and planning of
medical/social interventions; this skill is valuable to students interested in psychiatry, as well as primary care.
Students will also learn to recognize forms of mental illness stigma in different cultures, and observe how psychiatrists
overcome this barrier by forging trusting, nonjudgmental relationships with their patients.

II. Medical knowledge – At lunch lectures, practicing psychiatrists will discuss different disorders and relevant cases, as
well as currently available treatments (both behavioral and pharmacological).

III. Practice-based learning and improvement – Case discussions and research presented at lunch lectures will keep
interested students updated on the current understanding of the etiology of mental illness; students will also learn
about available therapies and their hypothesized mechanisms. This will hopefully motivate students to continue
following developments in this rapidly evolving specialty even after they complete the requirements for the non-credit
elective. Even for non-psychiatrists, an awareness of current recommendations for management of psychiatric cases
will affect how one makes clinical decisions.

IV. Interpersonal and communication skills – By observing and practicing obtaining psychiatric histories, students will
learn to interact with a subset of patients that is often difficult to communicate with due to social factors such as
shame and stigma, as well as psychiatric factors that affect patients’ perception of reality and willingness to receive
care.

V. Professionalism – While shadowing, students will appreciate the importance of physician-patient confidentiality and
mutual trust in working with psychiatric patients, who are encouraged to share intimate details of their lives with
mental health professionals. Students will learn how to respond appropriately to the information that is divulged by
patients, even if it is surprising or uncomfortable, while maintaining professional boundaries. Students will also be able
to observe how psychiatrists correspond respectfully with their colleagues in the workplace environment.

VI. Systems-based practice – When shadowing with the Consult-Liaison Service at RWJUH, students will be able to
observe how psychiatrists interact with a team of physicians, nurses, and other hospital staff to ensure that proper
care is provided for patients with diverse needs. Lunch lectures with psychiatrists who work in private practice,
schools, correctional facilities, or inpatient units will also introduce students to financial, institutional, and social
barriers to psychiatric care that might arise in these environments.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES**

I. Lunch lectures on academic topics in psychiatry and psychology research, as well as case presentations and discussion of professional concerns about practicing psychiatry

   Preliminary list of speakers for Academic Year 2013-2014:
   a. Dr. Steve Silverstein – cognitive and perceptual impairments in schizophrenia (co-hosted with SIGN, the neurology interest group)
   b. Dr. Edward Selby – emotional dysregulation and self-sabotaging behaviors
   c. Child psychiatrist panel – 4-5 child psychiatrists discuss cases, career choices, advocacy, and important issues germane to child/adolescent psychiatry
   d. Dr. Stephen Porges/Dr. David Holbrook – autonomic nervous system and polyvagal theory
   e. Dr. Jose Vasquez and/or Dr. Samuel Sostre – delivery of acute psychiatric services at UBHC
   f. Forensic psychiatrist TBD

II. Movie nights co-hosted by the Department of Psychiatry at RWJMS (and the elective on analyzing Film Depictions to Learn Elements Related to Mental Disease (FIDLER)) that present psychopathologies that appear in film, accompanied by live commentary (via Twitter) by faculty member Dr. Anthony Tobia and RWJMS psychiatry residents

III. Shadowing at the University Behavioral HealthCare’s Adult Inpatient Unit and Child/Adolescent Inpatient Unit or the Consult-Liaison Service at RWJUH

**METHOD OF EVALUATION**

Attend at least 3 lunch talks, at least one movie night, at least one shadowing appointment in the fall semester, and at least one shadowing appointment in the spring semester. Students are required to submit at least 2 written reflections following shadowing experiences to their site supervisor(s).