Grading guidelines PSY2208 Spring 2024

General information about the exam:
- The exam is a three hour school exam.
- The curriculum of the course should form the main basis for the answers.

General information about grading:
- The candidates are asked to answer two out of three questions. The average of these two is used to give the final grade. When in doubt, the best grade should guide the final decision.
- The grading scale is a descending scale with letter values, where A is the best grade, E the lowest pass grade and F is fail. The assessment is based on defined, qualitative criteria for each grade in the grading scale, see https://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/grades/index.html
- If one of the two essays is graded "fail", the exam is to be graded "fail".
- It is necessary to have knowledge about the curriculum in the course to grade the exam. For an overview over the curriculum, the course webpage. The most relevant articles for each exam question will be further specified.
- In the following guidelines we describe an ideal answer and a minimum answer. The minimum answer is what we expect in order to pass the exam.
- Importantly, the ideal answer describes relevant elements, but it does not mean that other elements cannot be relevant as well. The guidelines are supposed to give guidance, but they are not checklists.
- The evaluation should be based on the four main principles for evaluations at the Department of Psychology, namely (1) the quantity of knowledge (theoretical / empirical); (2) the demonstration of insight (overview / understanding); (3) structure and use of concepts; and (4) independence and originality.

1. Describe strategies that can be used to reduce the burden of mental illness and improve mental health and wellbeing. Discuss the effectiveness of such strategies.

Relevant sources:
- Arango, C., Díaz-Caneja, C. M., McGorry, P. D., Rapoport, J., Sommer, I. E., Vorstman, J. A., ... & Carpenter, W. (2018). Preventive strategies for mental health. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, *5*(7), 591-604.
- Heckman, J. J. (2006). Skill formation and the economics of investing in disadvantaged children. *Science*, *312*(5782), 1900-1902.
- Mackenbach, J. P., Lingsma, H. F., van Ravesteyn, N. T., & Kamphuis, C. B. (2013). The population and high-risk approaches to prevention: quantitative estimates of their contribution to population health in the Netherlands, 1970–2010. *The European Journal of Public Health*, *23*(6), 909-915.
- McDaid, D., Park, A. L., & Wahlbeck, K. (2019). The economic case for the prevention of mental illness. *Annual review of public health*, *40*, 373-389.
- Rose, G. (1993). Mental disorder and the strategies of prevention1, 2. *Psychological Medicine*, *23*(3), 553-555.
- Stockings, E. A., Degenhardt, L., Dobbins, T., Lee, Y. Y., Erskine, H. E., Whiteford, H. A., & Patton, G. (2016). Preventing depression and anxiety in young people: a review of the joint efficacy of universal, selective and indicated prevention. *Psychological medicine*, *46*(1), 11-26.
- Caspi, A., & Moffitt, T. E. (2018). All for one and one for all: Mental disorders in one dimension. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *175*(9), 831-844.
- Vigo, D., Thornicroft, G., & Atun, R. (2016). Estimating the true global burden of mental illness. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, *3*(2), 171-178.

Ideal answer:
- The candidate should describe the mental health burden in Norway and/of globally today, provide prevalence estimates and potential cost estimates, and elucidate the major challenges concerning mental health and wellbeing in today's society
- The candidate should communicate that mental health and wellbeing are multifaceted phenomena that are determined by a variety of factors at different explanatory levels (individual, group, cultural/societal).
- The candidate should provide a general definition of mental illness prevention and wellbeing promotion and explain the different strategies (universal, selective, indicated), - and relating these to treatment. Ideally the candidate describes also primary and secondary prevention and the rationale for changing the preventative conceptualizations.
- The candidate should provide concrete examples of the different preventive and promotive strategies that are relevant to mental health and wellbeing.
- The candidate should describe the prevention paradox and the usefulness of universal strategies for reducing the burden of mental health issues when risk factors are (rather) evenly distributed in the population. Ideally the candidate provides examples for illustration. Preferable the candidate also mentions the concept of proportionate universalism.
- The candidate should describe the cost-effectiveness of mental health and illness preventive measures; the current evidence, specific examples, and potential gaps in current knowledge.
- It should be kept in mind that the students have limited time for writing the exam, and not all the bullet points above have to be included in detail for an ideal answer.

Minimum answer:

- The candidate should provide an overview of the burden of mental health problems
- The candidate should define mental illness prevention and wellness/mental health promotion
- The candidate should describe different preventive and promotive strategies (universal, selective, indicative) and illustrate with some examples

2. What do we mean by social causation in research on disparities in mental health? Why is it challenging to examine causal mechanisms in mental health research?

Relevant sources:
- Lewis, G. (2011) Introduction to epidemiologic research methods. In: Tsuang, T., Tohen, M., & Jones, P. B. (Eds.), pp. 1-8. Textbook of Psychiatric Epidemiology (3rd ed.).
- Bonita, R., Beaglehole, R., & Kjellström, T. (2006). Chapter 3: Types of studies (pp. 39-62). In: Basic epidemiology (2nd ed.).
- World Health Organization & Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (2014). Social determinants of mental health.
- Carod-Artal, F. J. (2017). Social Determinants of Mental Health. In S. Bährer-Kohler & F. J. Carod-Artal (Eds.), Global Mental Health : Prevention and Promotion (pp. 33-46).
- Conger, R. D., & Donnellan, M. B. (2007). An interactionist perspective on the socio-economic context of human development. Annual Review of Psychology, 58, 175-199.

Ideal answer:
- The candidate should provide a definition of what is meant by social causation in research on disparities in mental health and contrast it to other potential mechanisms that may explain the association between socioeconomic status and mental health, such as social selection mechanisms.
- The candidate should provide examples of how social causation mechanisms may work, for example by referring to mechanisms as proposed by the family stress model or the family investment model. Describing specific examples of how socioeconomic status may causally influence mental health and presentation of empirical findings in this field is an advantage.
- The candidate may also present how social causation mechanisms are in interplay with the social selection perspective (i.e., the interactionist model)
- The candidate should elaborate in detail on the difficulties of examining causality in epidemiological research by referring to criteria that provide support for causal inference.
- The candidate should address the issues of confounding and/or reverse causality as main challenges in research in causal epidemiology.
- The candidate should provide examples of epidemiological designs and their advantages and disadvantages to examine causal associations. Such designs can include observational studies (e.g., descriptive studies, cross-sectional studies, cohort/follow-up studies) or experimental studies, such as RCTs. It is not expected that the candidate lists all study designs described in the curriculum, but it is an advantage to mention examples and discuss limitations and strengths.
- It is an advantage if the candidate can explain how challenges in examining causal mechanisms also makes it difficult to examine social causation mechanisms.
- It should be kept in mind that the students have limited time for writing the exam, and not all the bullet points above have to be included in detail for an ideal answer.

Minimum answer:
- The candidate should provide a definition of social causation
- The candidate should provide some valid arguments for why it is difficult to examine causal mechanisms in mental health research.

3. Discuss the role of social relationships for wellbeing/happiness. Include relevant empirical findings.

Relevant sources:
- Helliwell, J. F. & Aknin, L. B. (2018). Expanding the social science of happiness. Nature human behaviour, 2(4), 248-252.
- Diener, E., Lucas, R. E., & Oishi, S. (2018). Advances and open questions in the science of subjective well-being. Collabra. Psychology, 4, 1-49.
- Aked, J., Marks, N., Cordon, C. & Thompson, S. (2008, October 22). Five ways to wellbeing: communicating the evidence. New Economics Foundation. https://neweconomics.org/2008/10/five-ways-to-wellbeing.
- Other parts of the curriculum, as well as the information given in the lectures, are also relevant.

Ideal answer:
- The candidate should define happiness/wellbeing.
- The candidate should present empirical findings on the association between social relationships and happiness/wellbeing. The students have been presented with findings that mainly support a positive relationship between social connection and happiness/wellbeing. We do not expect detailed descriptions of studies, merely a description of relevant findings/observations and how this may shed light on the relationship between social connection and wellbeing/happiness.
- The students can also discuss findings on the negative effects of loneliness or on the positive effects of social behaviours such as prosocial behaviours or acts of kindness, and how this may be related to opportunities for social connection.
- Bonus for discussing potential reasons for the observed relationship between social connection and happiness/wellbeing (e.g. evolutionary roots, biological mechanisms).
- The candidate may also discuss the role of social relationships in the definition/understanding of happiness.
- Bonus for critically evaluating empirical results and discussing potential limitations.
- Bonus for mentioning that there are other factors affecting wellbeing/happiness too. The biopsychosocial perspective is relevant here.

Minimum answer:
- A basic discussion of how social relationships are related to happiness/wellbeing. The candidate should include at least one empirical finding. This can be a very general finding or observation. We do not require the candidate to state the correct name of the researchers nor the specific year of the publication.