

NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, LOUDOUN CAMPUS  
COURSE SYLLABUS-SPRING 2012  
**PSYCHOLOGY 240, HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY**  
*Dr. Rosalyn M. King, Professor*

**OFFICE HOURS AND LOCATION:**

Monday, 2:00pm-4:00pm; Wednesday, 2:00pm-4:00pm; Thursday, 5:00pm-6:00pm. Other hours set by appointment only. Office location: Room 307, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Library (Building LR).

**E-MAIL AND WEB COURSE ADDRESSES:**

E-mail: [roking@nvcc.edu](mailto:roking@nvcc.edu). Course website: [www.psyking.net](http://www.psyking.net) (King's Psychology Network). Textbook Author's website: [www.worthpublishers.com/straub](http://www.worthpublishers.com/straub).

**TELEPHONE NUMBERS:**

Office: (703) 450-2629; Division Office: (703) 450-2527; Home: 571-434-8285; Cell: 202-368-4328.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Straub, Richard O. (2012). **Health psychology: A biopsychosocial approach, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition**. New York: Worth Publishers.  
Reid, T.R. (2009). **The healing of America: A global quest for better, cheaper, and fairer health care**. New York: Penguin Press. (Purchase from amazon.com)

**RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTS:**

Daniel, Eileen. (2012). **Annual Editions: Health 12/13**. Conn: Dushkin Publishers.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*Health Psychology* is a sub field of psychology that applies psychological principles and research to the enhancement of health and the treatment and prevention of illness. It is concerned with the social conditions (such as the availability of health care and support from family and friends), biological factors (such as inherited vulnerabilities to certain diseases and the potential for longevity) and personal traits and lifestyle patterns.

Psychologists who strive to understand how biological, behavioral, and social factors influence health and illness are called health psychologists. The term "health psychology" is often interchanged with the terms "behavioral medicine" or "medical psychology." In contemporary research and medical settings, *health psychologists* work with many different health care professionals (e.g., physicians, dentists, nurses, physician's assistants, dietitians, social workers, pharmacists, physical and occupational therapists, and chaplains) to conduct research and provide clinical assessment and treatment services. Many health psychologists focus on prevention through research and clinical interventions designed to foster health and reduce the risk of disease. While more than half of health psychologists provide clinical services as part of

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their duties, many health psychologists function in non-clinical roles primarily involving teaching and research.

Health psychologists are on the leading edge of research focusing on the biopsychosocial model in areas such as HIV, oncology, psychosomatic illness, compliance with medical regimens, health promotion, and the effect of psychological, social, and cultural factors on numerous specific disease processes (e.g., diabetes, cancer, hypertension and coronary artery disease, chronic pain, and sleep disorders). Research in health psychology examines: the causes and development of illness, methods to help individuals develop healthy lifestyles to promote good health and prevent illness, the treatment people get for their medical problems, the effectiveness with which people cope with and reduce stress and pain, biopsychosocial connections with immune functioning, and factors in the recovery, rehabilitation, and psychosocial adjustment of patients with serious health problems.

This course will cover discussions on the history of health, healthcare, and health policy. The psychological and biological underpinnings of health, the impact of stress, anger, fear, nutrition, substance abuse and addictions will be examined. In addition, the course will explore and investigate health debilitators, chronic disease and terminal illnesses, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, allergies and infectious diseases and more. The course also will discuss the environmental influences on health. The role of complementary/alternative and energy medicine will also be investigated as well as new models for health and healthcare systems.

Health psychologists participate in health care in a multitude of settings including primary care programs, inpatient medical units, and specialized health care programs such as pain management, rehabilitation, women's health, oncology, smoking cessation, headache management, and various other programs. They also work in colleges and universities, corporations, and for governmental agencies.

The opportunities for careers in health psychology in the United States are quite good. Medical settings, particularly medical centers, have greatly expanded their employment of psychologists. Health psychologists also work in medical schools, health maintenance organizations, public health agencies, hospitals, and private consultation/practice offices. In addition to the specific content skills which psychologists offer to patients and staff in the medical community, psychologists' unique training often makes the health psychologist an asset to the medical team with regard to quality assurance methods (making certain that health care is helpful and cost-effective), research, writing, grant-writing, statistical, communication, and team development skills.

For undergraduate study, health psychology courses are available at about a third of North American colleges and universities. Because of the field's biopsychosocial orientation, students are also encouraged to take courses focusing on abnormal and social psychology, learning processes and behavior therapies, psychophysiology, anatomy and physiology, psychopharmacology, community

psychology, and public health. Source: APA. Division of Health Psychology, 2008 (<http://www.health-psych.org/resources.php>).

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- To think critically about the educational, social, economic, political, environmental impacts on health wellness, illness, and disease.
- To understand and be able to describe the impact of psychological factors on health and disease.
- To understand the biopsychosocial model (mind-body linkages) in understanding health, illness and disease.
- To understand the role of psychology in promoting health maintenance, preventing illness and promoting wellness.
- To analyze different health behaviors, attitudes, outcomes, and illnesses from the perspectives of the major theories of health, and recognize those theories when used by others to analyze events.
- To recall important concepts in health psychology, and be able to recognize and apply these concepts in various situations.
- To describe health psychology as a profession and its role in helping to shape health care policy and reform.
- To enhance students' understanding and awareness of the ways in which social, political and cultural trends affect the individual.
- To formulate relevant questions about health processes and outcomes, and explore possible solutions to health problems and healthcare policy.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

Class activities will include, lecture, discussion, group projects, research, reviews, video and multi-media participation, Internet and online study and exploration, and student presentations. A detailed class schedule is attached outlining topics of discussion, chapter assignments and examinations or assessment products.

## **CLASS PREPARATION AND DISCUSSIONS**

The time constraints on this course are such that your professor may not be able to lecture on all aspects of your readings. You will be responsible for all material assigned in your text or in handouts. You are expected to read the assigned chapter(s) and any assigned readings before coming to class and prepared to participate in the discussion.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS: OVERVIEW OF REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS**

You will be required to develop 3 products for grading to fulfill requirements in this course: 1) a personal health and wellness prevention plan; 2) a digital and oral presentation as part of a task force on: health debilitators, chronic diseases and illnesses; environmental influences on health; complementary and

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alternative medicine; 3) a group chapter critique from the book, *The Healing of America*, with recommended healthcare policy proposals outlining a model for a viable, workable and economically feasible healthcare system for all in the United States. Other class assignments will also be given over the course of the semester. Each project is described below.

**Personal Health & Wellness Prevention Plan**

You will conduct a thorough self-analysis of your health status and overall well-being. What dangerous habits do you have that might jeopardize your health (such as smoking, not exercising, eating unwisely, using alcohol or drugs, not getting enough sleep, overworking, etc.)? Also discuss the impact of stressors on your daily life and how you plan to manage stress. Consider your diet and nutrition and provide a current assessment.

What will you do to increase your lifespan in good health, considering that by the year 2030 more than 30 percent of the population will be people living to be well over 100 years of age? Review the research on Centenarians and identify the factors that are contributing to their longevity.

Outline the techniques, nutrition program, exercise program, psychological strategies, medical and other resources you will use throughout your life to promote positive outcomes. Your plan can be presented in a formal research paper or a portfolio.

**Task Force Presentations on Health Debilitators and Chronic Diseases,  
Environmental Influences on Health and Complementary and Alternative  
Medicine**

You will develop a research paper or portfolio and make a presentation using the scholarly literature to examine one of the following: 1) a health debilitator, chronic illness or disease; 2) discuss the environmental influences on health; or, 3) discuss one of the complementary and alternative medicine therapies or treatment. Topics may include some of the following: cardiovascular disease; lung diseases (COPD, Emphysema, Chronic Bronchitis, Asthma); diabetes; cancer; HIV/AIDS; kidney disease; substance abuse, dental health; allergies and infectious diseases; environmental influences such as air pollution, mold, airborne particles, workplace hazards, and climate, mind-body medicine, chiropractic medicine, energy medicine, acupuncture and more. Below are some suggestions and ideas for what you might explore, research and discuss.

**Task Force on Debilitating & Chronic Diseases**

- Compare and contrast mortality rates in the U.S. with other countries and regions of the world (Europe, India, Africa, Russia, China, Japan and other countries).
- What are the leading causes of death throughout the world? (You may consult the World Health Organization.)
- Discuss symptoms, as well as biological, psychological and social factors that may contribute to these illnesses.
- How are these debilitating illnesses or diseases being treated, including medical and alternative & experimental therapies?
- How might a person find meaning during a chronic illness?
- What is the prognosis for the future eradication of the illness or disease under study? What new and innovative research is being conducted or explored currently?

Websites you may visit include:

Healthy People 2010 (<http://www.healthypeople.gov>)

Centers for Disease Control (<http://www.cdc.gov>)

National Institutes of Health (<http://www.nih.gov>)

**Task Force on Environmental Influences on Health**

- What is environmental medicine? What is environmental health?
- How can the environment impact your health?
- What is the role and impact of air pollution and air quality on respiratory health?
- How can climate change impact health?
- How can the lack of cruise ship sanitation impact health?
- How do public health departments track environmental health issues?
- Describe the ideal criteria for healthy places and environments?
- How can lead poisoning impact health?
- What are the environmental impacts on a developing fetus during prenatal development?
- Describe the field of occupational health and the impacts of the people they serve?
- How does radiation impact health?
- How does the environment impact allergies, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, infectious diseases and more?
- Discuss the importance of good air quality.

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- What chemical hazards can impact health (lead, asbestos, carbon monoxide, smoking, pesticides, chemicals in water, hazardous waste, pollution from factories, toxic substances, mercury poisoning, melamine, and more)?
- How does mercury fillings and mercury exposure impact the body and brain in healthy individuals, in developing fetuses?

Websites you may visit include:

The Centers for Disease Control (<http://www.cdc.gov/Environmental>)

The World Health Organization ([http://www.who.int/topics/environmental\\_health/en](http://www.who.int/topics/environmental_health/en))

**Task Force on Complementary and Alternative Medicine**

- What is complementary and alternative medicine? How are the fields characterized by type and why? What are some of the treatments used?
- Describe the differences between natural medicine and holistic medicine.
- Discuss mind-body medicine and the relationship between mind (thinking) and illness.
- Describe the Chakras system. How does it contribute to health or illness?
- Describe the role, impact, and outcomes of one or more of the following: acupuncture, chiropractic medicine, foot and hand reflexology, craniosacral therapy, Light therapy, Reiki, Feldenkrais techniques, hypnosis, massage, meditation, spirituality and prayer, naturopathic medicine, herbal medicine, energy medicine and more.

Websites you may visit include:

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health,  
<http://nccam.nih.gov>.

Complementary and Alternative Medicine Center at the Mayo Clinic,  
(<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/alternative-medicine/CM99999>)

**An Examination of National and Global Healthcare: Book Report**

One of the major health issues in America today is the lack of available and affordable health care for all. Currently, between 35 and 45 million people in the U.S. are without healthcare. We will explore the question: How does the currently designed healthcare system negatively and positively impact the overall health and wellbeing of Americans?

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We will read and critique T.R. Reid's book: **The Healing of America-A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care**. Each investigative team will follow Reid around the world and report on one aspect of his fact-finding tour on health and healthcare systems. Your team will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each system. Compare and contrast the overall effectiveness of healthcare systems throughout the world; or, at least compare the U.S. system with the best healthcare system of your choice in the world. You will ask the question, which models seem to work best and why? These will be oral but graded reports. It is suggested that each team prepare a digital presentation to accompany their discussion.

Make recommendations for a model for a more viable, workable and economically feasible healthcare system for all in the United States. Consider the following: financial structure, health insurance, the structure of hospitals and health facilities, types of healthcare providers and training, collaborative efforts between medicine and complementary and alternative medicine, health prevention campaigns, the role of health psychologists, and affordability for all. Groups and teams should organize early in the semester and designate set meeting times outside of class to collaborate on their reading, thinking and formal presentation

This assignment will not require your submission of a written product. You will be graded on your oral presentation, including any prepared handouts, visual and electronic presentations. Please see your instructor about the criteria for grading of presentations.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL PAPERS, PORTFOLIOS, AND PROJECTS**

### **Required Length of Paper**

**Papers are to be submitted in typewritten form and should be between 5 and 8 pages in length.** Therefore, it is important for you to read the related information first and attempt to condense it in a very precise manner.

### **Regarding Sources from the Internet:**

All sources taken from the Internet should be appropriately cited. **Please consult the research manuals on reserve in the library, the APA Style page on their website, or the sources listed in the web course for the proper written citation of Internet sources. YOU MAY NOT SOLELY USE THE INTERNET FOR THE SOURCES USED IN YOUR PAPER. INTERNET SOURCES MAY NOT AMOUNT TO MORE THAN HALF THE SOURCES YOU USE IN YOUR PAPER UNLESS YOU ARE USING ONLINE SCHOLARLY JOURNALS.** The professor strongly recommends you carefully screen the articles selected from the Internet for their validity and credibility.

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While the Internet is an invaluable resource, there are many reports that are not credible. If you are unclear about an article's validity, please check with your instructor before using it. **DO NOT USE WIKIPEDIA AS A SOURCE OR POPULAR MAGAZINES SUCH AS PSYCHOLOGY TODAY!!** Look for scholarly primary articles from professional psychological journals. *Ask your professor for a list of scholarly journals in psychology.*

### PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS RELATED TO HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

- **Health Psychology** (American Psychological Association)
- **Journal of Behavioral Medicine** (Kluwer/Plenum Publishing Corporation)
- **Journal of Adolescent Health** (Society for Adolescent Medicine)
- **Psychosomatic Medicine** (American Psychosomatic Society)
- **The Lancet**
- **New England Journal of Medicine**
- **Journal of the American Medical Association**
- **American Journal of Public Health**
- **American Journal of Epidemiology**

### Formatting of Papers, and Projects

It is required that you use the official American Psychological Association (APA) format for your paper in this class. Several reference manuals of the APA style are located in the library (at the reference desk on the 2nd floor and on reserve on the 3rd floor). A copy also is housed in the **writing center**. There are 2 sources that you can consult: 1) Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (Sixth Edition). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2009; and 2) Concise Rules of APA Style. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2009. Both can be purchased at the College Bookstore.

The research paper must include citation of bibliographic data sources - in the body of the paper and on a reference page at the end of the paper. ***It is advised that you begin early in the semester learning the APA format as you will be heavily penalized for using any other form.*** You can also go to the APA website to get examples of how to cite data sources including sources from the Internet and how to put a bibliography together at <http://www.apastyle.org>. On this page find the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section. You also can purchase online your own copy of: ***Mastering APA Style for Students.***

### Style, Typographical or Spelling Errors

Please **proofread your paper for typographical and other grammatical and spelling errors** before submitting the final version to the instructor. Points will be deducted for typographical or spelling errors. *Again, please limit papers to no more than 8-10 pages.*

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### **Cover Page Required**

All papers should include a cover page. Page should include the following: **name; course name and number; topic; type of paper and the number of the assignment (e.g., Portfolio #1, Final Paper, Portfolio, or Project #4); instructor's name; College name; and, date of submission.**

**Papers should be typed. No handwritten papers will be accepted.** All papers should be submitted on time and will not be accepted after the due date. You may, however, submit your paper before the due date. Please allow 2-3 weeks for the return of papers, exams and projects. I do not accept responsibility for papers or other items left in my mailbox, under my door and left with secretaries. All assignments should be submitted directly to me on the assigned date and time.

***REMINDER: PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF YOUR PAPERS IN CASE MISPLACED OR LOST!***

### **Use Subheadings in Paper**

Another critical formatting requirement is that **you must include subtitles in the body of your paper.** Please do not submit a running paper. If you need more direction on this point, please make an appointment to meet with me for examples.

### **A Note on Plagiarism**

**Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism can be defined as presenting the ideas or words of another as one's own.** Any information presented that is taken directly from a source should be credited to that author and/or source in a reference citation in the text of your paper. Even if you are paraphrasing an author's idea, you should give credit to that author. **A paper written without any citation of sources in the body will be suspect and you could be accused of plagiarism. In fact, you should not submit a paper to me with no stated references in the text of your paper as you are not yet the experts on subject matter in psychology.** Please be careful and ethical in this regard. Also list all your citations on your reference page. **All papers must include a signed "Honor Code Pledge."** *See form at the end of this syllabus.*

## **GRADING CRITERIA**

### **Criteria for Grading Research Papers**

All papers will be read and evaluated based on a set of criteria and a point system totaling 100 points. Criteria will include: **organization and format** (10 points); **clarity/quality of content** (25 points); **typed paper with cover page** (10 points); **documentation and citation of data sources in text, or review and discussion of literature, or thinking/analysis displayed** (25 points); **thoroughness/conciseness** (20 points); and **bibliography included with at least 6 sources** (10 points).

### Criteria for Grading Portfolios

Please read carefully the guidelines for portfolio development and the criteria for grading form which must be included with your submission of a portfolio. *Download guidelines and forms from course website.*

### OVERALL GRADING POLICY

For this class, you are responsible for **3 written products** (Health Plan, Task Force Reports and Book Report on Model Health Systems). Therefore, you will have a total of 3 grades, plus any bonus points that you earn. Your course grade will be determined by adding raw scores from products and finding the average score.

Every assignment is important. **Therefore, it is important to make every grade. Missing any grade assignment can result in your failing this course.** The grading system is as follows: 100-90=A; 89-80=B; 79-70=C; 69-60=D; 59 & below=F. **Extra credit** opportunities outside of your options to earn bonus points are not available in this course. Students should devote their time and energy to doing well on the course requirements.

### BONUS POINTS

You can receive a number of **bonus points** to be added to your final average at the end of the semester for your participation in a variety of related class activities during the semester. The instructor distributes bonus points for some of the following: **perfect attendance (3 points); very good attendance(1 point); class summary/motivator (2 points); participating in psychology discussion group forums outside of class (2 points per session); outstanding and innovative class presentations (unassigned) (2 points); assisting the instructor (5 points).**

### ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend all class sessions except in cases of emergency (e.g., illness, death in the family), the advent of religious holidays - the observance of which requires restriction of daily activity), or when participating in official college functions (e.g., field trips or other designated events). In these cases, you are to inform the instructor prior to missing class for the reason of your anticipated absence. **In the case of absence for special personal reasons other than those mentioned, it is your responsibility to confer with the instructor about whether the absence is to be considered as excused. You should also provide a written medical or other written explanation for your absence. You will be penalized for an excessive number of absences; and will be reported to the Counseling Center and the Dean of Students. You can miss *no more than one class that meets once a week and no more than 3 classes meeting twice a week.* Attendance will**

**be factored into all grades.** Points will be deducted from the total grade for persons with poor class attendance. **Being on time for class also is important. It is your responsibility to withdraw from the course before the designated withdrawal date.** Your instructor will not withdraw you and you will receive an "F" grade for non attendance.

## **OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **1. Class Summaries/One Minute Motivator at the Opening of Class**

Students will be asked to volunteer (or randomly selected) to summarize the activities and discussion of the previous class based on their notes, understanding or analysis. This summary takes place at the beginning of each class. The assigned student also will be responsible for providing their own thinking and analysis of information covered in the previous class, and to discuss how the material discussed can be applied to everyday life. Each student assigned to provide the summary should also be prepared to bring a one minute motivator to class to energize your classmates. This one-minute motivator could be a poem, a game, a puzzle, some physical activity, a song, a quotation or something innovative and creative from your imagination. The beginning of class also is a time that students may share an article or study they have read related to the area of discussion.

### **2. Class Presentations**

Students may be asked to make special presentations or share their thinking or written assignments with the entire class. **All students are required to make a presentation of their research paper/project to the class at the end of the semester.** This is an opportunity for all to benefit from your research through the exchange of information, knowledge and scientific data.

### **3. Psychology Discussion Group**

The psychology discussion group will meet twice monthly, outside of class time, to discuss pertinent research or issues related to our topical discussions in class. Since our class time is limited and because we have so much basic material to cover during this time, the discussion group is designed to give you an opportunity to discuss in greater depth any related topic. The discussion group meeting time also can be used to clarify issues and information discussed in class. From time to time, the discussion group also may include guest speakers or specialists in certain areas. **Participation in all psychology discussion groups will earn you bonus points toward your final grade. Students (or teams or groups of students) are encouraged to coordinate and run the discussion group sessions and can opt to serve as coordinator for the semester and receive a grade in lieu of doing a final paper.**

4. **Psychology Fair**

Students who develop portfolios, special exhibits, media presentations and other creative and innovative psychology projects will have the opportunity to have their work on display in a half day psychology fair open to the campus and the public. This fair is structured much like a Science Fair, where the students creating the exhibits are present to explain their projects to interested viewers. The instructor also will be making an assessment of each student's learning and the exhibits they enter into the psychology fair. **The entries in the psychology fair will be judged by a panel. The outstanding project or portfolio will receive a prize. A team of students can also opt to plan, coordinate, advertise and implement the psychology fair in lieu of the final paper project. Each student will receive a grade based on the effective planning and implementation of the fair.**

5. **Psychology Study Group**

Your professor and students in psychology have created an ongoing study group on matters pertaining to parapsychology and altered states of consciousness among other topics. These study groups meet once a week for an hour. Topics for study include: energy anatomy, levitation, Kabbalah, mysticism, extrasensory perception, Yoga, Qigong and much more. **Student volunteers can opt to coordinate study group sessions and receive a grade as a final project or bonus points.**

6. **Creating an Ideal Learning Environment**

We are confident that you will continue to make every effort to help create a warm, friendly, courteous, and positive learning environment for all in the classroom. **Please turn off cell phones and take your hat off when entering the classroom. Talking with classmates during class lectures and discussion will not be tolerated.** This also is disruptive and disrespectful to your instructor and your classmates. **Regardless of the clock, please wait until the instructor indicates that class has ended before closing books, gathering belongings, putting on coats, etc. This is disrespectful and disruptive to others.**

7. **Outside Assistance**

Students are encouraged to use the many services offered by the college to assist and support your academic work. This includes the library, counseling center, the writing center, the tutoring center among others. The library staff is available to provide you with an orientation of resources in the library and how to use them. These services are available to you at no cost to provide assistance and support. Make an appointment with the appropriate resource based on your needs. Meetings may also be arranged with your instructor during office hours or by appointment.

## Honor Code and Pledge Statement

Embodying the ideals of academic honesty, integrity and responsible citizenship is at the core of the foundation of all academic work and student conduct here at NVCC and most other colleges and universities. Enrollment at NVCC presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in these codes and a respect for the tradition of integrity and honesty. Your participation in this course comes with my full expectation that your work will be completed in full observance and respect of the Honor Code. Academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable and is a breach in academic integrity. However small, such dishonesty would be destructive to the College's life and work. *As a result, the following statement is required to be attached to all submitted papers and projects directly behind the cover page:* (You may reproduce this page and attach it to your product with your signature.)

*"In this paper, every opinion from someone else has been properly credited (whether it is a direct quotation enclosed in quotation marks, a summary, or a paraphrase). All factual information (common knowledge or uncontested knowledge), though not credited in any way, has been stated in my own words. In using factual information, I have not copied entire sentences or portions of sentences in the exact words of another. This paper is my own work. No one has helped me in the organization or writing of this paper. I have read the complete assignment."*

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_( Your name)