Course Syllabus:

Personal and Organizational Resilience: Overcoming Chronic Stressors and Acute Shock Events

- Undergraduate Course #57165 – GT 4801 and Graduate Course #57166 – GT 8801
- Mini-mester Term: Early Summer 2020 – May 11 to June 16, 2020
- 5 – 6:15 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday
- Location: Online

Instructor: Sonia Alvarez-Robinson, PhD, GT Resilience Resource Group and Executive Director
Georgia Tech Strategic Consulting
co-led by Joi Alexander, Director of Health Promotion, Health Initiatives

Course Goal and Learning Objectives:
This course is designed to help students strengthen their personal resilience and their ability to build greater resilience in organizations they are part of. Students will examine three aspects of resilience: the head (mindset about adversity), the heart (the feelings and beliefs about adversity), and the hand (the actions or tactics to build resilience through adversity). Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- define and distinguish personal and organizational resilience
- identify key characteristics and attributes of highly resilient individuals and organizations
- understand the barriers and challenges to resilience while building strategies to overcome them
- understand a range of tools, tips and techniques for building personal and organizational resilience

Format and Expectations:
- This class is highly interactive and participants will be invited to share their own personal stories about chronic stressors and acute shock events with their classmates. The level of sharing is completely voluntary. Students are expected to not share the stories of their classmates with others outside of the class without the express permission of the person who shared the story.
- This is an online program that will involve full-class discussions and smaller breakout group interactions using interactive videoconferencing capabilities. The ability to participate fully in the course will require accessing the course through BlueJeans, using the web version or the downloadable app on a computer. Use of both video and audio is highly recommended.
- Between class times, students are expected to read assigned articles, watch assigned videos, and perform interviews of others to gather perspectives and stories of resilience.
- One page written reflections on the reading and learnings will be assigned for submission throughout the course.

Reading Materials:
Students will be assigned a variety of articles, videos, and other materials to gain exposure to concepts and tools for building resilience. No book purchases will be required for this course.
NOTE: Some guest presenters and dates may change

Schedule:
• **Week 1: Foundations of Resilience: The What, Why, and How**

Tuesday- May 12th
- **Full Class Discussion:**
  - What do you want to get out of this course?
  - What does resilience mean to you?
  - Why do you think it is important?
- **Break Out Discussion:**
  - What examples have you seen of strong personal resilience?
  - What examples have you seen of strong organizational resilience?
  - What examples have you seen of strong community resilience?
- **Presentation:**
  - Definitions in action, examining case studies
  - The power and importance of resilience
  - Three rings of resilience: individual, organizational, community
- **In-class activity:** Journey Line Exercise. Students reflect on their life’s journeys and the chronic stressors and acute shock events that have shaped who they are today.
- **Assignment:**
  - Read assigned articles and be prepared to discuss.

Thursday- May 14th
- **Full Class Discussion** – Reflection of the reading assignment:
  - What resonated with you about what you read?
  - What did you learn that you could apply in your own life?
- **Break Out Discussion:**
  - What chronic stressors have you experienced?
  - What was the impact of those stressors?
  - What acute shock events have you experienced?
  - How did they impact you?
- **Presentation:** The impact of stressors and acute shock events. The power of our thinking: what we know and what we do with it. Sharing of research and evidence about the value of resilience on quality of life and growth.
- **In Class Activity:** Resilience Self-Assessment
- **Assignments:**
  - Watch the assigned video [https://smartech.gatech.edu/bitstream/handle/1853/61912/resilience_video_stream.html?sequence=2&isAllowed=y](https://smartech.gatech.edu/bitstream/handle/1853/61912/resilience_video_stream.html?sequence=2&isAllowed=y)
  - Be prepared to discuss:
    - What resonated with you most about what you heard from their stories?
    - What was their mindset about the adversity?
• What did you learn that you could apply in your own life?

• **Week 2: Shaping Our Mindset: What We Know and How We Think about Adversity**

**Tuesday- May 19**

○ **Full Class Discussion:**
  - What resonated with you most about what you heard from their stories?
  - What was their mindset about the adversity?
  - What did you learn that you could apply in your own life?

○ **Break Out Discussion:**
  - What thoughts filled your mind when you experienced stress or shock events in the past?
  - What contributed to this automatic thinking?
  - What thinking is critical to your ability to bounce back and grow through difficult experiences?

○ **Presentation (back to full class discussion):**
  - Presentation: The Power of Mindfulness to Shape our Beliefs and Emotions

○ **In-class activity:** Mindfulness Meditation

○ **Assignment:**
  - Select one or more of the provided mindfulness activities to practice on your own.
  - Be prepared to discuss:
    - What activity did you try?
    - What impact did it have on you?
    - Would you do it again or recommend it to others?

**Thursday- May 21**

○ **Full Class Discussion – Reflection of the mindfulness assignment:**
  - What activity did you try?
  - What impact did it have on you?
  - Would you do it again or recommend it to others?

○ **Break Out Discussion:**
  - In your experiences with chronic stressors or acute shock events, how might you have applied any of the mindfulness activities you learned about?
  - Do you think the outcome would have been different? If so, how?

○ **Presentation:**
  - Guest Presenter: Mitsuko Ito - Training and calming our brains.

○ **In Class Activity:** EFT Tapping

○ **Assignments:** Read assigned articles to prepare for Week 3
  - Write a one page summary and be prepared to discuss:
    - What was most interesting about what you read?
    - What did you learn that you did not already know?
    - How might you apply it?
• **Week 3: The Power of Our Emotions** – How We **Feel** and What We **Believe** About Adversity

Tuesday- May 26
- **Full Group Discussion:** Share reflections from your reading:
  - What was most interesting about what you read?
  - What did you learn that you did not already know?
  - How might you apply it?
- **Break Out Discussion:**
  - Describe a chronic stressor or acute shock event you have experienced.
    - How did your beliefs shape the outcome?
  - How did the impact of that experience shape what you believe today about adversity?
  - What can you do to maintain a belief system about adversity that is healthy for you?
- **Presentation:** Beyond cognition - The power of our beliefs to manage stress and reduce anxiety. How appreciative inquiry can reshape our feelings about challenges. Possible guest presenter: Robbie Outz
- **In-Class Activity:** Appreciative Inquiry: Focusing on our strengths
- **Assignment:**
  - Watch the panel interview with Dean John Stein, Dr. Lynn Durham, and Dr. Charles Isbell. [https://smartech.gatech.edu/handle/1853/62106](https://smartech.gatech.edu/handle/1853/62106)
  - Be prepared to discuss:
    - What resonated with you most about what you heard from their stories?
    - What were their beliefs about adversity?
    - How does their individual resilience contribute to the resilience of Georgia Tech?

Thursday- May 28
- **Full Group Discussion:** Share your reflections from the video:
  - What resonated with you most about what you heard from their stories?
  - What were their beliefs about adversity?
  - How does their individual resilience contribute to the resilience of Georgia Tech?
- **Break Out Discussion:**
  - Describe an example of an experience you have had or observed with an organization or a community facing a challenge or unplanned change.
  - How did they handle the situation?
  - How did the beliefs of that organization or community shape how they dealt with the adversity or challenge?
  - How did the presence or absence of that resilience impact you or other individuals personally?
- **Presentation:** Building Organizational Resilience: Grounded in Values, Guided by Purpose, Manifested in Action
  - What organizational values are key to create a resilient organization?
  - How has Georgia Tech’s values emerged in our response to COVID-19?
- **In-Class activity:** The Power of Purpose and Appreciation
- **Assignment:**
  - Complete Your Personal Mission and Vision Exercise

- **Week 4: The Power of Our Actions** – What We Do about Adversity: Building Our Skillset

  **Tuesday- June 2**
  - **Full Class Discussion:**
    - Why is personal mission and vision important to build resilience?
    - Why is organizational mission and vision important for an organization during a crisis?
  - **Break Out Discussion:**
    - Share your personal mission and vision in small groups
    - How will this shape your personal and professional decisions in the future?
    - How might this help you stay grounded in the face of adversity?
  - **Presentation:** Resources to build resilience. **Guest speaker:** Ariyanna White, clinical case manager, Center for Assessment, Referral, and Education (CARE).
  - **Assignment:** Read assigned articles on strategies to build resilience through self-care and movement. **Summarize and be prepared to discuss:**
    - What was most interesting about what you read?
    - What did you learn that you did not already know?
    - How might you apply it?

  **Thursday- June 4**
  - **Full Class Discussion:**
    - What was most interesting about what you read?
    - What did you learn that you did not already know?
    - How might you apply it?
  - **Presentation:**
    - **Special Guest:** Caroline Dotts, Campus Rec Center. Using physical activity and movement to build resilience.
  - **In Class Activity:** Led by Caroline
  - **Assignment:**
    - Select 3 items from a list of available options for self-care and movement. Put those 3 actions into practice and write a one page summary to compare and contrast these activities:
      - What activities did you choose?
      - What were the effects?
      - Would you incorporate any of these activities into your regular routine?
• How could you make it a habit for longer term well-being?

• **Week 5: Becoming a Resilient Leader**

  **Tuesday- June 9**
  o **Full Group Discussion**
    • What activities did you choose?
    • What were the effects?
    • Would you incorporate any of these activities into your regular routine?
    • How could you make it a habit for longer term well-being?
  o **Break Out Discussion:**
    • Describe the attributes and behaviors of a resilient leader
    • Can you provide an example? Someone you know or have observed?
    • How does the resilience of a leader impact the organization?
  o **Presentation:** Resilient Leaders. Guest Presenter: Kerry Wallaert (to be confirmed)
  o **In-Class Activity:** Led by Kerry
  o **Assignment:**
    • Prepare and submit a one page reflection of this 5 week class and be prepared to discuss:
      • What did you learn?
      • How will you apply what learned?
      • What should we add or do differently when we offer this again?

  **Thursday- June 11**
  o **Full Group Discussion**
    • What did you learn?
    • How will you apply what learned?
    • What should we add or do differently when we offer this again?
  o **Break Out Discussion:**
    • Feedforward – What is a likely challenge you will deal in the future? Ask your classmates for advice on how you might exercise your resilience muscles in the face of that adversity.
  o **Presentation:** Bringing it all Together: Building Individual, Organizational, and Community Resilience
  o **Closing Discussion:**

**Course Requirements and Grading:** This course will be pass/fail grading. To pass this course, attendance and active participation is critical. Success will require contributing to every class discussion, completing the in-class activities, completing assignments and reading selections between classes. Students must attend at least 8 out of the 10 sessions in order to pass this class.