

Abnormal Psychology

Course Number: 01:830:340-03
Spring, 2014
Mondays and Wednesdays 1:40pm-3:00pm
Room 232, Tillett Hall, Livingston Campus

Instructor

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TA

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Course Materials:

Required: Ronald J. Comer (2013). Abnormal Psychology – DSM-5 Update, 8th Ed., New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

Course Website: <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>

Course Description, Objectives, and Evaluation Procedures

Although the only prerequisite for this course is Introductory Psychology, this is an upper-level course and as such, assumes a moderate level of sophistication regarding general psychology and methods for studying psychology. Those without such a background who are unwilling to put in some extra work to compensate for any resulting deficiencies might experience limited success.

The field of abnormal psychology is extremely broad and rapidly changing. Its subject matter spans development from conception to death and can legitimately include any and/or all of the following domains: (a) definition, description, classification, assessment, and diagnosis of mental disorders or “abnormality,” (b) etiologies or causes of mental disorders, (c) prediction of the likely course and prognosis of various mental disorders, (d) interventions designed to manage or otherwise ameliorate identified problems of abnormal behavior, and (e) prevention strategies designed to reduce the incidence and/or negative impact of maladaptive behavior. One cannot reasonably expect a single course to provide adequate coverage of all of these topics. In fact, any one of them represents more than sufficient material for a course in itself. With this limitation in mind, the present course will focus on the **empirical approaches to identifying and explaining the major forms of adult psychopathology.**

Additional future coursework is recommended for the student interested in abnormal psychology field experience, exceptional children, and/or psychotherapy and the treatment of maladaptive behavior problems. Although clearly relevant to abnormal psychology, **these areas will receive little or no attention in this course.**

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To acquaint students with established and emerging scientific methods for the descriptions, conceptualization, classification, assessment and diagnosis of major forms of adult mental disorders,
2. To familiarize students with the nature and prevalence of these disorders,
3. To stimulate critical and integrative thinking about psychological phenomena, including the impact of multiple sources of causality and cultural diversity.

Attendance: Although attendance will not be taken on a daily basis, consistent attendance **is necessary** in order to be successful in this course. There will be course material that is discussed in lecture only, and not necessarily on lecture presentations or in assigned course readings. You are responsible for this material in exams.

Participation: Class participation is encouraged. Discussion of psychological concepts promotes understanding. Sharing different viewpoints increases cultural awareness and critical thinking.

Classroom decorum: Arrive on time! If you arrive late, please find a seat as quickly and quietly as possible. Turn off cell phones when you enter the classroom. Please be respectful of your fellow classmates by refraining from talking with them during class.

ASSIGNMENTS and RESPONSIBILITIES

Readings: Readings from the textbook will be assigned for each lecture. See the schedule listed below. Occasionally, additional readings may be required. Any such readings will be announced ahead of time and posted on Sakai. **You are responsible for learning all assigned readings and all lecture materials.** Materials from readings WILL be on the exams.

Exams: Exams will occur In-Class and cover information presented during class as well as information from the assigned book chapters and additional readings. There will be four non-cumulative unit exams. None of these will specifically address content from prior units, although they may draw on basic concepts and methods covered previously. Each exam will consist of **50 multiple choice questions worth 2 points each**. Each exam will have equal weight. There will be no cumulative exams, the “final” exam is simply the last unit exam held during the final exam period. No exam scores can be dropped from your grade.

Make up exams: If you cannot attend class on the scheduled exam day, please contact me via e-mail *immediately*. **You will not be allowed to make up a missed exam and will receive a zero for that exam unless you have a legitimate documented reason. Legitimate documented reasons include illness or family emergency. Work conflicts, oversleeping, or difficulty with parking do not constitute legitimate reasons.** Please note that you may not retake an exam, but only make up the exam that you missed. **Make-up exams will only be given during week following the exam during my office hours.**

Extra Credit: Extra credit opportunities MAY be made available at the instructor’s discretion.

GRADING/EVALUATION:

A total of 400 points are possible across the four exams. To calculate your grade, the extra credit points earned will be added to your points earned on the tests. Total points earned will then be divided by 400. The totals will be converted to final grades as follows:

90↑ = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, 59↓ = F (+/-at the instructors’ discretion).

Grades will be posted on Sakai where you (and only you) can access your grade in order to protect your confidentiality and identity. Final grades will be available on line by December 19th, 2014. Decimal points of .5 and greater will be rounded up. Decimal points below .5 will be rounded down. For the sake of fairness, there are no exceptions to this. No additional extra credit assignments will be possible at the end of the semester. *Please monitor your grades and come to me early with any concerns you may have so that we may help you achieve your goals.*

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT:

Some of the materials in this course are possibly copyrighted. They are intended for use only by students registered and enrolled in this course and only for instructional activities associated with and for the duration of the course. They may not be retained in another medium or disseminated further. They are provided in compliance with the provisions of the Teach Act.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE:

Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published by Rutgers. The Academic Honor System of Rutgers is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community. Please see the following web site for a complete explanation of the Academic Honor Code:

http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf

Cheating and plagiarism **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED**. Plagiarism has been defined as “the unacknowledged use of another person’s work, in the form or original ideas, strategies, and research as well as another person’s writing, in the form of sentences, phrases, and innovative technology.” Plagiarism is a form of theft, and is a violation of the Academic Honor Code. If you have any question as to whether a particular action would constitute an act of plagiarism, please consult the Academic Honor Code or ask me.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA):

The ADA requires that all qualified persons should have equal opportunity and access to education, regardless of the presence of any disabling conditions. If you have a documented disability and need special provisions, please contact the Office of Disability Services for Students, Lucy Stone Hall, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Ave, Suite A145, Piscataway, NJ 08854 (Phone: 848-445-6800) and notify me during the first week of class.

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY:

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice. Changes made will be noted on Sakai.

TOPIC AND EXAM SCHEDULEUnit 1: *Etiology, Classification, & Psychology as a Science*

Chapter 1: Abnormal Psychology: Past and Present

Chapter 2: Research in Abnormal Psychology

Chapter 3: Models of Abnormality

Chapter 4: Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment

Exam 1: Monday September 22nd, 2014

Unit 2: *Depression, Bipolar Disorder, & Suicide*

Chapter 8: Disorders of Mood

Chapter 9: Treatment for Mood Disorders

Chapter 10: Suicide

Selby et al. (2010). Overcoming the fear of lethal injury: Evaluating suicidal behavior in the military through the lens of the Interpersonal-Psychological Theory of Suicide. *Clinical Psychology Review*. **PDF**

AVAILABLE ON SAKAI!

Exam 2: Wednesday October 15th, 2014

Unit 3: *Anxiety Disorders & Schizophrenia*

Chapter 5: Anxiety, Obsessive-Compulsive, and Related Disorders

Chapter 6: Stress Disorders

Chapter 14: Schizophrenia

Chapter 15: Treatments for Schizophrenia and Other Severe Mental Disorders

Exam 3: Monday November 10th, 2014

Thanksgiving Week Break: No Class on Wednesday November 26 (Friday Class Switch)Unit 4: *Personality Disorders, Eating Disorders, & Substance Use Disorders*

Chapter 11: Eating Disorders

Chapter 12: Substance Use and Addictive Disorders

Chapter 16: Personality Disorders

Chapter 18: Disorder of Sex and Gender Disorder

Last Class: Wednesday December 10th, 2014

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday December 17th at 8:00am-11:00am in Tillett

NOTE EXAM IS EARLY IN THE MORNING AND NOT AT THE USUAL CLASS TIME – OVERSLEEPING IS NOT A UNIVERSITY APPROVED ABSENCE!!