

ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY
Psychology 830:340:B7, Summer 2010
TTh 6:00-9:40 PM
Lucy Stone Hall A143

Instructor: Daniel Chazin, M.S.
Email: dchazin@rci.rutgers.edu
(class email: abnormalpsychsu2011@sakai.rutgers.edu)
Office: Tillet 333
Office Hours: After class and by appointment

Course Objectives:

- This course is intended to provide a broad overview of the major areas of abnormal psychology. In the first few weeks, we will discuss definitions of psychological abnormality, historical trends and the fundamental paradigms within the field, and the classification, diagnosis, and assessment of psychological disorders (also known as psychopathology or mental illness). The remainder of the course will cover some of the most commonly occurring forms of psychopathology. Coverage will emphasize (a) the symptoms, associated characteristics, and phenomenology of disorders (the subjective experience of the individual with a disorder); (b) their etiology (possible causes) of disorders from psychological, biological, and sociocultural perspectives; and (c) issues pertaining to their diagnosis and treatment (with particular emphasis on contemporary treatment approaches). Classes will integrate lecture presentations with in-class discussions, exercises, multimedia and video footage. While the course may not be exhaustive in covering every facet of abnormal psychology, psychological disorder, or treatment, it aims to provide students with a deeper understanding of these areas and how they affect people's lives.

Readings and Materials:

- *Required Textbook:* Comer, R. J. (2011). *Fundamentals of Abnormal Psychology* (6th Edition). New York: Worth Publishers. (ISBN 1429216336). Available at RU Bookstore (Livingston) for \$125 new or \$93 used (subject to availability).
- There will be *weekly reading assignments*. The reading is substantial. I understand that you may not be able to keep up entirely on every class. However, it is critical that you read and comprehend all of the assigned textbook material. The exams will be partially based on the reading, and *you are responsible for everything in the assigned chapters or pages*, even if we did not cover it in class.
- Course Web Page: <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal/site/abnormalS2010>. The site will contain essential resources, slides/handouts, links, announcements, a chat room, and gradebook. If you are a visiting student and are having difficulty accessing Sakai, please notify me immediately and I will provide you with access.
- Textbook web page: www.worthpublishers.com/comer; www.worthpublishers.com/apvtk. Excellent source for learning and study aides.
- Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders : DSM-IV-TR 4th ed., text revision. (2000). Copy on reserve at Library of Science and Medicine (Busch Campus) – copy circulates for circulates for 2 hours – and in reference section of Alexander Library (College Avenue). Electronic copy accessible on campus or when logged on to

www.libraries.rutgers.edu with Rutgers account:

<http://www.psychiatryonline.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/resourceTOC.aspx?resourceID=1>. You will need to use the DSM for your film paper and may find it useful at other points in the semester.

Course Requirements:

- Because of the relatively short length of the course, we will be covering large amount of material at a fairly rapid pace. I will do my best to make the task more manageable by trying to keep the workload reasonable and to be responsive to any questions or concerns you may have. You will have two exams and one brief (and hopefully fun) written assignment. There will be other continuing assignments and additional readings throughout the course. (Stay tuned for updates). In addition, active class participation, including participation in class discussions, asking questions, sharing thoughts and insights, and participating in other in-class activities (such as debates and exercises), is crucial to your learning and the quality of the course.

Attendance and Punctuality:

- Attendance is mandatory. It is advisable to attend every class, since lectures will help clarify and illustrate concepts and emphasize materials considered particularly important, and will also cover some points not in the text. In class, we also will engage in discussions and exercises and will occasionally watch videos, which I cannot lend to students.
- Please remember that this class is scheduled to meet a full 3 hours and 40 minutes. While we might not always use this whole time slot, we are obligated to use most of it in order to comply with university policy for 3 credit-hour courses. Please do not make other arrangements during this period. I know that Rutgers' transportation is often unreliable and traffic is a challenge, and that classes are on the late side, yet it is *your* responsibility to plan ahead of time to be in class, on time, for every session.
- Attendance will be checked on 4 or 5 unannounced occasions (1.25% or 1.00% of your final grade each). Students who arrive late (after roll is taken) will be responsible for notifying me of their presence on the same day. Students who leave before class is over will *not* be credited for their attendance, unless they provide a valid reason for leaving early and accompanying documentation. If you miss any class, you must receive an official excuse from the Dean. Multiple latenesses may result in deductions from your attendance grade.
- There will be NO make-up classes. If you happen to miss (or come late for) a class, please do not write me to find out what you missed. As a general rule, I can only cover course information once; unfortunately, there is simply not enough time to repeat material for students who were absent. Instead, please make sure to make at least two contacts in the class who can fill you in on what you missed, furnish copies of their notes, and even audio record lectures for you (given advanced notice). Also, be sure to inquire about any information about or revisions to course schedule/structure that may have been discussed, as well as any exercises and videos watched (including issues that came up).

Classroom Etiquette and Guidelines:

- Cell phones, pagers, and other similar devices must be turned *off* when in the classroom. Do not put them on vibrate, as they will still make noise. Please refrain from reading newspapers, chatting, non-course related laptop activities, and engaging in other potentially

disruptive activities during lectures. There may be material covered in lecture that is not covered in the text, and this material is likely to be included on the exams. You need to become acquainted with at least *two* other member of the class, who will serve as your “*class partners*.” One of these individuals will also be your *partner for the written assignment*. You should exchange phone numbers and email addresses with these individuals the first day of class so that you may contact them outside of class and should select one of them to collaborate with you on the written assignment. If you miss a class, check with your class partner to get the notes that you missed. Class partners will also be helpful if you need help clarifying a difficult concept and can make excellent study buddies. Yet, class partners are not substitutes for doing your own studying and taking your own notes. Please be kind and do not take advantage of your class partner.

Class Participation (15% of grade):

- Please come to class prepared to share your thoughts on the readings and to participate in discussions. We will have numerous in-class discussions, exercises, and opportunities for questions and comments. *Active participation* in these and other in-class activities is strongly encouraged since it is critical to your own learning and to the overall class experience. Participation will be consistently noted and contributes significantly to your final grade. (In many cases, participating can bring a student’s grade up or down a full letter grade.) Feel free to ask questions as they arise or jot them down and ask during designated Q & A periods. Some questions may require a more in-depth review than I can give during lecture; for such questions please make an appointment to come see me.

Guidelines for Class Discussions:

- Discussion, respectful debate, and the exchange of ideas will occur frequently in this class. While all viewpoints will be respected, please note that not everyone may share your opinion on a particular topic. This class is designed to be a safe space for *all* individuals regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, physical or psychological disability, or socioeconomic status. Please bear in mind that some of the topics we discuss in class may be sensitive and/or controversial and may personally affect persons present in the classroom. Psychological disorders affect many people in a direct and personal way – whether through their own experience, a family member’s, or a friend’s. Please be mindful of this during class, when formulating your questions and/or comments, as certain subjects may be more personal to your classmates than you might initially think.

What to Do if Disorders Seem to Fit You:

- At times, personal problems can come to the fore for students taking Abnormal Psychology classes. At times, students may become convinced during the course that they have many of the disorders being studied. Rest assured that this is a common and natural reaction to the subject matter (much like med school student syndrome). In general, the majority of people who take this class probably do not have many of the disorders we learn about. However, if you happen to experience personal problems or believe that you might truly have an emotional disorder that is not currently being addressed, it is important that you seek help. While ethics prohibit me from providing students with psychotherapy or counseling for personal problems (such as depression, a relationship breakup, or a family member’s alcohol problem), I am more than happy to help direct students to resources that can help. These

include the Psychological Clinic at the Rutgers Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology and the University Counseling Center. I am always happy to offer help for academic problems students might be having (such as trouble studying effectively or keeping up with reading assignments).

Abnormal Psychology in Film Project (10% of grade):

- In groups of two, to be determined the first day of class, you will work on a film-based project that will be due in class, as well as electronically through Sakai, on **Tuesday, June 28** at 6:00 pm (the second-to-last week of the semester). The project will involve viewing and critically analyzing a movie that portrays a character with one or more forms of mental illness that we have covered in the class. With this assignment, you will have the opportunity to step into the role of a clinical psychologist. Specifically, you will use information gleaned from a film to assess and diagnosis a character with discernible psychological abnormality(-ies), and to determine the connections between these abnormalities and various forms of social-environmental stressors/problems, medical conditions, and functional impairments in the individual's life. Following this diagnostic assessment, you will develop a case formulation in which you provide a plausible explanation for the individual's abnormality(-ies) and speculate on plausible causes, origins, and determinants of the person's disorder(s). The formulation is a theoretically based and research-informed, yet individually tailored, explanation of how the individual's particular problems, symptoms, disorders, distress, and impairments relate to one another; and of how and why these problems might have developed and been maintained. In this latter part, you will come up with a plausible explanation of the etiology of the individual's disorder(s) by identifying plausible causal, precipitating, and maintaining factors and their contribution to the disorder(s), applying your knowledge of various theoretical perspectives and research findings introduced in the course. Based on the diagnostic assessment and case formulation, you will briefly recommend suitable treatment options and assess the character's prognosis. Your discussion will conclude with a brief, critical assessment of the strengths and weakness of the movie's portrayal of the particular disorder(s) covered and of mental illness in general, and their treatment. You will want to take note of any inaccuracies, inadequacies, omissions, or creative liberties in the portrayal and consider ways in which the film (implicitly or explicitly) might echo and serve to shape societal beliefs and attitudes toward mental illness(-es) and its treatment, whether positively or negatively.
- To complete the assignment, and particularly the diagnostic assessment, you will need access to copy of the DSM-IV-TR (on reserve both in print and electronically through the library; see "Readings and Materials" above). Along with your lecture notes and textbook, this manual will enable you to you complete a comprehensive, multi-axial DSM diagnostic assessment of your chosen character. The manual is likely to prove especially helpful in identifying the key diagnostic symptoms exhibited by the individual, along with any typical, though non-diagnostic, "associated features"; determining a precise DSM diagnosis (or diagnoses) and justifying your judgment according to the formal criteria sets; ruling out other, related disorders that could account for the symptom profile ("differentials"); clarifying important terminology; and determining appropriate Axes III, IV, and V diagnoses. (At times, the manual can also be somewhat useful in highlighting age, gender, and cultural considerations related to the expression and diagnosis of particular disorders). The DSM may

also come in handy when you are assessing the merits and faults of the film's portrayal (Part III).

- You will be free to choose from a list of film suggestions that will be provided to you or can select another film not on the list with my approval (if you opt for the latter, please talk to me before or after class or send me an email no later than 6/9). To help make sure you are on the right track and to provide me with the opportunity to assist you, you and your partner will submit a brief summary write-up-about two or three paragraphs- by Jun 14 in Sakai assignments, identifying your partnership, film, and character selection and summarizing your preliminary thoughts regarding select aspects of the diagnostic assessment, case formulation, and film portrayal. (Specific guidelines for this summary can be found in Sakai assignments folder).
- The final write-up should be 5 to 7 double-spaced pages using a 12-point Times or Times New Roman font, with typical margins (1.5" inch on left and right; 1" on top and bottom), and all pages numbered. Please be sure to print double-sided and staple all pages together. Details of this assignment will be provided later. Please note that this is designed to be a *team assignment*. *If you are unable* for whatever reason to work with another student, you must notify the first day of class. In this case, you may be excused from this assignment and an additional 15% of your grade will depend on your exam performance. Late assignments will be marked down by 1/10 the grade deserved for every day they are late, up to 3 days, and will not be accepted thereafter. *Missed assignments that are not excused and those later than 3 days will receive a "0."*

Exams (70% of grade):

- There will be two multiple-choice exams in this class, a midterm (*Thursday, June 16*) and a semi-cumulative final (*Thursday, July 7*), each worth 35% of your final grade. These will be administered during regular class hours. The midterm will occupy less than half the class's meeting time and will be followed by a new learning module.
- The midterm will span all topics corresponding to the first five classes (up to June 15), roughly three weeks of material. The final exam will focus almost exclusively on topics and materials after the midterm (six classes), though some degree of familiarity with key terms, concepts, and paradigms learned before the midterm (especially those that apply to multiple disorders) will be necessary for maximum performance.
- Exams will assess your understanding of and ability to apply and think critically about materials from class sessions and assigned readings. Please note that anything covered in class (including materials from lectures, discussions, videos, or exercises) or assign to read is fair game for the exams, so it is advisable that you read the chapters thoroughly and pay attention and actively participate in class.
- There will be one extra credit question on each exam.
- There will be *no make-up exams* in this class, as each exam will only be offered on one occasion. Unexpected travel plans; car trouble, heavy workloads, personal problems, sporting or military events, or minor illnesses are not acceptable reasons for missing an exam, so plan your schedules accordingly. Exceptions may be considered only in rare circumstances if there has been a dire emergency that was unpredictable and can be verified through documentation (i.e., a serious accident, sudden death in the family, or other major crisis).

Extra Credit:

- On both exams, there will be one or two questions that will result in two extra percent points on the exam if answered correctly. Because there are two exams, and each is worth 35%, you will have the opportunity to raise your final grade by up to 4 percentage points by making use of this option.

Academic Integrity:

- Academic integrity is vital to student learning and to the academic community. It is essential that all academic work must be original (i.e., your own work, using your own words) or properly referenced. Plagiarism (which refers to the improper use of the words or ideas of other individuals, whether published authors or fellow students) is strictly prohibited. Additional breaches of academic integrity include cheating on an exam, passing off another person's work as one's own, forging another's signature, and falsifying or fabricating information or citations. Individuals found guilty of plagiarism or other breaches of academic integrity will be penalized harshly. Possible consequences of such offenses may include not receiving credit for the work in question, reduction in final course grade by at least one full letter grade, or even receiving an F in the courses. Serious breaches will be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Office and may lead to even more serious consequences, including expulsion. Please contact me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism and review Rutgers' rules of academic integrity at <http://cat.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>.

How to Do Well in This Course:

- To do well in this class, you must be an *active learner*. It is advisable that you take detailed notes on materials, especially those that are new to you, not covered thoroughly in the textbook, or emphasized in class; and that you review these notes regularly. In addition, your learning is likely to be significantly enhanced if you *think critically* about the material, *participate actively* in classroom discussions, and *ask questions* in class if you do not understand or want to know more about topics discussed. There will also be opportunities for students to share and consider different perspectives and viewpoints. You are strongly advised to keep up with the reading assignments and to review the readings and lecture material; you should plan to devote at least a little time to studying at least three days a week, if not every day, and certainly make time to *think about* the material every day. It is also recommended that you use learning aids, such as resources on the textbook website, self-quizzes, flash cards, outlines, study guides, study groups (e.g., with your class partners), questions for your fellow students in the Sakai chartroom, etc.
- Exams will cover points from lectures, assigned readings, and possibly other supplementary materials (e.g., class discussions, videos). Exams will require that you be able to do *more than just spit back facts and definitions of terms* (although knowledge of this will be helpful). They will also assess the extent of your understanding of and ability to apply the ideas, concepts, points covered in the course, such as an ability to recognize distinguishing elements of, identify examples, relate, compare and contrast different symptoms, disorders, methods, theoretical perspectives, and treatments. You might be asked, for example, to identify examples of and differentiate similar disorders, to distinguish or compare different perspectives on causation and treatment, or to weigh the evidence for a particular proposition or perspective. Your studying should be geared accordingly. Unfortunately, I will not be able to provide study guides or sample exams. Therefore, you might wish to create your own

guides or outlines—and perhaps even to divide the task with one or more class partners. I will, however, be able to assist in your preparation by offering online *review sessions* in which I will help address questions and requests for clarification (see schedule below).

Grading/Evaluation:

- Your final grade will be comprised of the following components.
 Midterm Exam – 35%
 Final Exam – 35%
 Analysis of Movie– 10%
 Class Participation – 15%
 Attendance – 5%
- Your final grade will be computed as a weighted average of your performance across the different domains of evaluation, represented as a percent score, and will be converted into a letter grade using the following rubric:
 90.00-100.00% = A 80.00-84.99% = B 70.00-74.99% = C below 60.00% = F
 85.00-89.99% = B+ 75.00-79.99% = C+ 60.00-69.99% = D
- Any student who is dissatisfied with the grading policies/scale or anything else in this syllabus is strongly encouraged to take another section of this class, which is offered every semester. *There is nothing I will be able to do for you if you are dissatisfied with your final grade, so please be forewarned.*

Students with Disabilities:

Any student who believes he or she might need accommodation for a physical or learning disability should notify me no later than the *second day* of class so that appropriate arrangements can be made. You may also contact the Office of Disability Services (151 College Ave, Suite 123; phone 732-932-2848; dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu) and read more about Rutgers’ policy at <http://disability/services.rutgers.edu>.

Course Schedule:

The following is a tentative schedule and list of topics. Readings and assignments are due by the date they are listed. Please note that *this schedule is tentative and subject to change*, depending upon the progress of the class and other considerations.

Class	Topics	Assignments / Notes
Tu 5/31, #1	Syllabus Review & Course Overview Partnerships Formation Introduction to Abnormal Psychology Historical Survey and Recent Trends Research in Abnormal Psychology	Ch. 1 Partnership changes/assistance and paper opt out requests due by email.
Th 6/2, #2	Theoretical Perspectives on Psychopathology and its Treatment Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis, and Classification (and links to Treatment)	Ch. 2-3 Selected psychotherapy session & “Gloria” videos
Tu 6/7, #3	Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis, and Classification (and	Ch. 4; Ch. 14, pp.

	links to Treatment) Cont'd Anxiety and Stress-Related Disorders	431-434 (“Childhood Anxiety Disorders”)
Th 6/9, #4	Anxiety and Stress-Related Disorders (cont'd) Stress and Psychophysiological Disorders	Ch. 5 Due: (preferably verbal) proposal to instructor to use unlisted film for project.
M 6/13	Online Review Session: Sakai Chat Room (tentative start time: 8 pm)	
Tu 6/14, #5	Anxiety and Stress-Related Disorders (cont'd)	Edna Foa Podcast
Th 6/16, #6	Midterm Somatoform Disorders Factitious Disorders Dissociative Disorders	Ch. 6
Tu 6/21, #7	Mood Disorders: Depression and Bipolar Disorders Suicide (Textbook)	Ch. 7; Ch. 14, pp. 434-436 (“Childhood Mood Disorders”); Ch. 8
Th 6/23, #8	Mood Disorders Cont'd Substance-Related Disorders	Ch. 10
Tu 6/28, #9	Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders	Ch. 12 <i>Film Project Due</i>
Th 6/30, #10	Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence: Guest Lecture – Irene Zilber, M.S.	Ch. 14
Tu 7/5 #11	Personality Disorders Wrap Up & Review	Ch. 13
Wed 7/4	Online Review Session: Sakai Chat Room (tentative start time: 8 pm)	
Th 7/7, #12	Final Exam	