

**Rutgers University
Department of Psychology
Summer 2012**

Course Syllabus: PSY 340:B2, Abnormal Psychology

Instructor Contact:

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Class Location	Lucy Stone Hall: B-115

Office Hours: M & Tr 1 – 3pm or by appointment

Number of Credits: 3

Required Texts and Supplementary Material (see note below):

Jeffrey S. Nevid, Spencer A. Rathus, & Beverly Greene. *Abnormal Psychology in a Changing World*, Eighth Edition.

NOTE:

Using an older edition of the text is permissible. If you do not have the 8th edition, check the chapter topics against the topics covered in each unit to make sure you are reading equivalent material. For example, if I am covering personality disorders you want to ensure you are reading the chapter on personality disorders in an earlier edition.

Not all of my material comes from our textbook. I will often cover topics not included in the text. You are responsible for both what is written in the text, what is covered in the slideset and lecture. While conflicting material does not often occur, defer to what is covered in the slideset for a test, quiz or other assignment.

Grading Policy:	1. Participation / Attendance	10%
	2. Group Assignments	10%
	3. Exams (4), drop lowest	60%
	4. Paper	20%

A = 90-100%	C = 70-76%
B+ = 87-89%	D+ = 67-69%
B = 80-86%	D = 60-66%
C+ = 77-79%	F = Below 60

PARTICIPATION/ ATTENDANCE 10% of your final grade

You are expected to be in class; missing more than 3 classes will negatively affect this portion of your grade. You will also lose points for sleeping, texting, obviously not paying attention or being rude to fellow classmates.

GROUP ASSIGNMENTS 10% of your final grade

Each unit has two to three accompanying, group assignments designed to assess your understanding of the material covered. Make sure you put your name **LEGIBLY** on the paper you submit for your group. If I can't read the answers or your name, you won't get credit.

UNIT TESTS 60% of your final grade (20% each, lowest dropped)

I will give four unit tests. The purpose of these tests is to assess your learning and understanding of the course material. The tests are based on the reading and material covered for each unit. All tests are open notes. **This does not mean you should not study.** Students who have not adequately prepared often do poorly on my tests or are unable to complete them during the time provided. Many questions are not rote definitions but require thought about concepts or contain examples. For example, I like to give paragraphs describing an individual and ask you what disorder they might have or ask you to describe someone with a disorder (see pages 4-5). Your lowest test grade will be dropped.

PAPER 20% of your final grade

Students will write a 5-7 page paper about a psychological disorder portrayed in a movie. Students will summarize the movie (less than one page), discuss the disorder (symptoms, causes), discuss how the movie portrayed the disorder (what did filmmaker get right/ what did they get wrong) and treatments for the disorder. Note, the paper is about the disorder NOT the movie. **Topics must be approved and are due by 6/12. Papers are due on Monday, July 2, 2012**

LATE POLICY & MAKE UP POLICY

Late work will generally not be accepted unless arrangements are made with me before the due date. **I generally do not allow make-ups** unless an extreme circumstance occurs, because I allow students to drop their lowest test grade. If you need to arrange for an extension please contact me before the assignment is due. Do not contact me the night before a test or due date for an assignment and expect an extension. Extensions will not be granted within 24 hours of a due date or test. Vacations are not an excuse for missing work. If you are leaving for a vacation, submit your work before you leave.

WITHDRAWAL POLICIES:

If you decide not to complete the course it is **your responsibility** to notify the college of your intention to withdraw before the deadline. (The last day to withdraw is **Tuesday, June 26, 2012**).

CHEATING & PLAGIARISM:

I will not tolerate plagiarism or cheating without exception. **A first offense will be reported on your college record and will result in the failure of the class. Consider this your warning.**

I would rather you come to talk to me or email me if you are having trouble completing an assignment than have you cheat or plagiarize it. We can always work out an extension or arrangement beforehand pending the situation. I cannot help you if you make the conscious decision to cheat or plagiarize.

Actual student excuse for plagiarism:

“But the question asked for a definition and an example. I just used the definition or example given in the slideset or textbook. I don’t understand how this is considered plagiarism.”

It is plagiarism when you copy something word for word or if you copy something and only change a few words or take someone else’s idea and act as though it is your own. When I ask you for examples or definitions, they should always be **IN YOUR OWN WORDS**. I’m looking to see if you understand a concept, so I want you to explain it to me. When you simply regurgitate what is written in the text or the slideset or on a website, I have no way to gauge whether or not you understand what we just covered. I periodically check answers of ALL students for plagiarism.

Example:

1. What is the definition of toplofty?
Plagiarized answer from online dictionary: very superior in air or attitude

Answer in your own words for full credit: Someone who is toplofty acts as though they are better than everyone else.

“I don’t understand what you mean when…”

**You ask me to describe a typical case of a disorder.*

In questions where I ask you to describe a disorder or a typical case of the disorder, I’m trying to see how well you understand it. I want you to understand it so well that you can picture what someone with this disorder might be like in terms of the following: what relevant characteristics they might have (e.g. gender, age), how they might behave and what symptoms they might exhibit. If a disorder is more common in men, for example, you would describe a man with the disorder. Alternatively, you could describe a woman with the disorder and mention that her case is atypical given her gender. If there is an age restriction on a disorder or an age when a disorder typically appears, you want to make that clear in your description. For example, schizophrenia often emerges in the early twenties. You would describe someone who is in their early twenties or mention that the person you’re describing was diagnosed in their early twenties.

Example

Diagnostic Criteria for Anorexia:

1. Patient is at or below 85% of the body weight typical for their age and height and refuses to maintain a minimal body weight that is greater than 85% of what is typical for their age and height (In English: a person weighs 85% of what they should weigh given their age and height. Example, a person weighs 85 pounds or less when the average minimum body weight for their age and height is 100 pounds; they refuse to weigh more than 85 pounds).
2. Patient has an intense fear of being fat or gaining weight
3. Patient has body image disturbance (In English: the patient insists they are fat despite the fact that they are severely underweight. When they look in the mirror they don’t see their actual reflection, but see themselves as larger and fatter than they actually are).
4. Patient (for females) has amenorrhea (In English: has not had a menstrual cycle for three consecutive months in the absence of pregnancy).

Description of typical case:

Jessica is a 19 year old female. She is 5’10” and weighs 107 pounds even though the minimum healthy body weight for someone of her age and height is 129 pounds. Doctors have repeatedly warned her that her weight is dangerous for her health. She has been repeatedly warned that she could die if she doesn’t make a serious attempt to gain and maintain an extra 20 pounds. She insists that she is too fat and needs to lose, “At least another 5 pounds.” Consequently she restricts her calorie intake to 500 or fewer calories per day. She refuses to eat foods containing any dairy products including butter or foods containing gluten despite having no allergies to either dairy or gluten. She has been in and out of hospitals for the past three years because of her weight and eating habits. While she is in the hospital she is typically fed via a feeding tube because she is terrified that if she eats anything the hospital gives her, she will gain weight and develop “A muffin top.” When she looks in the mirror she sees herself with a double chin. She grabs her skin and pinches it, exclaiming, “See, these are fat rolls,” even though you can see her spinal vertebrae and count her ribs. She started menstruating around the age of 14, but hasn’t has a period in over three years.

“I don’t understand what you mean when…”

**You ask me to given an example of a concept*

I want you to show me you recognize and understand a concept by your ability to describe a real-world example of it.

Example

Concept: Negative reinforcement in operant condition.

In operant conditioning the term negative means, “To take away;” the term reinforcement refers to an act that increases the likelihood of a behavior happening again. Negative reinforcement, in operant conditioning, means you are taking something away which increases the likelihood that a behavior will recur. In other words, a person (or pet) completes a behavior. In order to encourage that behavior to happen again in future, you take something that person (or pet) doesn’t like away in order to encourage the behavior to happen again. Why must it be something the person doesn’t like? Well, if you take something they enjoy away, you’re no longer encouraging a behavior to recur you’re discouraging it. In negative reinforcement, after a behavior occurs, you take away something unpleasant in order to encourage that behavior to happen again in future.

The example you might give:

John lives at home with his parents and attends Bucks County Community College. In exchange for room and board, his parents expect him to complete a number of chores. His least favorite chore is mowing the lawn in the summer because it’s hot and unpleasant. John’s parents just received his final grades from his spring semester. John got straight A’s. In order to encourage John to do well in subsequent semesters, John’s dad agrees to hire a lawn service so John doesn’t have to mow the lawn this summer.

John completed a behavior (getting straight A’s).

John’s dad took away something John doesn’t like (mowing the lawn) to encourage the likelihood of John getting straight A’s again.

Note, the behavior doesn’t have to be “desirable,” see example below.

Another example you might give:

Kristina is five years old. She hates going clothes shopping. Kristina’s mom takes Kristina to Kohl’s to buy Kristina a new dress for summer. Kristina throws a temper tantrum in the middle of the children’s section. Kristina’s mom is embarrassed by the tantrum, so they leave the store immediately. Through negative reinforcement, Kristina just learned that throwing a temper tantrum got her what she wanted, so she is likely to throw a temper tantrum again in future.

Kristina exhibited a behavior (temper tantrum).

Kristina’s mom, however unintentionally, took away something Kristina didn’t like (clothes shopping), which encouraged the likelihood that Kristina will throw a temper tantrum again in future.

Schedule of Assignments, Tests and Due Dates

Date	Topics Covered	Due Dates
May 29 – June 6	Unit 1 Ch 1: Introduction to Abnormal Psychology Ch 2: Contemporary Perspectives on Abnormal Behavior Ch 4: Methods of Treatment	06/06/12: Unit 1 Test
June 7 – June 18	Unit 2 Ch 14: Abnormal Behavior in Children & Adolescence Ch 15: Cognitive Disorders and Disorders Related to Aging Ch 11: Disorders involving Gender & Sexuality	06/18/12: Unit 2 Test
June 19- June 26	Unit 3 Ch 6: Anxiety Disorders Ch 8: Mood Disorders & Suicide Ch 9: Substance Abuse & Dependence	06/26/12: Unit 3 Test
June 27 – July 5	Unit 4 Ch 7: Dissociative Disorders Ch 12: Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders Ch 13: Personality disorders	07/02/12: Paper Due 07/05/12: Unit 4 Test