

ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Office hours: Wed 3:15-4. and by appointment (generally I am available before or after class, just send me an email letting me know you'd like to meet)

Strongly Suggested Text: Abnormal Psychology; Susan Nolen-Hoeksema (2007)

ISBN: 0077236394

- *The textbook is optional however, I strongly suggest buying it or sharing it with a friend. Exam questions will come from the notes, however, many students find the book very helpful for clarification or for additional information should they miss class.*

Course Objectives: This course is designed to help broaden your knowledge and conceptual understanding of abnormal psychology. We will primarily focus on the description of mental disorders. However, research and theories concerning etiology and treatment will also be covered. The specific objectives for this course are:

- To become familiar with diagnosable psychopathologies as currently defined by the DSM-IVTR
- To understand different theoretical explanations for mental illness
- To become familiar with different assessment and diagnostic techniques and treatment methods
- To understand the effect of culture and context on our definitions of mental illness
- To understand and engage in discussion regarding the ethical dilemmas associated with treating individuals with severe mental illness

Course Structure: The course will begin with a general overview of the history of mental illness with a brief review of how we, practitioners, assess of mental illness. The following weeks will involve a closer look at the various theoretical models of psychopathology (i.e. biological, cognitive, behavioral) and general principles used to treat disorders based on these orientations. Once a general understanding of mental illness is obtained, the class will delve deeper into a variety of mental disorders that affect both adults and children. The course will then conclude with student presentations, which will provide an in-depth look at a specific theory or treatment of the assigned disorder.

The course schedule is quite tentative and there is some room allotted for flexibility and tailoring to student interests. If there is a topic you are interested in that is not being covered, please let me know before the first exam and I will do my best to incorporate it into the course.

Course Description: Class will consist of a combination of lecture, video presentations, discussions, and a group project

Course Requirements:

- To read all assigned materials prior to each class period
- To be prepared to engage in discussion

Course Grading:

- I. **Four Tests:** There will be 4 tests including the final exam. Test questions will be based on all material presented in lectures (including videos, presentations) and any material covered in the assigned readings. *The final exam is not cumulative.* The tests will mostly be in a **multiple-choice format**. Each exam is worth 40 pts. Tests cannot be made up except in cases of emergency.

II. Paper: Students will complete one paper. The purpose of this assignment is to gain a deeper understanding of the process of case formulation, diagnosis and treatment. Each individual will choose a character from the media (tv/movie) and will provide them with a case formulation and diagnosis. In addition, possible explanations of the disorder and treatments will also be discussed. A handout with more details regarding the presentation topics and format will be distributed in the first week of class. This presentation is worth a total of 50 points and will be due Monday, June 23rd.

III. Class Participation and Small Group Assignments (ICP): Students are expected to attend all classes and participate in class discussions. As each student has had unique experiences with the topics discussed and can bring their own perspective to the discussion, group participation will increase the interest level and depth of the class. In order to encourage participation, there will be small group activities (case studies, etc.) and discussions throughout the semester. For each of the ICP's, there will be a reading assigned to be read prior to class. These assignments will be provided at least 3 days prior to class. On 6 of these days, six points of credit will be awarded to those who actively participate in the activity/discussion. The lowest score from these days will be dropped (i.e. you can miss one class without penalty). A total 30 points for the course can be earned in this manner.

IV. Extra Credit: You have the opportunity to earn up to **10 points of extra credit** by participating in psychology experiments listed on the Sona system. Each hour of participation is worth **2** points extra credit (e.g., if you get 4 points on Sona, and assign them to the class, you will get 8 points of extra credit). It is your responsibility to search for, sign up for, and attend psychology experiments. You must complete participation by the last day of class, and assign your credits to this class on the Sona System. To sign up for an account on the Sona System, go to <http://www.psyc.vt.edu>, click on 'research online' and follow the instructions for students. Extra credit points will be added to your total points at the end of the semester. As some individuals choose not to participate in psychology experiments, individuals may also complete research critiques (each worth up to 5 pts). Instructions for the research critique are listed on scholar. Both extra credit assignments are due by June 30th.

V. Missed Classes and Make-up Exams: If you should miss a class, you are responsible to borrow notes from another class member. You will also be held responsible for any changes to the syllabus, which may be announced in class. **The opportunity to make-up a missed exam will only be granted to students with a University-approved excuse or in cases of emergency. Unless your situation is an emergency, you need to inform me about missing the exam before it occurs.**

VI. Grading:

Exam 1	=	40 pts
Exam 2	=	40 pts
Exam 3	=	40 pts
Exam 4	=	40 pts
In class presentation	=	50 pts
Participation/Activities	=	30 pts
Total	=	240 pts
Extra Credit	=	10 pts

Grading Scale: All grades will be determined using the following grading scale. No grades will be rounded.

≥223	= A	175-182	= C
216-222	= A-	168-174	= C-
207-215	= B+	158-167	= D+
199-206	= B	151-157	= D
192-198	= B-	144-150	= D-
183-191	= C+	≤ 143 (59%)	= F

Students with Disabilities: I encourage students with disabilities (physical, intellectual, psychological etc.) or other specific needs to contact me early in the semester so I can help you enhance your learning potential in this class. Accommodations are approved through the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, 150 Henderson Hall, 231-3788, www.ssd.vt.edu

Honor System: All students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the principles set forth by the Virginia Tech Honor System. Violations of the honor code will be taken seriously and handled in accordance with the provisions established under the honor system. It is each student’s responsibility to ensure his or her familiarity with the Honor Code and abide by it at all times (<http://www.honorsystem.vt.edu>). Specific provisions of the honor code are listed below:

The Honor Code is the University policy that expressly forbids the following academic violations:

1. *Cheating* -- Cheating includes the actual giving or receiving of any unauthorized aid or assistance or the actual giving or receiving of any unfair advantage on any form of academic work, or attempts thereof.
2. *Plagiarism* -- Plagiarism includes the copying of the language, structure, ideas and/or thoughts of another and passing off same as one's own, original work, or attempts thereof.
3. *Falsification* -- Falsification includes the statement of any untruth, either verbally or in writing, with respect to any circumstances relevant to one's academic work, or attempts thereof. Such acts include, but are not limited to, the forgery of official signatures, tampering with official records, fraudulently adding or deleting information on academic documents such as add/drop requests, or fraudulently changing an examination or other academic work after the testing period or due date of the assignment.

<i>Tentative Schedule</i>		
Week	Date	Class Description
Week 1	1/23	Introduction; Defining abnormal behavior;
	1/30	NO CLASS; Ch 2 Theories and treatment
	2/6	Ch 3: Assessing and Diagnosing
	2/13	Assessment and Classification p2
	2/20	NO CLASS: Read history chapter and fill in blanks on lecture powerpoint; bring any questions to class ; ICP 1
Week 2	2/27	NO CLASS: MEMORIAL DAY
	3/6	Treatments for Abnormality
	3/13	ICP 2; Intro paper
	3/20	NO CLASS SPRING BREAK
	3/27	Anxiety Disorders p1

