

Abnormal Psychology

Course Information

PSY4343, Section 001, Abnormal Psychology, Fall 2013

Course Description

“The world is full of suffering, but also of the overcoming of it.”

Helen Keller

This course examines patterns of abnormal human behavior, approaches to psychotherapy, and related research. We will work for a sophisticated understanding of psychological disorders, their causes, and their treatments, while acknowledging what remains to be known.

Professor Contact Information

Dr. Marion K. Underwood

Email: undrwd@utdallas.edu

Office: JO3.202 (NE corner of the 3rd floor of Jonsson, walk over walkway on 4th floor, down the stairs on the left, open the door to the 3rd floor and 3.202 is straight ahead at the end of the hall)

Office Hours: Mondays, 12:45 – 2, Fridays, 1:30 – 3, or by appointment

Course Assistant Contact Information

Sarah B. Hinkley

Email: sarah.hinkley@utdallas.edu

Office: GR 4.604 (in the little hallway between the Dean's conference room and the fishbowl)

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10 – 11:30, or by appointment

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

There are no pre-requisites for this course.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

After completing the course, students should be able to:

- Explain the nature of psychology as a scientific discipline, compare and contrast the methods of psychology with those of other disciplines
 - Describe and analyze major theoretical perspectives (behavioral, biological, cognitive, humanistic, psychodynamic, and sociocultural) and explain the overarching theme of the interaction of mind and body in understanding psychopathology
 - Understand psychological disorders and their causes
 - Describe how various research designs address different types of questions and hypotheses, distinguish the nature of designs that permit causal inferences from those that do not
 - Integrate theoretical perspectives and empirical findings to produce comprehensive and multi-faceted explanations of mental health and mental illness
 - Use critical thinking to determine how well reasons support conclusions and identify weak, contradictory, and inappropriate assertions
 - Understand how scientific research on psychopathology can guide the prevention of behavioral and mental health problems and the treatment of abnormal behavior
 - Demonstrate how psychological principles can explain social issues and inform public policy
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Required Textbooks and Materials

To get the most out of the lectures and to succeed in this course, it is very important that you read the assigned book chapters prior to each lecture. We will read from two texts:

Comer, R.J. (2011). *Abnormal Psychology, DSM-5 Update Edition*. NY, NY: Worth Publishers

PLEASE NOTE – IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU GET THE DSM-5 UPDATE EDITION.

Kaysen, S. (1993). *Girl, Interrupted*. NY, NY: Vintage

Course & Instructor Policies

Lectures To succeed in this course, it is critically important that you attend all lectures. Some lectures will cover material also discussed in the book chapters; most will present additional material. Attending class is the only option for obtaining much of the information conveyed in this course. No lecture notes will be posted on the web, and no copies of study guides or other instructional materials will be provided for students who choose not to attend. Many lectures will include brief video clips to illustrate particular psychological disorders, and to give us some common examples to discuss. I welcome your questions as I lecture, although at times I may need to keep us moving and personal disclosures of any type are discouraged in class (though I would be glad to discuss individual situations during office hours).

In Class Essays On seven different occasions throughout the semester, you will write a very brief paper in class on a topic announced right before the writing activity. The top five of these scores will be summed and will count toward your final grade. No make-ups of these writing assignments will be allowed. You must be in class on the day of the writing assignment to earn these points. These papers will offer you the opportunity to show what you know, demonstrate that you have been reading the book chapters and attending lectures, and allow me to know more about how you are understanding the material as we go through the course.

Exams Exams will assess your understanding of material presented in the lectures and in the textbooks. There will be three exams throughout the semester, during class on the following dates: September 23, October 21, and November 20. A comprehensive final exam will be given during our last class meeting (Wednesday, December 11, 11:30 – 12:45). Exams must be taken on the scheduled date. You may drop one of your four exam grades. There will be no makeup exams and no extra credit – if you must miss an exam for any reason that will count as the one you drop.

One final word The intellectual excitement of this course depends on your active participation. I look forward to each of your questions, and I welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Grading Policy

Grades Your grade will be determined by the sum of your three highest exam scores and the sum of your scores on your five best in class essays. Each exam and the in class essays as a group will count 25% toward your grade. Grades will be assigned on the basis of the final distribution of the sums of all students' total points. Criteria for each letter grade will be determined on the basis of this distribution, but sums in the range of 90-100% will always earn A range grades, sums in the range of 80 – 89% will always earn at least B range grades, sums in the range of 70-79% will always earn at least C range grades. **YOU WILL ONLY RECEIVE A GRADE IN THIS COURSE IF YOU COMPLETE THE RESEARCH PARTICIPATION CREDITS REQUIRED BY THE SCHOOL OF BEHAVIORAL AND BRAIN SCIENCES.** Details about this requirement appear on the separate handout distributed on the first day of class.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

8/26	Introduction	Comer 1
8/28	Models of Abnormality	Comer 3
9/2	LABOR DAY – NO CLASS	
9/4	Diagnosing and Treating Abnormality	Comer 4
9/9	Research in Abnormal Psychology	Comer 2
9/11	Stress Disorders	Comer 6
9/16	Stress Disorders, Cont.	
9/18	Generalized Anxiety, Phobias, and Panic	Comer 5, pp. 113 - 140
9/23	EXAM #1	
9/25	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	Comer 5, pp. 140-151
9/30	Dissociative Disorders	Comer 7
10/2	Personality Disorders	Comer 16
10/7	Personality Disorders, cont.	
10/9	Depression	Comer 8
10/14	Bipolar Disorder	Comer 9
10/16	Schizophrenia	Comer 14
10/21	EXAM #2	
10/23	Schizophrenia, cont.	
10/28	Schizophrenia, cont.	Comer 15
10/30	Schizophrenia, cont.	
11/4	Schizophrenia, cont.	
11/6	Eating Disorders	Comer 11
11/11	Substance-Related Disorders	Comer 12
11/13	Substance –Related Disorders, cont.	
11/18	Review and catch up	Comer 13, pp.406 - 421
11/20	EXAM #3	
11/25	NO CLASS – FALL BREAK	
11/28	NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING	
12/2	<i>Girl, Interrupted</i>	Kaysen
12/4	<i>Girl, Interrupted</i>	
12/9	Social, Policy, and the Law – ATTENDANCE MANDATORY	Comer 19
12/11	EXAM #4	

