

# ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY (Psyc 229) Brief Course Overview

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## *Course Description:*

Welcome to the fascinating world of psychopathology! In this course, we will explore the broad range of psychological distress in the human experience. Together, we will examine the theories and empirical research regarding the causes, nature, and treatment of psychological disorders. You will quickly discover that the field of psychopathology is filled with many unanswered questions and a great diversity of opinion. Throughout the course, we will devote considerable attention to these questions and controversies, as well as to their societal and political landscape, by posing questions such as the following: What constitutes “normal” and “abnormal” behavior, and who decides? How can historical, social, and cultural context influence definitions of mental illness? Are psychological disorders diseases with known cures? Are some disorders more biologically based than others? As we investigate these questions, you will be challenged to (re)examine your own thoughts and assumptions about mental illness and the individual and family lives profoundly affected by its course.

This course will begin by reviewing the many ways in which psychologists have conceptualized and assessed psychological disorders. We will then explore specific classes of disorders and associated issues, including anxiety disorders and reactivity to stress, mood disorders, eating and substance use disorders, somatoform and dissociative disorders, personality disturbance, schizophrenia, childhood disorders, and disorders of cognition. As we progress through these many categories of disorders, I invite you to consider underlying themes and similarities that unite these diverse conditions. Finally, we will consider the major ethical and legal issues that intersect with our understanding of mental illness, its context, and its consequences.

Psychopathology is a truly remarkable area of study. I do hope that this course will inspire you to continue learning about topics in the field that pique your interest. If you find yourself particularly intrigued by a specific topic (or multiple topics!) that you encounter in this course, please come and talk to me anytime with your questions, comments, and confusions!

## *Course Goals:*

This course covers a great deal of material and requires you to do a lot of thinking, evaluating, and questioning. During our time together, I hope that you will:

- Develop increased knowledge of psychological disorders, their causes, and their treatments.
- Understand and appreciate the historical, social, and cultural context of psychological disorders.
- Apply a critical approach to understanding the ambiguities and controversies in abnormal psychology.
- Engage in thoughtful, sophisticated reflection of the ethical issues in this field.
- Strengthen your ability to evaluate scientific research on psychopathology.
- Refine your skills in written and oral communication about abnormal psychology.
- Contribute to an active learning environment for yourself and your fellow scholars.

## ***Course Requirements:***

Our class format will be a combination of lecture, discussion, and class activities. Note that we will not have a chance to discuss all text/supplemental readings in class. Please think of class time as an opportunity to take active part in discovering new knowledge, clarifying questions, and voicing your opinions in front of your peers. Participation is critical to active learning, and no question is unimportant. I wish to create a safe and collaborative learning environment for all students, which means that we must value the diversity of others' opinions, *even when we may not agree*. I do welcome thought-provoking discussion and scholarly debate in my classroom, but please remember to keep it polite and respectful.

<b><i>Course Requirement</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage</i></b>
Attendance; class participation; in-class activities; non-graded assignments	Pass/fail (pulls grade up/down)
Three exams	60% (20% each)
Three critical thinking essays	30% (10% each)
Group lead class / presentation and group paper	10%

## ***Readings:***

The following texts are required:

- Comer, R. J. (2006). *Abnormal psychology (6th ed.)*. New York: Worth.
- Jamison, K. R. (1997). *An unquiet mind*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Kaysen, S. (1993). *Girl, interrupted*. New York: Vintage Books.

*In addition to the above required texts, you will complete the following supplemental readings. Readings are listed in the order in which they appear on the course syllabus. Complete bibliographic information can be found on my course syllabus.*

Szasz (1960). The myth of mental illness.

Rosenhan (1973). On being sane in insane places.

Widiger & Samuel (2005). Diagnostic categories or dimensions? A question for the *DSM-V*.

Rapoport (1989). *The boy who couldn't stop washing* (excerpt).

Schwartz et al. (1996). Systematic changes in cerebral glucose metabolic rate after successful behavior modification treatment of OCD.

Jacobs, Horne-Moyer, & Jones (2004). The effectiveness of critical incident stress debriefing with primary and secondary trauma victims.

McNally (2004). Psychological debriefing does not prevent posttraumatic stress disorder.

Striegel-Moore & Cachelin (2001). Etiology of eating disorders in women.

Gilbert (2003). Eating disorders in women of color.

Lewinsohn, Seeley, Moerk, & Striegel-Moore (2002). Gender differences in eating disorder symptoms in young adults.

Petrie & Rogers (2001). Extending the discussion of eating disorders to include men and athletes.

Pearson, Goldklang, & Striegel-Moore (2002). Prevention of eating disorders: Challenges and opportunities.

Knapp (1996). *Drinking: A love story* (excerpt).

Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross (1992). In search of how people change: Applications to addictive behaviors.

A brief guide to Alcoholics Anonymous.

Pope, Barry, Bodkin, & Hudson (2006). Tracking scientific interest in the dissociative disorders: A study of scientific publication output 1984-2003.

Reinders et al. (2003). One brain, two selves.

Spiegel, D. (2006). Recognizing traumatic dissociation. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 163, 566-568.

Davis, Loftus, & Follette (2001). How, when, and whether to use informed consent for recovered memory therapy.

Loftus, E.F. (2005). Planting misinformation in the human mind: A 30-year investigation of the malleability of memory.

Durbin & Klein (2006). Ten-year stability of personality disorders among outpatients with mood disorders.

Dohrenwend et al. (1992). Socioeconomic status and psychiatric disorders: The causation-selection issue.

North et al. (2004). Are rates of psychiatric disorders in the homeless population changing?

Talbott (2004). Deinstitutionalization: Avoiding the disasters of the past.

Haddon (2004). *The curious incident of the dog in the nighttime* (excerpt).

Faraone et al. (2003). Does stimulant medication lead to substance use disorders?

Rohde et al. (2005). ADHD in a diverse culture: Do research and clinical findings support the notion of a cultural construct for the disorder?

ADHD criteria from DSM-IV-TR (2000); HD (hyperkinetic disorder) criteria from ICD-10

John/Joan case reading

Knapp & Slattery (2004). Professional boundaries in nontraditional settings.

Nigro (2004). Counselors' experiences with problematic dual relationships.

Gutheil (2001). Moral justification for Tarasoff-type warnings and breach of confidentiality: A clinician's perspective.

*The following supplemental readings are optional:*

McNally, Bryant, & Ehlers (2003). Does early psychological intervention promote recovery from posttraumatic stress?

Nolen-Hoeksema (1987). Sex differences in unipolar depression: Evidence and theory.

Kasch, Rottenberg, Arnow, & Gotlib (2002). Behavioral activation and inhibition systems and the severity and course of depression.

Garlow, Purselle, & Heninger (2005). Ethnic differences in patterns of suicide across the life cycle.

Hornbacher (1999). *Wasted: A memoir of anorexia and bulimia* (excerpt).

*The big book of Alcoholics Anonymous* (Ch. 1, "Bill's story") [ERES – listed as "AA Big Book Ch. 1"]

Loftus & Ketcham (1994). *The myth of repressed memory: False memories and allegations of sexual abuse* (excerpt).

Lynch et al. (2006). Mechanisms of change in dialectical behavior therapy: Theoretical and empirical observations.

Steele & Burman (2001). *The day the voices stopped* (excerpt).