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.

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

The following texts are required:


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.
Widiger & Samuel (2005). Diagnostic categories or dimensions? A question for the *DSM-V*.
Schwartz et al. (1996). Systematic changes in cerebral glucose metabolic rate after successful behavior modification treatment of OCD.
Petrie & Rogers (2001). Extending the discussion of eating disorders to include men and athletes.

A brief guide to *Alcoholics Anonymous*. 
Reinders et al. (2003). One brain, two selves.
North et al. (2004). Are rates of psychiatric disorders in the homeless population changing?
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

*The following supplemental readings are optional:*

McNally, Bryant, & Ehlers (2003). Does early psychological intervention promote recovery from posttraumatic stress?
Kasch, Rottenberg, Arnow, & Gotlib (2002). Behavioral activation and inhibition systems and the severity and course of depression.
The big book of *Alcoholics Anonymous* (Ch. 1, “Bill’s story”) [ERES – listed as “AA Big Book Ch. 1”]
Steele & Burman (2001). *The day the voices stopped* (excerpt).