



PSYS 440 Abnormal Psychology

Summer 2019 (7/8 to 7/26), web-based course

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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Textbook: Nolen-Hoeksema, S. (2014). *(Ab)Normal Psychology, Sixth Edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

DO NOT BUY THE 5TH EDITION OF THE TEXTBOOK. IMPORTANT UPDATES WERE MADE IN THE 6TH EDITION AND THIS VERSION IS REQUIRED.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Abnormal psychology is the study of the etiology, diagnosis, and treatment of psychological and associated disorders. This course will cover the diagnostic and classification systems for psychological disorders and the process of defining “normal” vs. “abnormal” behavior. We will cover as many categories of psychological disorders as possible, emphasizing more common disorders, such as anxiety and mood disorders, and will also cover some less common disorders based on time and interests of the class.

COURSE PREREQUISITE: Completed 6 hours of PSYS/PSY courses, including PSYS/PSY 100; junior standing, or permission of instructor.

PURPOSE OF THE SYLLABUS

This syllabus outlines the schedule that we will use to cover the major topics of the course. It includes a list of specific dates for assignments and exams. The schedule also lists the required reading for the course. It also included the distribution of points that will make up your grade in this course. If you have a question about the course, *please check the syllabus first*. You will likely find the answer; if not, contact me. **You are responsible for checking the course website on Blackboard and your e-mail prior to class for any posted announcements.**

Disclaimer: Please note that this syllabus is a general plan for the course and the professor reserves the right to deviate from this plan, if necessary, during the summer term.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Learn about the history of classifying mental illness and the current diagnostic system.

2. Learn about the process of defining abnormal behavior including theories of assessing, diagnosing, and treating abnormality.
3. Become familiar with many different categories of psychological disorders and be able to recognize their symptoms and patterns of behavior.

What will I learn in the course?

Course Objectives	Activities to support the objectives	Assessment of the objectives
Upon completion of this course you will be able to		
1. Explain current issues & scientific approaches to understanding and treating abnormal behavior.	Reading, Discussion	Discussion Points, Exams
2. Summarize the biological, psychological and social challenges of maladaptive functioning.	Reading, videos, Discussions	Discussion Points, Exams
3. Classify, at a beginning level, abnormal behavior	Reading, videos	Exams
4. Analyze a mental health issue in depth	Reading, Discussions	Discussion Points
5. Evaluate professional and popular press information concerning human behavior.	Discussions	Discussion Points, Exams

COURSE POLICIES

Motivation for an On-line Course

Success in this course will be related to your level of commitment and time management. Many students think that an on-line class will be easier than a face-to-face course. However, on-line courses require students to be even more responsible for learning the material. There are no class lectures to sit through with hopes that you will “just learn” the material by listening to the professor. This course will require you to read the assigned chapters on specific dates in order to not fall behind. You will also need to structure your time so that you can complete quizzes, assignments, and discussion board posts in a timely manner. Links to video clips may be posted on Blackboard to correspond to assigned chapters. Plan on spending a few hours each day on this course. We are fitting in 15 weeks’ worth of material into three weeks.

Academic Honesty

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Academic misconduct will result in failure of an assignment, or in some cases, failure of the course, and appropriate disciplinary action, according to university guidelines. The following are not permitted: taking quizzes for another student, passing off someone else’s work as your own, buying or selling assignments, or plagiarizing other people’s work (including the textbooks).

Academic dishonesty tends to occur when students are having a rough semester and feel they need to resort to desperate measures to pass a class. If you find yourself in this situation, please

come speak with me about your situation. You can also contact the WKU Academic Advising and Retention Center. They can assist in notifying your professors about a difficult situation, such as a death in the family or medical issue. The center is in Downing University Center, Room A330, phone: 745-5065.

Respect in the On-line Classroom

Respect for fellow students and the instructor is expected and is very important. This class may stir up strong emotions and opinions about certain topics. When posting on the discussion board, students are expected to use appropriate, respectful language. We may disagree with each other, and that's OK. It is not OK, however, to resort to name-calling or using other negative language. There is a general tendency for people to be more uninhibited when posting comments on-line because they feel a sense of anonymity. If you are unsure if a comment will be offensive, imagine yourself saying it out loud in class before posting.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Discussion Board Posts

Students will be required to post to discussion boards multiple times a week to facilitate participation in the on-line course format. Directions for these posts will be on the course Blackboard site in the "Content" section. Basically, for each day that a post is due, you will provide a paragraph for a key term assigned to you, as well as feedback to one other student's post. You will earn up to 3 points for your own post and 2 points for the feedback given. You will be responsible for making 10 total posts (5 points each) during the 3-week term to earn a possible 50 points for Discussion Board Posts. I will post assigned terms for students for each discussion post. **Please see the course Blackboard page for more detailed instructions.**

Exams

There will be 3 exams that will be administered on-line through the course Blackboard page. Each exam is worth 100 points and will consist of up to 50 items. These exams are meant to assess the depth and breadth of your knowledge of course material. This includes application of concepts to real world situations and interpretation of the implications of concepts. **You will have 1.5 hours to take each exam.** Do not expect to have time to use your book. It is highly recommended that you prepare for these exams as you would for an in-person exam. You are only allowed to take each exam once. **If there is a technical difficulty and Blackboard shuts down, you must e-mail me within 1 hour of the exam and we will discuss how to remedy the situation.**

Because this is a 3-week course, **NO MAKE UP EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN.** If there is an extreme emergency and you must miss an exam, I will take the average of your other exams, minus 20 points (this option requires that all other exams were taken on time). This is **ONLY** for extreme emergencies. There are 3 circumstances in which accommodation is made for missing an exam (i.e., the following count as "extreme emergencies"):

- 1) A personally life-threatening emergency (includes fever over 100 or being deployed by the military). Appropriate documentation of the emergency is required in order for me to assign a grade. The following are **NOT** life-threatening: a cold (no fever), a hangover, a vacation trip. You have advance notice of all due dates for this course and must make choices about fulfilling obligations. Documentation includes notes from doctors, pharmacy receipts, etc.

- 2) A death in the family. Documentation will also be needed in this case, such as an obituary, funeral cards, etc. While I am very sympathetic to losses, please understand that this is a common excuse given by students and documentation is the only way for me to know if it is a valid event.
- 3) The university chooses to approve certain types of absences.

The vast majority of the time students manage to take the exams and perform in a manner equal to their daily effort of the material. A crisis does not disrupt the grade of someone who has kept up all along.

Exams will be posted on Blackboard and made available the morning they are due. They must be completed by 11:59pm CST on the day they are due.

Critical Thinking Paper

The purpose of this paper is to learn how to critique certain orientations and lines of research. Textbooks sometimes give the impression that abnormal psychology is all a matter of “science,” and that if we just improve our scientific methods we will find solutions to most of our personal and social problems. However, science does not exist outside of society, and science cannot solve all of our problems. It is people like you and me who use science and make important decisions about how to help people. People who use the information presented in your textbook are influenced by personal values, religious beliefs, and political attitudes. Psychologists cannot help but be affected by these factors, which shape their interpretation of scientific data. Therefore, it is important that we critically evaluate everything.

For this paper, you will select one of the options below and write **6-8 double-spaced typed pages** in APA style. The title and reference pages do not count toward the final page length. You need **6-8 pages of text**. You do not need an abstract. Make sure you **answer all the questions** given for each option. Be clear, give examples, and make sure it is apparent when you use terminology that you understand what the word/concept means. The purpose of this paper is not to do library research, but rather for you to engage in critical thinking and personal reflection. It is fine to draw from one or two sources for your papers, but you **MUST** reference any sources that you use, including websites. **Remember that not crediting sources or “lifting” material word-for-word from the textbook or other source counts as plagiarism. Please use your own words.** Please, please, please proofread papers or have someone else read and edit them before submitting them to me. Papers will be graded on a) organization of presentation, logical sequence, flow of thought, b) clarity of expression, grammar, and c) critical analysis or linking of theory/research with personal experience.

OPTION #1

Psychiatrists have developed and refined a diagnostic system for the classification of psychiatric disorders. Yet there have been many different critiques of this system. A Psychiatrist by the name of Thomas Szasz has argued since the 1950s that mental illness is a myth, that unlike other diseases, no lesions or other underlying disease processes in the body have been identified as the cause of most mental disorders. Psychologist Paula Caplan has argued that the inclusion of new diagnostic categories like Masochistic Personality Disorder illustrates that the DSM is a tool of a male-dominated psychiatric system. If there is a category for Masochistic Personality Disorder, which applies primarily for women, she asks, why is there not a category of Delusional Dominating Personality Disorder, which would apply primarily to men?

The famous pseudo-patient study conducted by Psychologist David Rosenhan in the 1960s found that people who had no discernable mental health problems could be admitted to psychiatric hospitals, diagnosed, and medicated, even though they exhibited no symptoms that could be classified within a DSM category. Finally, many people who have been diagnosed and treated within the formal mental health system object to being labeled, arguing that it reinforces the stigma and rejection that they have experienced many times over by society. Such individuals resent being called “a schizophrenic” and treated in a dehumanized way, noting that no one would ever think of calling someone who has cancer “a cancer.” They want to be seen as “people first,” not as mental patients or diagnostic labels.

Consider and respond to each of the following questions:

1. What do you see as the advantages of having a classification system for abnormal behavior, like the DSM?
2. What do you see as the disadvantages of having a classification system for abnormal behavior, like the DSM?
3. Based on your answers to the first two questions, do you think that the DSM is a reasonable system as it stands, that the DSM should be completely scrapped, or that a new system should be developed that minimizes the disadvantages of the current system, while maximizing the advantages? Provide reasons and evidence for your response.

OPTION #2

A classic dilemma that challenges many researchers conducting clinically-based experiments is: How ethical is it to withhold a promising treatment, even if still in experimental stages, from patients who might benefit from the therapy or medication? But, at the same time, each threat to the internal validity of an experiment impacts on the ability of researchers to generate conclusive evidence supporting the effectiveness, and thus justify the use of the treatment. It is not uncommon for tensions to develop between therapists whose primary concern is their clinical responsibilities toward patients and researchers who endeavor to uphold the often rigid requirements of experimental designs.

1. What do you think the responsibility of the researcher should be under these circumstances?
2. What factors should go into the decision-making process?
3. What would you do?

APA Style: Any written product is expected to conform to the standards set forth in the latest edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association unless my directions indicate otherwise. This web site, <http://citationmachine.net/index.php>, can be a great help in formatting common resources. Again, there aren't too many opportunities to use APA style but there are a few. Ask me if you are unsure of it.

Remember that the official format for submitting papers is Word doc or rtf. If you need help getting to a format I can read, call me when you are at your computer and we'll work through the options. Don't submit another format. It will be late.

Plagiarism & Intellectual Property: Randomly selected and/or suspicious material will be checked for plagiarism using the original document, plagiarism detection (text matching) software, search engines or copies of prior student projects. Again, I want students who are careful to be protected from those who aren't. Copying another person's work (in any form, including images, Web pages, textbooks, etc.) without giving credit is plagiarism.

Do not duplicate more than three consecutive words. Rephrase any ideas into your own words. Plagiarism will result in 0 points on the product.

Extra Credit Research Participation

If research studies are available in the summer, you can earn up to 5 points of extra credit by serving as a research participant. You can access available studies at <http://wku.sona-systems.com>. You will receive one point of extra credit per one credit of research. Some studies can be completed on-line and some require coming to campus to participate.

GRADING

Requirements	Points
Exams	300 (3 @ 100 points each)
Critical Thinking Paper	100
<u>Discussion Board Participation</u>	<u>50</u>
Total	450

A = 90 – 100%

B = 80 – 89%

C = 70 – 79%

D = 60 – 69%

F = below 60%

Discussion of Grades. Students sometimes want to discuss their grade via e-mail. E-mail is *neither* secure *nor* private. If an individual student requests his/her grade, I cannot reveal to that student his/her grade through e-mail. However, course software does provide a way for you to check your grade on-line. I am cautious in discussing it in detail via email.

Students with disabilities: In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center A-200. The phone number is 745-5004; TTY is 745-3030. Per university policy, please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation.

USING BLACKBOARD

This class will be presented through “Blackboard,” which is the name of the website you will use to access materials, turn in assignments, participate in discussions, and take quizzes. To access Blackboard:

1) Go to www.wku.edu

2 On the top of the page you will see a link that says “Quick Links.” Hold your mouse over this and then select “Blackboard” from the links listed.

- 3) You will be required to login using your WKU email username (the part before the @) and WKU e-mail password (what you use to access your WKU e-mail).
- 4) After logging in, on the right-hand side of the screen, you will see the course name underlined, Abnormal Psychology. Click on the course name.
- 5) Now you will see a screen that will have any current announcements in the center. To the left will be a list of menu items on white buttons, such as “Content,” “Tests and Quizzes,” etc. Click on these, depending on what you want to do.

Getting Course Materials

To access the syllabus and other documents I might post for the class, click the “Content” link on the far left side.

Accessing Exams

To access the exams, click the “Tests and Quizzes” link. Exams may be taken once from any computer.

Anyone who uses an unsupported browser (see Blackboard for a list) will receive a zero for all lost exam scores. No make-ups will be made available. Once you open exams, you must finish them.

Exams must be taken from a fast Internet connection. If you do not have reliable, fast Internet service at home, exams should be taken from a Library or other trusted location.

Discussion Board

To access the discussion board for each day that a post is due, click on the “Discussions” link.

Checking Your Grade

You can check your grade anytime in Blackboard by clicking on the “My Grades” button.

Getting HELP!!

If you are experiencing difficulty with your computer or the internet, please call the WKU IT Help Desk at 270-745-7000. While I am usually your best resource for helping you with Blackboard, I am not a good resource for helping you with technical problems concerning your computer and the way it might be interfacing with Blackboard. **PLEASE read important information on Blackboard that is on the screen immediately after you login, and before you click the name of the class.** There is a box in the middle of the screen that tells you which web browsers work best for Blackboard (Web Browser recommendations). Most technical problems can be solved by changing browsers. Ironically, some newer browsers do not work well with Blackboard—so check. It is your responsibility to solve technical problems by contacting the IT Help Desk. Technical problems are not an acceptable reason for not completing something on time.

The Course Schedule and Due Dates - Due dates for assignments will be listed with each assignment and on the syllabus. In general, we will be covering 3-4 chapters per week. **All assignments are due by the end of the last due date (11:59 p.m.) Central Standard Time.** Due dates/times indicate the last point at which I will accept discussion posts, exams, and assignments. **Assignments may always be submitted early. Late assignments will be reduced by one letter grade per each day it is late.** Assignments should be posted to Blackboard in the designated areas or e-mailed to me as instructed. Links for assignments/activities will be disabled once the due date/time has expired. Once the link disappears, you will no longer have access to the activity/assignment.

Blackboard Instructions: Participating in the Discussion Board

For each chapter, I will have one or more discussion board "threads." You may also respond to other students' postings. From there you can click the option to add a new thread (a new idea). You can also click on and read other people's responses and respond to them. If you want to reply to a particular post, make sure you click the little Reply button on the right in the box of that particular post. In a thread where there are lots of posts, there may be lots of Reply buttons showing. Just make sure you click the right one. I encourage you to watch the following training videos that will help you using the Discussion Board feature.

Posting Threads:

http://www.wku.edu/infotech/atech/videotutorials/PostingThread_demo.htm

Replying to Threads

<http://www.wku.edu/infotech/atech/videotutorials/ReplyingtoThreadsMessages.htm>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Dates for reading chapters are suggested. Items that are highlighted are due on the date listed by 11:59pm CST.

Week One: July 8-12, 2019

Monday July 8

- Read Syllabus, more than once (it covers a lot of material)
- E-mail me with any questions about the syllabus
- Read Chapter 1, Abnormality

Tuesday July 9

- Read Chapter 2, Theories & Treatment
- Discussion Post

Wednesday July 10

- Read Chapter 3, Assessing and Diagnosing Abnormality
- Discussion Post

Thursday July 11

- Read Chapter 4, Research
- Discussion Post

Friday July 12

- Exam #1 - covering Chapters 1-4

Week Two: July 15-19

Monday July 15

- Read Chapter 5, Trauma, Anxiety, Obsessive-Compulsive, and Related Disorders
- Discussion Post

Tuesday July 16

- Read Chapter 6, Somatic Symptom & Dissociative Disorders
- Discussion Post

Wednesday July 17

- Read Chapter 7, Mood Disorders & Suicide
- Discussion Post

Thursday July 18

- Read Chapter 8, Schizophrenia Spectrum & Other Psychotic Disorders
- Discussion Post

Friday July 19

- Exam #2 – covering Chapters 5-8

Week Three: July 22-26

Monday July 22

- Read Chapter 9, Personality Disorders

Tuesday July 23

- Read Chapter 10, Neurodevelopmental & Neurocognitive Disorders
- Discussion Post
- Critical Thinking Paper Due

Wednesday July 24

- Read Chapter 11, Disruptive, Impulse Control, & Conduct Disorders
- Discussion Post

Thursday July 25

- Read Chapter 12, Eating Disorders
- Discussion Post

Friday July 26

- Exam #3 – covering Chapters 9-12