



**Psychology of Abnormal Behavior
Western Kentucky University**

PSY 440 – Section 01
Fall 2022
MW 1:50PM – 3:10PM



Contact Information:

Instructor: Ellie Steele, PhD.

Email: ellen.steele@wku.edu

Virtual Classroom/Office: <https://wku.zoom.us/j/5786486535>

Office hours: By appointment (email to schedule a time—Please do not hesitate to schedule a meeting)

Course Materials:

Recommended text:

Nevid, J. S., Rathus, S. A., & Greene, B. (2021). *Abnormal Psychology in a Changing World* (11th ed.). Pearson: Hoboken, NJ.

Course Description:

In this course, you will learn about the scientific study of people whose behaviors are classified as abnormal or unusual. Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

- Identify established and emerging scientific methods for the description, conceptualization, and treatment of major forms of adult mental disorders
- Understand the nature and prevalence of these disorders
- Utilize critical and integrative thinking about psychological phenomena, including the impact of multiple sources of causality and cultural diversity
- Develop a sense of compassion for individuals suffering from mental disorders.

I hope that through this class you will gain both a broad understanding of the field of abnormal psychology and a critical understanding of the nuances involved in categorizing behavior as “abnormal.” Learning our definitions and system is very important. You must first learn how the current diagnostic system works in order to critically examine if it should work the way it does. Most students look back on their abnormal psychology course as an exciting and enlightening experience. It is my goal that we share such an experience!

Course Format:

Given that this is a survey course, classes will consist primarily of lectures. However, this learning new information works best when lectures are supplemented by reading, discussion, and possible additional assignments. To get the most of the material and contribute to the discussions meaningfully, it is expected that students will arrive on time and prepared to participate actively in class with all readings completed by the assigned date.

Additionally, lectures may be supplemented with various forms of media, and some material discussed in class will not be available in the required text. Any information discussed in class or supplemental media may be included on the quizzes and exam.

Course Policies

Classroom Decorum:

Although this class is remote, students are still expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students are to treat faculty and peers with **respect**. **Class discussions and lectures may approach sensitive topics (including but not limited to racial and cultural issues, trauma, and systemic issues), so it is imperative that everyone respect each other's views and remain professional in addressing controversial topics.**

Respectful behavior includes arriving to class on time, refraining from interrupting the instructor or other students, and avoiding the use of language that could potentially insult or hurt anyone in the classroom.

Electronic Devices:

Please put cell phones on vibrate or silent and out of sight during class time.

Part of being respectful of your fellow classmates and instructor is refraining from talking or texting during class. If you have a valid reason for having your cell phone on and out during class (i.e., you are expecting a call due to a family emergency) you should inform the **instructor before class begins**.

I strongly encourage note taking by hand to avoid distractions on computers. In addition, there is clear scientific evidence showing that using a laptop to take notes in class leads to poorer engagement and comprehension of lecture material relative to taking notes by hand (Gingerich & Lineweaver, 2014).

You must get permission from the instructor to audio or video record lectures.

The instructor reserves the right to dismiss from the class for the day any student who is not adhering to these rules or who is being a disruption in the class. Disruptive behavior includes any behavior that results in distraction of or offense to the instructor or any student in the class (i.e., talking while the teacher is speaking, cell phone use, excessive smartwatch use, disrespectful attitude toward the instructor or classmates, etc.).

Attendance and Participation:

Even though I will be reporting attendance to the university, there is no formal attendance policy in this course. However, if you want to do well in this class, attendance is highly recommended. Though it's possible to learn a lot of material from reading the book outside of class, we will engage in a fair amount of discussion during class, and the information from the classroom discussions will be used to shape some of the questions of the test. If you must miss class, I would recommend asking a class member to copy their notes and ask about any discussion points that you might have missed. I often point out key points during discussions.

Communication:

E-mail is the best way to reach me. You can expect timely (within 48 hours) responses to e-mails sent M-F before 5pm. If you do not get a response within 48 hours, feel free to send again. Email is not perfect, and something may get lost. Please check your e-mail and Blackboard on a regular basis. Not checking your e-mail or Blackboard is not a valid excuse for missing a class update—I suggest setting up notifications for any Blackboard updates. If you need to meet with me, e-mail me to set up an appointment.

E-mail etiquette is important as a young professional. Thus, I will not respond to e-mails that do not adhere to the following outline. All emails should be sent through your @wku.edu account and include information about the topic of the e-mail in the subject line of

the email. Additionally, each e-mail should contain a greeting, a body with complete sentences clearly addressing the purpose of your e-mail, and a salutation. Please do not use any slang or shortcut language when e-mailing instructors. This is an opportunity for you to practice professional communication skills you will need for your careers.

Getting Help:

If you are having difficulties with any aspect of this course, **please contact me**, and I will do my best to help you. If you have just a short question, feel free to ask me after class or send it via e-mail. I can't help you improve your performance in class if you do not ask for it! Also, be sure to ask for help earlier rather than later – research shows that earlier intervention leads to the best outcomes.

Academic Dishonesty:

Students are expected to complete their own work. As stated in the university catalog, “students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the coursework in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal.” In other words, do your own work and do not cheat. The psychology faculty consider academic dishonesty an ethical matter.

Campus Safety and COVID-19:

All students are strongly encouraged to get the COVID-19 vaccine. In accordance with WKU policy, all students must call the WKU COVID-19 Assistance Line at 270-745-2019 within 4 hours of testing positive for COVID-19 or being identified as a close contact to someone who has tested positive. The COVID Assistance Line is available to answer questions regarding any COVID-19 related issue. This guidance is subject to change based on requirements set forth by federal, state, and local public health entities. Please refer to the Healthy on the Hill website for the most current information. www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill

Student Accommodations:

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. **Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.**

Title IX Statement:

“Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU’s Title IX Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy (#0.2070) at <https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf>. Under this policy, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex-gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, **WKU faculty are “Responsible Employees” of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU’s Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.** If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU’s Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.”

*****Additional information about Title IX, academic dishonesty, and campus safety can be found at: <https://www.wku.edu/syllabusinfo/>**

Methods of Evaluation

Exams (100 points each – 400 points total):

Five exams will be given throughout the semester. Each exam will be worth 100 points. The first four exams will cover a full unit but will build on previous knowledge learned throughout the semester. The final exam is **cumulative, cannot be dropped, and will be given during finals week during our assigned time (see schedule)**. Exam questions will be based on lecture, the textbook, class examples, or various media shown in class.

I will drop the lowest of your 4 exam scores, leaving the 3 best scores to make up your exam grade.

Discussions & Syllabus Quiz (10 points each)

We will have reading assignments with an accompanying discussion board or the Syllabus quiz throughout the semester. There are a total of 11 potential readings, this allows you to skip or miss two of the readings. To complete these assignments you will read the academic reading posted for that week and then write a paragraph. This can be a review of what you read, questions about the topic, or a thoughtful reaction to the reading. Posts should be at least 5-7 good sentences. Make sure to read and re-read your posting as well as using spell and grammar checks as it will contribute to your grade.

Postings will be due on at Noon on the date before class begins.

Syllabus quiz is due the class after the last day of add/drop (August 29th, 2022). It will test your knowledge of the syllabus and can be taken multiple times.

Extra Credit

You have the opportunity to earn extra credit points by participating in psychological research experiences. You can earn up to 10 points, by any of the following means, in any combination:

- 1) You may volunteer to serve as a participant in an approved study being conducted by WKU faculty or students through the WKU StudyBoard.
- 2) You may take quizzes over psychology research articles through the WKU StudyBoard.

A list of studies that you can participate in can be found on the StudyBoard website.

Only credits that you register for through StudyBoard will count for extra credit. Some studies are worth one credit, others are worth more. One credit is equivalent to 15 minutes of research participation. Two (2) StudyBoard credits = 1 extra credit point in PSY 440. Students interested in taking quizzes over psychology research articles for extra credit can get details on the StudyBoard website <http://www.wku.edu/psychology/studyboard>

Grading Scale and Summary: Task	Point Value
Discussions & Syllabus Quiz	100
Exams	300 (Lowest dropped)

Final Exam	100
Total	500

Final course grades will be based on the scale below:

A = 450 – 500 points (90-100%)

B = 400 – 449 points (80-89%)

C = 350 – 399 points (70-79%)

D = 300 – 349 points (60-69%)

E = less than 300 points (< 60%)

Date	Topic	Reading	Due
8/22 (Monday)	Class Introduction and Overview	Syllabus	
8/24 (Wednesday)	Introduction and Methods of Research		
8/29 (Monday)	Contemporary Perspectives		Last Add/Drop Day
8/31 (Wednesday)	Contemporary Perspectives		Syllabus Quiz
9/5 (Monday)	Labor Day	No Classes	
9/7 (Wednesday)	Classification & Assessment	WEIRD Reading	WEIRD Discussion Board
9/12 (Monday)	Classification & Assessment & Methods of Treatment		
9/14 (Wednesday)	Review for Exam 1		
9/19 (Monday)	Stress-Related Disorders		Exam 1 Due
9/21 (Wednesday)	Stress-Related Disorders	PTSD Reading	PTSD Discussion Board
9/26 (Monday)	Anxiety Disorders and Obsessive- Compulsive and Related Disorders	Anxiety Reading	Anxiety Discussion Board
9/28 (Wednesday)	Anxiety Disorders and Obsessive- Compulsive and Related Disorders		
10/3 (Monday)	Dissociative Disorders & Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders	Somaticizing Reading	Somaticizing Discussion Board
10/5 (Wednesday)	Review for Exam 2		
10/10 (Monday)	Mood Disorders and Suicide		Exam 2 Due
10/12 (Wednesday)	Mood Disorders and Suicide	Discussion Reading	Depression Discussion Board
10/17 (Monday)	Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders	Substance Use Reading	Substance use Discussion Board
10/19 (Wednesday)	Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders		
10/24 (Monday)	Eating Disorders	Eating Disorders Reading	Eating Disorders Discussion Board

10/26 (Wednesday)	Review for Exam 3		
10/31 (Monday)	Sleep-Wake Disorders		Exam 3 Due
11/2 (Wednesday)	Disorders Involving Gender & Sexuality	Gender & Sexuality Reading	Gender & Sexuality Discussion Board
11/7 (Monday)	Personality & Impulse- Control Disorders	Personality Reading	Personality Disorder Discussion Board
11/9 (Wednesday)	Personality & Impulse- Control Disorders		
11/14 (Monday)	Disorders Diagnosed in Childhood & Adolescence	Childhood & Adolescence Reading	Childhood & Adolescence Discussion Board
11/16 (Wednesday)	Disorders Diagnosed in Childhood & Adolescence		
11/21 (Monday)	Review for Exam 4		
11/23 (Wednesday)	Thanksgiving Break		Exam 4 Due?
11/28 (Monday)	Abnormal Psychology & the Law		Exam 4 Due?
11/30 (Wednesday)	Final Exam Review		
12/8 (Monday) 10:30 am -12:30 pm	Final Exam in Class		

***** PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A GENERAL PLAN, HOWEVER DATES MAY CHANGE AND WILL BE UPDATED ASAP VIA BLACKBOARD*****