

Psychology 162-910: Abnormal Psychology

Summer 2021

Tuesdays & Thursdays

5:30pm-9:20pm

Instructor: Colin Xu

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Office Hours: After lecture and by appointment

Overview

This course introduces the study of abnormal behavior from an evidence-based perspective. We will begin with a discussion of key themes in the study of mental disorders, and an overview of methods used to classify, diagnose, and research mental disorders. The rest of the course will provide an overview of different mental disorders. Discussion will include describing the clinical presentation, prevalence, course, and outcomes of these disorders. We will also discuss theoretical approaches to conceptualizing and treating these psychological disorders. Disorders we will cover include: anxiety disorders, depression and mood disorders, trauma and stressor related disorders, schizophrenia and psychosis, eating disorders, developmental disorders, neurocognitive disorders, personality disorders, and others.

Required Reading

There is a required textbook for this course:

Barlow, D. H., Durand, V. M., Hofmann, S. G. (2018). *Abnormal Psychology: An Integrative Approach* (8th Edition). Publisher: Cengage (ISBN:9781305950443)

*You may use the hardcover, paperback, loose leaf, or ebook copies of this textbook, but you must have the 8th edition. The supplemental materials/access codes are *NOT* required.

Additional required readings will be available on the Canvas website for this course (<https://canvas.upenn.edu>) under the link for Files.

Course Outline and Attendance Policy

There is a tentative list of dates and topics at the end of this syllabus. Lectures and class discussions will clarify and build upon, *but not replace*, the readings. Therefore, to do well in and get the most out of this course, it is essential that you both (a) do the required reading *before* each class and (b) attend class. The lectures and class discussions will assume that you have done the reading before the class for which it is assigned. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get the notes and any announcements from another student in the class.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

1. **Exams:** There will be three non-cumulative exams designed to assess your knowledge and understanding of the concepts covered in this course. Each of the three units of course will be followed by an exam emphasizing content specific to that unit. Exam questions will be drawn from lectures and in-class discussions (~60%) and readings (~40%). The exams may include multiple-choice, short-answer, and short essay questions. *Due to the coronavirus campus closures, these exams will be open-book, though you should complete them independently.*
2. **Writing assignment:** To engage your critical thinking skills, you will complete the following writing assignments:
 - a. Choose a DSM-5 mental disorder. Next, identify a randomized controlled trial that compares two or more treatments for that disorder. Describe the theoretical rationales for the treatment, summarize the study methods and results, and critically analyze the study's strengths and weaknesses. The writing assignment will be 8-10 pages (double-spaced).
3. **Presentation:**
 - a. Critically analyze the popular media portrayal of a DSM-5 mental disorder of your choosing. You will identify a mental disorder that is portrayed in some form of popular media (e.g., book, movie, TV show, etc.), and then evaluate the accuracy or inaccuracy of that popular media depiction against the published scientific research. The presentation will be 10-15 minutes long, and include submitting a brief written summary.

To help you structure your paper/presentations and make sure you are on the right track, you should submit a brief outline to me the week before the writing assignment or presentation is due. The outline should list the disorder you have selected, the media portrayals/treatments you are examining or the scientific research articles you are referencing, and how you intend to structure your paper (should be less than half a page, bullet-points are fine). This outline will not be graded, and it so that I can provide you feedback to help you better construct your final paper.

Your final grade for the course is a weighted average of the three exams and the two writing assignments:

Exam 1:	16%
Exam 2:	17%
Exam 3:	17%
Writing Assignment:	25%
Presentation:	25%

The following cutoffs will be used to determine your final course grade:

Grade	Total Score Cutoffs
A+	97-100
A	93-96.9
A-	90-92.9
B+	87-89.9
B	83-86.9
B-	80-82.9
C+	77-79.9
C	73-76.9
C-	70-72.9
D+	67-69.9
D	60-66.9
F	0-59.9

Additional Course Information

Consultation

You are encouraged to stop by during office hours or email me to make an appointment any time you would like to discuss the course material, review your assignments, or discuss study strategies. I would enjoy speaking with you about your questions, interests, or opinions, as my goal is to help you master and apply the material in this course as best as you can. I would also be happy to consult with you about your interests in psychology or career plans.

Getting help in the course

For questions about assignments and course details, please first refer to the syllabus and Canvas (<https://canvas.upenn.edu>). I will use Canvas to share documents and announcements with you. Please check Canvas and your email regularly to ensure that you receive class announcements on time.

Disability accommodations

Students who have a disability and are in need of accommodation in this course should contact Student Disability Services immediately. This should be done within the first week of class so that you have time to make arrangements for the exams.

Academic Honesty

The University of Pennsylvania Academic Code of Integrity states: “any work that a student undertakes as part of progress toward a degree or certification must be the student's own, unless the relevant instructor specifies otherwise. That work may include examinations, whether oral or written, oral presentations, laboratory exercises, papers, reports, and other written assignments.”

Plagiarism, use or performance of another person's work, misconduct during an examination, prior possession of an examination, and submission of work previously used are violations of the Code. Any student who violates this Code will *receive zero points for the work in question* and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for further action.

Make-up exams

Please speak with me as far in advance as possible if you will be unable to take an exam at the scheduled time. I will consider rescheduling your exam only if you contact me prior to the exam date and can prove an emergency (e.g., family emergency, serious illness).

Writing Assignment paper

The writing assignment paper should be submitted on Canvas by 11:59 PM on the date indicated on the course outline. In order to ensure fairness to other students, there will be a penalty for late work. Late assignments will incur a grade deduction of 10% for each 24 hours late, beginning at midnight, up to a maximum deduction of 50%.

Grade queries

You are encouraged to meet with me to review your exams or Case Study paper in order to better understand the reason you received your grade. If you believe there was an error in the scoring of your exam or paper, please submit a query to me in writing (email is fine) within one week of receiving your grade. You should describe why you believe an error was made and request that your exam or paper be re-graded. Please note that I will re-grade your entire exam or paper, and that it is possible that your grade will decrease rather than increase.

Use of computers

You are welcome to use your laptop to take notes during the lecture portion of each class. I ask that students using laptops sit in the back on one side of the class, so that laptop use does not distract students who are not using laptops in this class. If your laptop use is disruptive to other students, however, you will be asked to refrain from using it for the remainder of the course. I may ask you to put your laptops away during the activity/discussion portion of each class. If this policy will pose a hardship for you, please contact me as soon as possible.

Important note

It is tempting for people to start diagnosing themselves or their friends and family when they learn about the criteria for different mental disorders. Please remember that diagnoses should only be made by professionals with the appropriate training, and that many people can show some characteristics of a disorder without experiencing clinically significant distress or impairment. If you wish to seek a clinical evaluation, or would like counseling, please contact professional mental health services such as the university's Counseling and Psychological Services (215-898-7021).

Tentative Course Outline

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
1	Tues May 25	Introduction; Defining Abnormality; Epidemiology	Chapter 1 (pp 1 – 29)
1	Tues May 25	Models of Psychopathology Causes of psychopathology	Chapter 2 (pp 32 – 72)
2	Thurs May 27	Assessment and Diagnosis Research Methods	Chapter 3 (pp 74 – 103)
2	Thurs May 27	Research Methods	Chapter 4 (pp 105-125)
3	Tues June 1	Anxiety Disorders & Obsessive-Compulsive and related disorders I	Chapter 5 (pp 127-154) DeRubeis et al., (2005)
3	Tues June 1	Anxiety Disorders & Obsessive-Compulsive and related disorders II	Chapter 5 (pp 168-180)
4	Thurs June 3	Trauma and Stressor-Related Disorders	Chapter 5 (pp 160-168) Rosen et al. (2013)
4	Thurs/Fri June 3 rd /4 th	EXAM 1 (covers classes 1-3)	
5	Mon June 7th	SUBMIT WRITING ASSIGNMENT OUTLINE	
5	Tues June 8	Mood Disorders I	Chapter 7 (pp.217 – 238) Hollon et al. (2005)
5	Tues June 8	Mood Disorders II Suicide	Chapter 7 (pp 251 – 268) Niederkrotenthaler et al. (2019)
6	Thurs June 10	Schizophrenia and Psychosis I	Chapter 13 (pp 484- 516)
6	Thurs June 10	Schizophrenia and Psychosis II Dissociative Disorders	Chapter 6 (pp 198 – 212) Andreasson et al. (1987)
6	Friday June 11 th	WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE	
7	Tues June 15	Eating Disorders Sleep Disorders	Chapter 8 (pp 262-294, 301-318)
7	Tues June 15	Somatic Disorders Sexual Disorders and Gender Dysphoria	Chapter 6 (pp 185 – 198) Chapter 10 (pp 360 -400) Dhejne et al. (2011)
8	Thurs June 17	Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders	Chapter 11 (pp 404 – 444)
8	Thurs/Fri June 17 th /18 th	EXAM 2 (covers classes 4-6)	
9	Mon June 21	SUBMIT PRESENTATION OUTLINE	
9	Tues June 22	Developmental Disorders I	Chapter 14 (pp 521-549)
9	Tues June 22	Developmental Disorders II Neurocognitive Disorders	Chapter 15 (pp 552-575)
10	Thurs June 24	Personality Disorders	
10	Thurs/Fri June 24 th / 25 th	EXAM 3 (covers classes 7-9)	Chapter 12 (pp 448 – 480)
11	Tues June 29	PRESENTATIONS	
11	Tues June 29	Mental health policy, Ethics, and Future Directions	Chapter 16 (pp 581 – 597)

Psychology 162-910 – Writing Assignment #1

Randomized Controlled Trials

With growing awareness of the costs and impacts of psychological disorders, many treatments for psychological disorders have been proposed and attempted. In the field of clinical psychology, it is important that a treatment is *empirically supported*; i.e., that there is scientific evidence that a treatment works for the psychological disorder it is designed to target.

Choose a DSM psychological disorder. Next, identify a randomized controlled trial that compares two or more treatments for that disorder. Describe the treatments used in the trial, the treatments' theoretical rationale, and summarize the results and conclusions of the trial. Analyze the strengths and limitations of the trial, and evaluate how the study informs your understanding of treatment of the disorder.

The goal of this assignment is so that you can gain an understanding for how treatments for psychological disorders are studied and developed, and gain exposure to how scientific research in the treatment of psychological disorders is conducted.

Finding a randomized controlled trial

For this assignment, you should find a randomized controlled trial (RCT) for a disorder of your interest. I have uploaded on Canvas a list of studies you can choose from if you are having difficulty finding studies that are of a manageable scope.

How should I format the paper?

The writing assignment should be 7-10 pages (double-spaced, not counting references). A title page is not needed. References should be cited in APA format.