

PSY 260

ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

3 credits

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION: In-depth study of abnormal behavior. Topics include theoretical perspectives of abnormality, classification systems (DSM-IV), and the prevalent groups of disorders: anxiety, personality, schizophrenic, mood, psychoactive substance, and developmental. Stress and psychophysiological symptoms are discussed, as are maladaptive behaviors of childhood and adolescence. Prerequisite: PSY 101

COURSE OBJECTIVES: After successfully completing PSY 260, the student will be able to:

- understand and appreciate historical perspectives and changes in the conceptualization of mental disorders;
- identify the different perspectives regarding the etiology and treatment of the various mental disorders (these perspectives include the psychodynamic and humanistic-existential, the behavioral, cognitive and interpersonal, and the biological);
- apply research methodology to issues of abnormality;
- distinguish among the following groups of disorders:
 - anxiety disorders, dissociative and somatoform disorders, psychological stress and physical disorders, mood disorders, the continuum of personality disorders and styles, substance-use disorders, and sexual and gender identity disorders;
 - differentiate among the various cognitive and psychotic disorders of adulthood, including the schizophrenic disorders;
 - identify the developmental disorders of childhood, including mental retardation and autism;
 - distinguish among the various therapies, including psychotherapy, family and group therapy, and biological therapies;
 - recognize the various legal issues that are pertinent to the field of abnormal psychology.

COURSE CONTENT:

1. Historical and theoretical perspectives.

- Abnormal behavior in historical perspective.
- Psychodynamic and human-existential perspectives.
- Behavioral, cognitive, interpersonal, and sociocultural perspectives.
- Biological perspective.

2. Research methods, diagnosis, and assessment.

3. Emotional and behavioral disorders.

Anxiety; dissociative and somatoform disorders.
Psychological stress and physical disorders.
Mood, personality, and substance-use disorders.
Sexual and gender identity disorders.

4. Psychotic and cognitive disorders of adulthood.

Schizophrenia and delusional disorder.
Cognitive disorders.

5. Developmental disorders.

Developmental disorders of childhood and adolescence.
Mental retardation and autism.

6. Therapies and legal issues.

Individual psychotherapy; group, family, and community therapy; biological therapies.
Legal issues in abnormal psychology.

APPROPRIATE ASSIGNMENTS THAT DEMONSTRATE CRITICAL THINKING:

Group exercises and test questions require the students to apply newly-learned concepts to novel situations, thus going beyond rote learning. The required term paper is an analysis of a Case Study, using existing biographical materials and diagnostic information in order to apply concepts and theories from the course to explain the etiology and prognosis of the mental disorder.

EVALUATION: Evaluation is based on the cumulative point total of quizzes, final exam, and the Case Study. There are five quizzes. The lowest score is dropped. If a student misses a test, that counts as the "Drop", as no make-up tests are provided. Quizzes include short answer questions as well as multiple-choice items. This has the effect of testing recall memory as well as recognition memory, a more effective process for evaluating how well a student understands the material.

The Case Study provides opportunity for the student to apply the theories being studied to a specific life. The Case Study chosen must be approved by the

instructor. Students are taught the APA style of manuscript preparation, listing references in the text, and preparing the References page.

Attendance is assumed to be acceptable - no more than four classes during the semester. The instructor reserves the prerogative of administratively withdrawing students from class for excessive absenteeism.

Occasionally, in class group exercises are introduced. These groups are assigned by the instructor, on the basis on test scores - mixing stronger and weaker students. These group exercises provide good review of the material, and give the students opportunity to work together in a cooperative manner, often with student of different ethnic backgrounds than they have had opportunity to interact with previously.

TEXTS:

Alloy, L. B., Acocella, J., & Bootzin, R. R. (1996). Abnormal Psychology (7th Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Vitkus, J. (1996). Casebook in abnormal psychology (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.