

**Abnormal Psychology
Psychology 300
Spring 2009**

Instructor: Glen Spielmans, Ph.D.

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- The website contains information regarding preparation for graduate school in clinical/counseling psychology and related fields. Information regarding Dr. Spielmans' research and syllabi for his other courses are also available on the site.
- The above website is **not** for official class business – D2L will be used for the online component of the course (see below)

Class Time: 6-9:20 M

Classroom: Midway 104

Required Text: Butcher, J. N., Mineka, S., & Hooley, J. M. (2007). *Abnormal Psychology* (13th edition). Allyn & Bacon.

Course Objectives

The main purpose of this course is to learn the basics of psychopathology and its treatment. Students will gain experience in applying course material through the design of a case study, answering discussion questions and completing brief assignments. Students should become somewhat familiar with the major research methods used in abnormal psychology. This course will require the use of, and likely improvement of, writing skills as well as locating, reading and integrating findings of psychological and psychiatric research. Students should understand (but their learning will not be limited to) the following major components of abnormal psychology:

1. various methods of defining psychopathology
2. various psychotherapeutic treatment models
3. the DSM-IV-TR diagnostic system
4. basic understanding of psychopharmacological treatments
5. how to evaluate treatment effectiveness
6. the most common categories of DSM-IV-TR disorders
7. relevant controversial issues in the field of abnormal psychology

Competency Statement

Students will display an understanding of the basics of psychopathology, including how it is assessed and treated. In addition, they will understand how treatments and assessments are evaluated via research. Students will also understand the strengths and limitations of the DSM-IV diagnostic system.

These competencies will be assessed through examinations and several written assignments that are directly related to the above competencies. Both factual knowledge and an ability to apply course knowledge to realistic scenarios will be assessed.

Course Structure

Discussions and activities are an integral part of this course. An abnormal psychology course that relies solely on lectures is very likely to be B-O-R-I-N-G! Students do not learn best by passively absorbing information, especially when the information is not always particularly exciting – I think most of the material is fascinating, but students may not always agree.

While lectures are a necessary and important portion of the course, students who participate actively in occasional group and individual activities are much more likely to both learn course material and enjoy the course.

An essential part of student learning is the completion of assignments and projects in which students apply course knowledge. If students fail to complete assignments, they are likely to learn much less in the course.

Preparing For Class

The applied nature of this course requires regular class attendance, participation as a group member, and completing readings and assigned exercises as required. You are expected to read assigned chapters and any assigned readings *before* each class session in order to prepare for classroom activities and discussion. While there is some overlap between the textbook and material covered in class, much of the material discussed in class is not found in the textbook. Thus, missing class is not advisable. Failure to complete assigned readings will show itself in a lack of contribution to class discussions and group activities. Students who fail to keep up with their reading have a strong tendency to perform poorly on exams. Should material in the text seem difficult to understand even after lectures and class activities, students are advised to read over the material thoroughly, then contact the professor should additional study prove unhelpful.

Extra Credit

Extra credit is not given in this class. Please do not ask if an exception can be made, because an exception will **not** be granted.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Examinations

There will be *five* exams for this course including a *non-cumulative* final examination. The format of the exams will be mostly or entirely multiple-choice. Each exam will cover information from approximately two or three text

chapters, class lecture information, and readings assigned during the semester. Please do not miss examinations! In the event of a severe illness or an emergency, you need to contact me *before* the exam. Otherwise, a makeup will not be granted. Supporting evidence for missing an exam, such as a *written, valid, and verifiable* excuse is required. If you take a makeup exam, it will be in the form of an essay exam that will likely be significantly more difficult than the regularly scheduled exam. Cheating of any kind will result in failure for the course.

Classroom Activities and Discussions

Small group activities will occasionally be conducted during the semester. These activities may not be announced and will involve participation points that will be included in the overall point total for course. Your participation in these activities will help to enhance your learning experience by gaining the perspectives of your group members and should help you to enjoy the class. Points for discussion and activities cannot be made up; if class is missed, points will be deducted.

In order to prepare for group and/or individual class activities, you will at times need to complete reading and research outside of class. Failure to prepare outside of class will certainly limit your ability to contribute to class activities, which will likely be reflected in your grade.

Written Exercises

On occasion, students will be assigned short writing assignments in which they will apply course material to a realistic scenario and/or perform some form of preparatory work for a class discussion.

Research Paper

Students are expected to complete an in-depth research paper on a topic in the field of abnormal psychology. Students *must* check with the instructor to approve their choice of topic for the paper. The length of the paper is from 10-15 pages, not including references. Please follow the format of the American Psychological Association when writing this paper. This main point of the paper is for students to demonstrate their ability to write coherently and make logical arguments that *are backed by reputable sources*. This is *not* an opinion paper. The paper is due on April 20th. Late papers will be docked 10% per day late.

Please keep in mind that the Metropolitan State University Library is extremely unlikely to have all of the sources which you will need for this paper. Therefore, a suitable topic should be chosen by each student as soon as possible and approved by the professor. At that point, students can start doing research and ordering articles and books via interlibrary loan or making trips to our library or the University of Minnesota to get sources themselves. If you throw your paper together at the last minute, it is highly likely to be incomplete and poorly

written. START YOUR PAPER SOON! Further handouts and instructions will be provided regarding the final paper.

Paper Formatting

Regarding formatting, there should be no more than a one inch margin around papers, and 12-point, Times New Roman font or a very similar font should be used. It is the student's responsibility to check with the professor regarding the appropriateness of any font other than TNR 12 point font. Double space the paper's text. Include a cover sheet for each paper. Do not start the first page of text any lower than one inch from the top of the page. Number the pages. Be sure to meet all page minimums for paper assignments. The paper grade may be reduced substantially (at least 1-2 letter grades) if the paper is short. Stated page minimums refer to *pages of text*. A cover page or reference page does *not* count as a page in your paper. Thus, a 10-15 page paper should have at least ten full pages of text.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that the due dates are unlikely to change; however, the topics covered in class may not align exactly with the schedule below. Note that there are several exercises marked on the following schedule (e.g., "case study ex.") and that the dates for these are tentative. Some of these exercises may be changed or skipped depending on the flow of the class.

Date	Covered in Class Chapter #'s are in parentheses	Due
01.12.09	Syllabus Groups Intro/Overview (1)	Initial Survey
01.19.09	NO CLASS (MLK Jr. Day)	
01.26.09	Intro/Overview (1) Understanding Research (D2L) History (2)	Research Design Exercise
02.02.09	Causal Factors (3)	EXAM 1
02.09.09	Causal Factors (3) Case Study Ex. Assessment (4)	
02.16.09	Assessment (4) Assessment Ex.	Assessment Exercise Research Paper Topic
02.23.09	Treatment (17) Outcome Assessment Ex.	EXAM 2
03.02.09	Treatment (17) Anxiety Disorders (6)	Case Study
03.09.09	NO CLASS (Spring Break)	

03.16.09	Anxiety Disorders (6)	
03.23.09	Mood Disorders (7)	EXAM 3
		Chemical Imbalance Exercise
03.30.09	Mood Disorders (7)	10 Sources for Research Paper
04.06.09	Eating Disorders (9) Eating Disorders Ex.	Eating Disorder Exercise
04.13.09	Personality Disorders (11)	EXAM 4
04.20.09	Substance Abuse (12)	Research Paper
04.27.09	Substance Abuse (12) Schizophrenia (14)	
05.04.09		EXAM 5 Reflection Paper

GRADES

Letter grades are assigned based upon the number of points students have earned in class based upon the following breakdown: 93%=A, 90%=A-, 88%=B+, 83%=B, 80%=B-, 78%=C+, 73%=C, 70%=C-, 68%=D+, 62%=D and below 62%=F.

Assignments will be given as follows. Remember that in-class assignments will not necessarily be announced in advance, so it is to your benefit to attend class. More details will be provided on each assignment well in advance of the due date.

Assignment	Skills and Knowledge Assessed	Points
Case study	Application of material/Writing	40
Reflection paper	Synthesis of course Knowledge /Writing	15
Initial survey	Knowledge/Writing	5
Research Paper	Research/Writing	100
Exams (5)	Knowledge of course material	40 each (200 total)
Group/class participation	Teamwork/Application of material	35
Written Exercises	Application of material	40

Late Assignments

The penalty for turning in the final paper late is 10% off per day late. For the case study, 10% will be taken off if the paper is late, with 3% more taken off per additional day late. All written exercise assignments will lose 20% if turned in one day late, and another 30% if turned in more than one day late. If the written exercises are more than two weeks late, they will receive no credit.

Incomplete Grades

Students whose performance is below 70% (C-) at the withdrawal deadline should consider withdrawing from the course with a grade of "W." Students **must** withdraw by the deadline; University Policy permits NO withdrawals after the deadline. If a student is in this situation the week prior to the deadline, he/she should discuss the advantages and disadvantages of withdrawing with the course instructor. Remember, it is important to do well in all courses and to stay in good academic standing. Grades of "I," Incomplete, are reserved for students who are doing reasonably well (i.e., performance above 70%) but encounter emergency situations very close to the end of the course. Incomplete grades will not be given if the student misses more than one exam or two exercises/homework assignments. Also, students whose performance is below 70% will not be eligible for an incomplete grade.

Online Component

This is a web-enhanced course. Thus, all students **must** sign up for D2L for this course. This can be done at http://www.metrostate.edu/col/students/gs_steps.html. Through D2L, students may access lecture notes, sample papers, course announcements, grades and other course-related information. **It is the responsibility of each student to regularly check D2L and use the resources on the site.** Students should check the website at least twice weekly for updates and announcements. If there are questions about accessing the site, please contact your professor.

Quality Control

This is a higher level undergraduate course. As such, it is expected that written assignments will meet at least minimal standards of decency. Misspelled words, obviously poor grammar, and sloppy writing are reflective of work that does not meet standards for this course. Points may be docked should work not meet standards for this caliber of class.

Students who are caught plagiarizing (passing off another person's work as their own), will be penalized with course failure. Note that every student must read the handout entitled "Plagiarism and Citing Sources: A Brief Guide." In addition to turning in a hard copy of their research papers, students will also turn them in through turnitin.com, a service that checks student papers for plagiarism.

In order to enroll for turnitin.com for this class, students must do the following:

1. Go to the following link (copy and paste into your browser's address bar):

https://www.turnitin.com/newuser_join.asp

2. Register for this class, as a student, using the following information:

Course ID: 2549843

Password: abnsp09spiel

3. If a student does not submit his/her research paper through turnitin.com, the final paper will not be graded (it will receive a score of zero).

Disability

The Disability Services Office helps students with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations from the university and their professors. Students need to register with the DSO in order to receive such services. For information, call 651-793-1525 or 651-793-1540.

Privacy Warning

Please note that e-mail is not a secure method of communication; thus, anything you send or receive via email may be intercepted by an outside party, though such a scenario is unlikely.

Classroom Etiquette

Use of cellular phones, cordless phones, corded phones, phone booths, smoke signals, Blackberries, walkie-talkies, random text messaging devices, iPods, swap-meet purchased fake iPods, and other such communication/music devices is forbidden during class. Should a student's device distract the professor or other students during class, the professor will gladly answer the phone in a manner that is sure to embarrass the student or delete the entire collection of funky illegally downloaded MP3's from the student's device. Should a student be expecting an extremely important call (e.g., his/her partner is nine months pregnant, a boss will fire the student if he/she doesn't take a call, or a relative is on his/her death bed), please inform the professor before class. If a student is expecting a call, he/she should also sit close to an exit and set the phone to vibrate mode, so that the phone can be answered and the student can then leave the room without disturbing classmates and the professor.

Further, students are expected to behave in an appropriate manner, contributing to an environment of mutual respect between students and between the students and the professor.

Other Information

Please feel free to talk with the professor about grades and class standing at any point during the semester. The course syllabus (including test dates) may be changed at the professor's discretion, including the addition or deletion of assignments, and the change of test dates. If such changes are made, the class will be given adequate warning.