Abnormal Psychology  
Psychology 300  
Fall 2007

**Instructor:** Glen Spielmans, Ph.D.  
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**Office:** Midway Campus, Suite 100, Office #104  
**Office Hours:** M 2:30-5:00 or by appointment  
**E-Mail:** glen.spielmans@metrostate.edu  
**Website:** [http://faculty.metrostate.edu/spielmg/](http://faculty.metrostate.edu/spielmg/)  

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  

**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 as well as through answering discussion questions. 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 you may not always agree.

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

An integral 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 your 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 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 November 26th. Late papers will be docked 12% 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, you should find a suitable topic as soon as possible and have it approved by the professor. At that point, you 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 yourself. 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, you should have no more than a one inch margin around your papers, and you should use 12-point, Times New Roman font or a very similar font. It is your responsibility to check with the professor regarding the appropriateness of any font other than TNR 12 point font before you turn in your paper. Double space your text. Include a cover sheet for each paper. Do not start your first page of text any lower than one inch from the top of the page. Be sure to meet all page minimums for paper assignments. Your 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Covered in Class Chapter #’s are in parentheses</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08.27.07</td>
<td>Syllabus Groups Intro/Overview (1)</td>
<td>Initial Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.10.07</td>
<td>Intro/Overview (1) Understanding Research (D2L) History (2)</td>
<td>Research Design Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.17.07</td>
<td>Causal Factors (3)</td>
<td>EXAM 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.24.07</td>
<td>Causal Factors (3) Case Study Ex. Assessment (4) Assessment Ex.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.01.07</td>
<td>Assessment (4)</td>
<td>Assessment Exercise Research Paper Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.08.07</td>
<td>Treatment (17) Treatment Selection Ex. Outcome Assessment Ex.</td>
<td>EXAM 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.15.07</td>
<td>Treatment (17) Anxiety Disorders (6)</td>
<td>Case Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.22.07</td>
<td>Anxiety Disorders (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.29.07</td>
<td>Mood Disorders (7) “Chemical Imbalance” Ex.</td>
<td>EXAM 3 Chemical Imbalance Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.05.07</td>
<td>Mood Disorders (7)</td>
<td>10 Sources for Research Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.12.07</td>
<td>Eating Disorders (9)</td>
<td>Eating Disorder Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.19.07</td>
<td>Personality Disorders (11)</td>
<td>EXAM 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.26.07</td>
<td>Substance Abuse (12)</td>
<td>Research Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.03.07</td>
<td>Substance Abuse (12) Schizophrenia (14)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12.10.07</td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAM 5 Reflection Paper</td>
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</tbody>
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**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+, 63%=D, 60%=D-, and below 60%=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 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Skills and Knowledge Assessed</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>Application of material/Writing</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection paper</td>
<td>Synthesis of course knowledge/Writing</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial survey</td>
<td>Knowledge/Writing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>Research/Writing</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams (5)</td>
<td>Knowledge of course material</td>
<td>40 each (200 total)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group/class</td>
<td>Teamwork/Application of material</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Exercises</td>
<td>Application of material</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Incomplete Grades

Students whose performance is below 70% (C-) at the withdrawal deadline should consider withdrawing from the course with a grade of “W.” You must withdraw by the deadline; University Policy permits NO withdrawals after the deadline. If you are in this situation the week prior to the deadline you should discuss the advantages and disadvantages of withdrawing with the course instructor. Remember, it is important to do well in your 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. You should check the website at least twice weekly for updates and announcements. If you have 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.

If you are caught plagiarizing (passing off another person’s work as your own), it will result in failing the course. Should you have a question as to what constitutes plagiarism, you should ask the professor.

### 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 your device distract me or other students during class, I will gladly answer your phone for you in a manner that is sure to embarrass you or delete the entire collection of funky illegally downloaded MP3’s from your device. Should you be expecting an extremely important call (e.g., your partner is nine months pregnant, your boss will fire you if you don’t take a call, or a relative is on his/her death bed), please inform me before class. If you are expecting a call, you should also sit close to an exit and set your phone to vibrate mode, so that you can answer the phone and leave without disturbing your classmates and 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 me about your grade 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.