

PSYCHOLOGY 270: ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

Spring 2009, 2-3:15pm Tuesdays and Thursdays

BH 304

University of Illinois at Chicago

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Office Hours: 3:30-4:30pm Tuesdays and Thursdays, and by appointment

Course Description

Abnormal psychology is the scientific study of people whose behaviors are considered abnormal or unusual. My goal in teaching this course is for you to gain an understanding of how mental disorders are defined in the United States and elsewhere in the world, to learn those definitions, and to understand the controversy surrounding them.

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 various power dynamics involved in categorizing people as abnormal. Learning the definitions and the system is important. You must first learn how the current diagnostic system works in order to be able to critically examine if it should work the way it does.

Most students view abnormal psychology as an exciting and enlightening experience. It is my goal that we share such an experience. Partial lecture notes will be posted on Blackboard under Course Documents at least 24 hours before class. Please either print out these notes and bring them to class to fill in by hand, or bring them in powerpoint form on your computer so that you can fill in the missing information. I will also be supplementing lectures with various media.

Required Text

The following text is required for the course. You can find it at the University Bookstore, or online.

Nevid, J. S., Rathus, S. A., & Greene, B. (2008). *Abnormal Psychology in a Changing World* (7th ed.). Pearson: Upper Saddle River, NJ.

If purchased at the University Bookstore, you will receive an accompanying media supplement and a study guide, but neither the media supplement nor the study guide is required.

Grading Policies

Your grade will be calculated by the amount of points that you earn out of a possible 300 (3 points = 1% of your grade). Your grade will be determined in the following manner:

269 – 300 points	A
239 – 268 points	B
209 – 238 points	C
179 – 208 points	D
Below 208	F

These grading criteria are FINAL. If you earn a 268 total, you receive a B. I've already rounded up for your benefit (i.e., 89.7% = A). **Please do not e-mail me after the semester has concluded to change your grade unless you believe there has been an error in grading.** If you are having difficulty with this course for any reason, please speak to me about it **early on** rather than, e.g., after a paper is due or after final grades are given. Final grades are determined by the total points obtained, and will not be changed because your total points place you one or two points below a higher letter grade. If your grade needs a boost, I encourage you to work hard on the extra credit paper.

Exams (200 points = 66.7% of your grade). There will be 5 exams in this course, of which 4 are mandatory. There will be 4 exams as the course progresses, and 1 cumulative final. All exams will consist of 50 multiple choice questions (1 point each). Each exam will be worth 50 total points.

Exam questions will be drawn from a combination of lectures and the text. Any information discussed in lecture or assigned in your readings is fair game for a question's topic, though my lectures will be the primary source for exam questions. **I will drop the lowest of your 5 exam scores, leaving the 4 best scores to make up your exam grade. If you have an A after the fourth exam, you are NOT required to take the final.**

A note about missed exams: There will be no excused absences for missed exams without extremely egregious circumstances (death in family, serious illness, etc.). If you miss an exam, you will have to take the cumulative final to make it up.

Theory Comparison Paper (73 points = 24.3% of your grade). There is one paper due in this course. Your assignment will be to (1) choose a mental disorder that we cover in class; (2,3) define two theoretical frameworks which attempt to explain the etiology (cause); (4) compare and contrast the two theories, and finally (5) conclude which one you believe is most useful for explaining the disorder. You will be graded on each of these five criteria as well as (6) the overall quality of your writing and argument. Each of the first five criteria is worth 12 points, with the overall quality of your writing worth 13 points.

Pop Quizzes (27 points = 9% of your grade). Due to the large class size inherent to a lecture course, I will not be checking attendance. However, in order to ensure that you remain up to date on readings and that you are continuously keeping up with lectures, you will be given 10 pop quizzes each worth 3 points (i.e., each quiz is 1% of your entire grade). These quizzes will focus on information provided in the previous lecture. They will be strictly informational (no tricks); so as long as you attend class, you should do well. **You are allowed to miss 1 of these quizzes without penalty. If you attend all 10 quizzes, you will receive extra credit for the 10th. These pop quizzes cannot be made up in any way.** If you are not in class for them, you will not receive credit.

Extra Credit Paper (9 possible points = 3% grade bonus). You are encouraged to read a chapter from Stephen Jay Gould's, *The Mismeasure of Man*, and write a 3-5 page paper summarizing the

chapter, explaining the author's argument, critiquing it, and stating whether you agree with this argument. Anywhere from 0-9 points will be awarded at my discretion based on your ability to show that you have understood the chapter, and that you have critically examined it and considered its implications to abnormal psychology.

Course Policies

Classroom Conduct. I will grant you the benefit of the doubt that you are strong scholars interested in assimilating the information I provide throughout this course. With that benefit comes the burden of expectations. I expect that you will be courteous to your fellow students while class is in session, meaning that you will **turn off your cell phones, ipods, or any other devices that make sound beforehand**. Also, please limit classroom discussion to clarifying questions concerning my lectures, or to responses to questions I ask the class. Lastly, I expect you to **come on time to class having read the assigned chapters for that day's lectures**.

Plagiarism. Plagiarism is representing someone else's work as your own. No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. **Students who break the university's code of academic integrity will receive an F for the course and may be subject to formal charges**. If you have any questions about what plagiarism is I urge you to check with me before handing in your paper.

Correspondence. The best way to get in contact with me is by e-mail. Please remember when e-mailing me that you are still engaging in an academic communication. Sign your name, especially when using an outside e-mail address, and **avoid using unnecessary abbreviations such as 'u' or 'lol' at all times**.

Students with Disabilities. Students with disabilities must inform me of the need for accommodations, preferably in the first week of class if possible. Those who require accommodations for access and participation in this course must be registered with the Disability Resource Center. **Please contact ODS at 312-413-2183 (voice) or 312-413-0123 (TTY)**

Counseling Center. Sometimes topics in Abnormal Psychology bring up unexpected issues for students. If you feel you or a loved one needs to speak with someone, please call the counseling center at: **312-996-3490**. Hours of operation are 8:30 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday throughout the year, except for university holidays. **All services are completely confidential and free for students!** In addition, the InTouch Crisis Hotline is available every evening from 6:00pm to 10:30pm, at **312-996-5535**.

The Writing Center. The Writing Center is an excellent resource available to you for free! The website is <http://www.uic.edu/depts/engl/writing/> or you can call **312-413-2206** and/ or drop by 100 Douglas Hall.

The Academic Center for Excellence. The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) is a multifaceted academic support program designed to help UIC students accomplish their academic goals. ACE is open to all UIC students, from freshman through graduate level. ACE can be reached at **312-413-0031** or Suite 2900 in Student Services Building.

Course Schedule

Note. This schedule is a best estimate and is subject to change. Any changes will be noted in class and on blackboard.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading/Papers
1	Jan. 13	Abnormal Psychology: Definition & History	Chapter 1
	Jan. 15	Definition & History / Contemporary Perspectives	Chapter 2
2	Jan. 20	Contemporary Perspectives	
	Jan. 22	Contemporary Perspectives/ Research Methods	
3	Jan. 27	Research Methods	
	Jan. 29	Classification & Assessment / Methods of Treatment	Chapter 3
4	Feb. 3	Methods of Treatment	Chapter 4
	Feb. 5	EXAM 1	
5	Feb. 10	Stress, Psychological Factors, & Health	Chapter 5
	Feb. 12	Anxiety Disorders	Chapter 6
6	Feb. 17	Anxiety Disorders	
	Feb. 19	Anxiety Disorders / Dissociative & Somatoform Disorders	Chapter 7
7	Feb. 24	Dissociative & Somatoform Disorders	FILM
	Feb. 26	Dissociative & Somatoform Disorders / Review	
8	March 3	EXAM 2	
	March 5	Mood Disorders and Suicide	Chapter 8
9	March 10	Mood Disorders and Suicide	
	March 12	Mood Disorders and Suicide / Substance Abuse and Dependence	Chapter 9
10	March 17	Substance Abuse and Dependence	
	March 19	EXAM 3	
-	March 24	SPRING BREAK-NO CLASSES	
-	March 26	SPRING BREAK-NO CLASSES	

11	March 31	Eating Disorders and Sleep Disorders	Chapter 10
	April 2	Disorders Involving Gender and Sexuality	Chapter 11
12	April 7	Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders	Chapter 12
	April 9	Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders	FILM
13	April 14	Personality Disorders	Chapter 13
	April 16	Personality Disorders	THEORY COMPARISON PAPER DUE
14	April 21	Abnormal Behavior in Childhood and Adolescence	Chapter 14
	April 23	Cognitive Disorders and Disorders Related to Aging	Chapter 15
15	April 28	EXAM 4	
	April 30	Review for Final	EXTRA CREDIT PAPER DUE
16	May 6	FINAL EXAM, 3:30-5:30pm	