

# Psychology 325: Abnormal Psychology

Fall 2005

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<b>Office Hours</b>	Mondays, 5:00-7:00 p.m., or by appointment
<b>Class Hours</b>	Thursdays, 7:20-10:00 p.m.
<b>Room</b>	Lecture Hall 3
<b>Text</b>	REQUIRED: Nevid JS, Rathus SA, Greene B. (2005) Abnormal Psychology in a Changing World, 6 <sup>th</sup> Ed

## Course Description

This course is designed to provide you with an overview of abnormal psychology and an introduction to the field of clinical psychology. The course will focus on the description of various psychological disorders, how they develop, the course they follow, and how they are treated.

## Learning Objectives

1. To familiarize students with some basic concepts, principles, and findings in abnormal psychology.
2. To introduce students to diagnostic criteria, testing and different schools of psychotherapy.
3. To familiarize the student with the biopsychosocial model.
4. To develop the student's ability to apply psychological knowledge to a wide range of human problems in everyday life.

## Course Format

Given class size, the format of this course is primarily lecture, although classes will also include discussion, in-class exercises, and films/documentaries that illustrate disorders. Class lectures will review the material in the text, clarify difficult material, answer questions, provoke discussions, and present information not covered in the text that will be on the exams.

## Course requirements

**Exams (300 points).** There will be four exams in this course. The lowest exam grade will be dropped, thus **a total of 3 exams will count toward your final grade in the course.** Exams will primarily cover material since the previous exam, but may ask you to make comparisons or reflect upon new information as it relates to previous course material. The final exam will be cumulative and include information covered since the beginning of the semester. Exams will be a combination of multiple choice, true-false and short essay questions. If you are satisfied with your grades from the first three exams you may opt to skip the final.

**Paper (100 points).** "Abnormal Psychology in the News." There is a great deal of new research into the origins, diagnosis, and treatment of various mental and emotional disturbances. The results of these studies are typically published in scientific, peer-reviewed journals. However, the general population generally does not read or have the scientific background to understand these reviews and thus relies on popular media as their source of information. This assignment requires you to find a recent (published no earlier than January 2003) popular press report (e.g., newspaper, magazine) discussing some form of psychopathology and compare it to information found in scientific journals. Based on this comparison you will determine the accuracy of the news report as well as how the presentation of the news article might influence public knowledge and opinions about mental illness. The paper should be written in APA style and should be 5 – 7 pages in length (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12pt. font). (See <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/psychology/writing/advice.htm#apa> for guidance on using APA format). Your paper will be graded on your ability to demonstrate an understanding of the disorder you have

chosen, your understanding of the scientific literature, the quality of your assessment, and your ability to support your arguments. Basic writing skills will also be taken into account. Papers are due by the end of class on October 27. For each day the paper is late, 10 points will be taken off the final paper grade (including weekends). Papers more than 4 days late will not be accepted.

***In-Class Assignments (50 points)***. There will be five (5) graded in-class assignments that will help you to think about the material in a way that will help you prepare for the exams. These in-class assignments will be conducted on a random basis. Thus, if you miss an in-class assignment, you will not be able to make it up unless you have documentation of hospitalization, jury duty, death, disability, or a car accident. There may be times when other, less severe circumstances cause you to miss or be late to class (severe traffic, cold/flu, work commitments). In these cases please use the extra credit provision to make-up the assignment.

### **Missed Classes and Exams**

There is no requirement that you attend class. However, it is not my intention to use the class time to repeat what is in the book. Instead, I will cover themes that the book covers, but hopefully from a somewhat different perspective, and this material will be on the exams. In the unfortunate event that you should miss a class, you will have to borrow notes from another classmate. You will also be held responsible for any changes or additions to the syllabus announced in class. Please be respectful of other students when you come to class and do not engage in distracting behavior like chatting, nail clipping, or allowing a pager or cell phone to go off.

There will be no make-up exams offered in this course. Instead, you will be permitted to drop your lowest exam grade of the four exams. Therefore, if you miss an exam for any reason, or perform poorly on an exam, you may simply drop that exam in lieu of completing a make-up exam.

### **Extra Credit**

You will have an opportunity to earn extra credit points for participating in a psychology or related discipline research project if you are willing to provide me with a write-up regarding your participation. The write-up should be 2-3 paragraphs in length and should include the hypothesis of the research project and a brief statement of what your participation entailed. You can locate studies through the Experimetrix web page on the GMU website ([www.experimetrix.com/gmu](http://www.experimetrix.com/gmu)). Additionally, you may earn extra credit points for attending relevant psychology-related seminars or lectures if you provide me with a short (2-3 paragraphs) write-up summarizing the lecture and your providing your own personal insight into the information provided. Up to a maximum of 10 points—2 for each hour of research participation or for each seminar attended—can be earned.

### **Grading**

***Total Points (\*\*REMEMBER-there is a 4<sup>th</sup> exam that will be DROPPED)***

Exam 1	100 points
Exam 2	100 points
Exam 3	100 points
Paper	100 points
<u>In-class Assignments</u>	<u>50 points</u>
	450 points (+ Extra Credit)

### ***Grading Scale***

A+ = 97% or more	B+ = 87 - 89%	C+ = 77 - 79%	D = 60 - 69%
A = 93 - 96%	B = 83 - 86%	C = 73 - 76%	F = below 60%
A- = 90 - 92%	B- = 80 - 82%	C- = 70 - 72%	

One additional note regarding grading: Please do not request that I modify your grades. As noted above, student evaluations are based OBJECTIVELY on a variety of measures and you will have ample opportunities throughout the semester to take measures to improve unsatisfactory grades. SUBJECTIVE pleas to alter that evaluation will not be granted.

## Honor Code

All students must follow the guidelines of the GMU Honor Code as described by the GMU catalog (<http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/index.html#Anchor13>). Exam performances and all assignments must be each student's own work, but students may use any means they prefer when learning the material. Studying in groups is encouraged. No written material may be used during exams. If you have any questions about the honor code or permissible use of materials or collaboration, please see me.

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of the University to make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Such requests will be accommodated within the reasonable constraints of fairness and timeliness with regard to the instructor and the other students enrolled in the course.

## Policies, Requests and Friendly Suggestions

I want this class to be a productive and enjoyable experience for all of us. Here are some important things to keep in mind:

- If you want to avoid stress and do well, don't miss class. Read before coming to class and make sure to ask clarifying questions if there is something you don't understand.
- My office hours are for you, so stop by! Or e-mail me any questions, concerns or comments that you may have.
- I won't reply to e-mails with exam-related questions received after 5:00 p.m. the night before exams, so be sure to ask early.
- We'll be discussing a wide range of topics and some may be controversial. Let's maintain a friendly and respectful environment where we all feel comfortable sharing our ideas and opinions. If there are topics with which you are particularly concerned, please come see me.

## Reading Assignments

Note that what follows is a *tentative* schedule of the semester's topics. A specific week's topic may change, and it is the student's responsibility to become informed of any changes, as well as any other announcements or information disseminated in class. Unless otherwise specified, reading assigned for a given week should be completed prior to that week's class.

<b>Class Dates</b>	<b>Lecture Topics</b>	<b>Reading Due</b>
Sept. 1	Class Overview Introduction to Abnormal Psychology	Chapter 1
Sept. 8	Introduction to Theories of Psychopathology and Psychotherapy	Chapter 2
<b>LAST DAY TO ADD CLASSES- SEPT 13</b>		
Sept. 15	Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment	Chapters 3 & 4
Sept. 22	Anxiety Disorders	Chapter 6
Sept. 29	Mood Disorders and Suicide	Chapter 8
<b>LAST DAY TO DROP CLASSES- SEPT 30</b>		
Oct. 6	<b>EXAM 1</b>	
	Eating Disorders	Chapter 10 (p. 330-344)
Oct. 13	Substance Abuse Disorders	Chapter 9
Oct. 20	Disorders Involving Gender and Sexuality	Chapter 11 (p. 364-394)
Oct. 27	Dissociative and Somatoform Disorders	Chapter 7
<b>PAPER DUE</b>		

Nov. 3	Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders	Chapter 12
Nov. 10	<b>EXAM 2</b>	
	Personality Disorders	Chapter 13
Nov. 17	Abnormal Behavior in Childhood and Adolescence Cognitive Disorders and Disorders Related to Aging	Chapter 14 (p. 470-502) Chapter 15 (p. 508-525)
Nov. 24	<b>THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY!</b>	
Dec. 1	<b>EXAM 3</b>	
	Abnormal Psychology and the Law	Chapter 16
Dec. 8	Current topics in Abnormal Psychology	TBA
Dec. 15	<b>** FINAL EXAM ** At our regular time in our regular classroom (7:20-10pm in Lecture Hall 3)</b>	