Welcome To Abnormal Psychology

This class will discuss a variety mental illnesses, such as, depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, personality disorders and other intriguing ailments that so many people endure on a daily basis; Posing the question, “How abnormal is it really?” This class is great for anyone interested in understanding those “abnormal” behaviors seen very often within our society. This class will also examine the tremendous impact mental illness has on the person living with abnormality. When examining the behavior of another, we can see many things both normal and abnormal. This is not to think everyone has a diagnosable disorder! As this class progresses, you will learn many tell-tale indicators of mental illness and psychopathology. It is a common practice for us to enjoy analyzing people and placing them into neat little categories, but please refrain from diagnosing yourself, your friends, your parents and family, your classmates, your professors or anyone else ℹ️

Course Description

This course is intended to provide a broad overview of the major areas of abnormal psychology. In the first few weeks, we will discuss definitions of psychological abnormality, historical trends and the fundamental paradigms within the field, and the classification, diagnosis, and assessment of psychological disorders (also known as psychopathology). The remainder of the course will cover some of the most commonly occurring forms of psychopathology. Coverage will emphasize (a) the symptoms, associated characteristics, and phenomenology of disorders (the subjective experience of the individual with a disorder); (b) their etiology (possible causes) of disorders from psychological, biological, and sociocultural perspectives; (c) issues pertaining to their diagnosis and treatment (with particular emphasis on contemporary treatment approaches) (D) familiarizing students with the multiple causes of psychopathology as viewed from a number of different theoretical perspectives; (E) discussing intervention and prevention strategies for psychological disorders. Classes will integrate lecture presentations with in-class discussions and exercises. While the course may not be exhaustive in covering every facet of abnormal psychology, psychological disorder, or treatment, it aims to provide students with a deeper understanding of these areas and how they affect people's lives.

Guidelines for Class Discussions

Discussion, respectful debate, and the exchange of ideas will occur frequently in this class. While all viewpoints will be respected, please note that not everyone may share your opinion on a particular topic. This class is designed to be a safe space for all individuals regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, physical or psychological disability, or socioeconomic status. Please bear in mind that some of the topics we discuss in class may be sensitive and/or controversial and may personally affect persons present in the classroom. Psychological disorders affect many people in a direct and personal way – whether through their own experience, a family member’s, or a friend’s. Please be mindful of this during class, when formulating your questions and/or comments, as certain subjects may be more personal to your classmates than you might initially think.
What to Do if Disorders Seem Make You Feel Uneasy

At times, personal problems can come to the fore for students taking Abnormal Psychology classes. At times, students may become convinced during the course that they have many of the disorders being studied. Rest assured that this is a common and natural reaction to the subject matter (much like med school student syndrome). In general, the majority of people who take this class do not have many of the disorders we learn about. However, if you happen to experience personal problems or believe that you might truly have an emotional disorder that is not currently being addressed, it is important that you seek assistance. I am more than happy to help direct students to resources that can help.

My Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy includes providing an environment that is comfortable for you to interact, ask questions (please!), have fun, and engage in the process rather than simply observe. In addition, I know from experience that your success is dependent on how strongly you attend to your academic responsibilities. When you engage in the class, prioritize time to actively read, and commit to studying for exams your chances for success are optimized. I act professionally in my commitment to your success, I expect my students to respond in kind. Finally, my bias in teaching leans toward application. I also emphasize concepts rather than reciting terms that you would need to memorize. Therefore, you will need to critically think about concepts so that you can apply them to real-life situations. And again, when you have relevant experience to share that will expand on a concept, please contribute!

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, you should be able to do the following (in no particular order):

1. Understand varying forms and perspectives of psychological disorders and abnormal behavior;
2. Identify diagnoses of particular disorders and be able to describe their associated symptoms;
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the (better or less) understood causes and etiology of particular disorders and abnormal behaviors;
4. Understand the appropriateness and purported efficacy of treatments for particular disorders;
5. Recognize the psycho-social-cultural factors that may influence the development, course and alleviation of psychological disorders and abnormal behaviors.

Text:

Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.

If you choose not to read the text, there is virtually no chance you will do well in this course.

NOTE TO THE STUDENTS:

Success in this course depends on:

1. Read the Chapters in the text prior to discussing them in class. This will allow the students to interact in class about the content and any questions that may arise.
2. Complete your Learning Objectives prior to each class.
3. Complete your Key Terms prior to each class.
4. Participate in each of the In-class exercises.
5. Attend all class meeting dates.
6. Ask questions.
7. Take notes.
8. Review the course material and have fun "
Web:
All class documents, including the syllabus and any review and lecture materials, are available online. In addition, this is a “web enhanced” course. Although there is no requirement to participate online, it is highly likely that your learning will be compromised (and your grade affected) if you do not use the technology that is available. There are discussion enhancements, and communication advantages to participation. The link to log on to Haiku Learning is [https://Haikulearning.com](https://Haikulearning.com)

Assignments and Grading

Exams: There will be three quizzes, a Midterm, Movie Project, Case Assessment and a Final exam. The final will not be cumulative. Each of the 3 quizzes is worth 100 points. There are no make‐ups. The final is worth 100 points and cannot be dropped. You are responsible for knowing the material in the textbook as well as the lectures and any media that are presented. Since I cannot go over all of the information in the text, I expect you to do so on your own. Late assignments are never accepted. If you have a printer problem, you may email me a Word.Doc file or PDF of your assignment before the due date at HasLavc@gmail.com. However; if you choose to email me instead of handing a paper copy you will receive your grade without any feedback. If you would like a feedback then we can go over your work at the office hours.

Assignments: The Movie Project and Case Assessment are assignment designed to allow you to attain a greater conceptual understanding of the concepts discussed and to demonstrate your breadth of knowledge. The assignment is explained in detail at the end of this syllabus.

Extra Credit
You may earn up to 20 extra credit points for online and classroom participation. I will be posting the Extra Credit Assignments on the Haiku Learning website and all the answers must be posted online as well. It is also important that you attend class every day. If you are in class, I assume you are participating by paying attention, asking questions, taking notes, and laughing at bad jokes. Extra credit is calculated as a combination of online and in‐class participation, but in order to earn points per unit you must complete the online assignment. That is, your extra credit grade may be affected if you do not attend class. However, if you are absent and still want to earn full participation/extra credit points, you can moderate an online discussion by choosing an appropriate topic in psychology, as discussed in class. Keep in mind that if you are absent, late (including breaks), or leave early you are not available to participate in class. Coming to class late or leaving early will be counted as half of a class.

Grading
Every assignment and exam is converted to points. For instance, if you correctly answer 35 out of 39 questions on a quiz, your percentage correct is 89.7. That percentage coincides to points out of 100, since quizzes are worth 100 points. In this example, you would earn 89.7 points out of 100 possible. The maximum points you can earn on assignments and exams (excluding extra credit) is **600**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Quizzes</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie Project</td>
<td>50 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study and Assessment</td>
<td>100 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total: **600**

Grades are guaranteed as follows:

- 540 – 600 = A (90%)
- 480 – 539 = B
- 420 – 479 = C
- 360 – 419 = D
**Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is the use of others’ words and/or ideas without clearly acknowledging their source. When you incorporate those words and ideas into your own work, you must give credit to original sources. *Whether intentional or unintentional*, plagiarism is considered academic dishonesty and will not be tolerated. Anyone found to be plagiarizing or cheating on assignments or exams (e.g., copying or giving answers, using notes, signaling) will (1) receive a zero credit on the test or assignment, and (2) be referred to the Vice President of Student Services for further disciplinary action. For further information on plagiarism go to the Writing Center website: [www.lavc.edu/WCweb/plagiarism.html](http://www.lavc.edu/WCweb/plagiarism.html) and the college website: [www.lavc.edu/catalog/policies.pdf](http://www.lavc.edu/catalog/policies.pdf).

Some simple definitions of plagiarism and ways to reference can be found here: [http://science.widener.edu/svb/essay/plagiar.html](http://science.widener.edu/svb/essay/plagiar.html) and here: [http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/definition.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/definition.html). If you are still not sure if you are plagiarizing, always feel free to ask me before the completion of an assignment.

**Other stuff:**

- *Please do not text during class*, as it can be distracting for those around you. Leave your phone off and make learning a priority.
- You may use laptops in class only for taking class notes.
- It is always your responsibility to keep up with material and class announcements you may have missed.
- If you are a student with a disability requiring classroom accommodations and have not contacted SSD, do so in a timely manner. SSD is located in the Student Services Annex, Room 175 or call SSD at (818) 947–2681 or TTD [818] 947–2680 to meet with a SSD counselor. If SSD has already sent the memo to me confirming accommodations, please meet with me to discuss arrangements.
- Course Syllabus, written assignments, study guides, PowerPoint presentations and all course relevant information will be posted at [http://www.haikulearning.com/](http://www.haikulearning.com/) Instructions for signing up and using the website will be distributed in class. I highly recommend printing out the Power Point Presentations so you can participate more and write less during the class.
- Library Computer Lab is located in the library and open to all Valley College Students.
- Please do not write me (or any other instructors) emails that look like this:

  Hi Professor Arakelyan I am a student in psychology1 8:00am to 9:30am in morning mondays and wends l jst need help with hw to go on line bse l need to sign but l have failed can u pliz help and send me the staps hw l can login o line. your student thanks

  Or this:

  Hello Professor,
  I wanted to know if you could let me know what my current grade is? Also when is the exact date of the final exam for the 11:20 class?

**Make sure you include identifying information in the subject of your email or I will probably delete the message without reading it!**

- Do not be offended if I return emails with brief efficiency! Sometimes I simply answer your question and press “send.” *
- I always respond faster to emails than to private messages sent through Haiku Learning.
- I do not answer questions about the text or lectures on exam days. Please ask questions prior to the exam. Use me! I am available during drop--in hours and by appointment.
• It is always your responsibility to keep up with material and class announcements you may have missed. You should always check Haiku Learning, but any notes or announcements there are likely to be incomplete.

• You may be excluded from class if you miss 4 hours or more.

• You are likely to be excluded if you miss either of the first two days of class.

• After the first week of class it is your responsibility to drop any classes that you no longer attend. I will not retroactively "drop" anyone who receives a fail because they stopped attending class.

• Anyone not officially enrolled will not be eligible to take exams or turn in work for credit, even if I have mistakenly graded assignments or exams. It is your responsibility to keep a record of your enrollment and confirm your class schedule.

As a courtesy to others and respect for the class, please turn off your cell phone prior to class.
# Tentative Schedule
(Subject to minor changes at my discretion)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 August 29-31</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 September 7</td>
<td>Research Methods in Abnormal Psychology</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 September 12-14</td>
<td>Abnormal Psychology: Legal and Ethical Issues</td>
<td>Chapter 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 September 19-21</td>
<td>Quiz 1 (1, 2, 15) Assessment and Diagnosis</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 September 26-28</td>
<td>Anxiety, OCD, Trauma &amp; Stressor Related Dis.</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 October 3-5</td>
<td>Somatic Symptom Dissociative and Factitious Dis.</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 October 10-12</td>
<td>Quiz 2 (3, 4, 5) Bipolar and Depressive Disorders</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 October 17-19</td>
<td>Feeding and Eating Disorders</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 October 24-26</td>
<td>Gender Dysphoria, Sexual Dysfunctions, and Paraphilic Disorders (Midterm 1-7)</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 October 31 November 2</td>
<td>Substance Related and Addictive Disorders (MP)</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 November 7-9</td>
<td>Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic D.</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 November 14-16</td>
<td>Personality Disorders Quiz 3 (8, 9, 10)</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 November 21-23</td>
<td>Neurodevelopmental, Disruptive Conduct and Elimination Disorders</td>
<td>Chapter 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 November 28-30</td>
<td>Aging and Neurocognitive Disorders</td>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 December 5-7</td>
<td>Health Psychology (CSA)</td>
<td>Chapter 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 12-14</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Everything Else!</td>
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</table>

I do not make a habit of reminding you of scheduling. Please make a note of dates and come to class prepared!
Details of The Movie Project

You will work on a Movie Project that will involve viewing and critically analyzing a movie that portrays a character with one or more forms of mental illness that we have covered in the class. With this assignment, you will have the opportunity to step into the role of a clinical psychologist.

1) Specifically, you will use information gleaned from a film to assess and diagnosis a character with discernible psychological abnormality(ies), and to determine the connections between these abnormalities and various forms of social-environmental stressors/problems, medical conditions, and functional impairments in the individual’s life.

2) Following this diagnostic assessment, you will develop a case formulation in which you provide a plausible explanation for the individual’s abnormality(ies) and speculate on plausible causes, origins, and determinants of the person’s disorder(s). The formulation is a theoretically based and research-informed, yet individually tailored, explanation of how the individual’s particular problems, symptoms, disorders, distress, and impairments relate to one another; and of how and why these problems might have developed and been maintained.

3) In this latter part, you will come up with a plausible explanation of the etiology of the individual’s disorder(s) by identifying plausible causal, precipitating, and maintaining factors and their contribution to the disorder(s), applying your knowledge of various theoretical perspectives and research findings introduced in the course. Based on the diagnostic assessment and case formulation, you will briefly recommend suitable treatment options and assess the character’s prognosis.

4) Your discussion will conclude with a brief, critical assessment of the strengths and weakness of the movie’s portrayal of the particular disorder(s) covered and of mental illness in general, and their treatment.

5) You will want to take note of any inaccuracies, inadequacies, omissions, or creative liberties in the portrayal and consider ways in which the film (implicitly or explicitly) might echo and serve to shape societal beliefs and attitudes toward mental illness(es) and its treatment, whether negatively or positively.

The final write-up should be 5 to 7 double-spaced pages using a 12-point Times New Roman font, with typical margins (1.5” inch on left and right; 1” on top and bottom). Please be sure to staple all pages together.
Details of The Case Study and Assessment

You will review a case study provided later in class. You will be responsible for reviewing the case, assigning a diagnosis and creating a treatment plan. You will also be responsible for providing a rationale for the diagnoses, as well as a discussion of rule outs, differential diagnoses. Differential diagnosis refers to all of the diagnostic categories that you seriously considered during the diagnostic process. Because the symptoms present in the case study suggest the possibility of several disorders, a thorough discussion of disorders that you excluded is warranted. In other words, you should discuss why you assigned the diagnoses that you did and why you ruled out others.

This process will require the student to:

1. Read the case study given by the professor based on a fictional patient describing the medical history
2. Assess symptoms
3. Assess other potential problematic areas of the person’s life, such as social, spiritual, emotional, cognitive, work/education level, physical
4. Identify diagnostic criteria based on DSM
5. Identify stressors
6. Give recommendations for treatment
7. Assess prognosis
8. Summarize results in a written statement

Format Outline: Written statement, 5-7 typed pages, double-spaced, no larger than 12-point, Times New Roman font. Make sure you follow the directions carefully and fulfill all of the above mentioned requirements. Don’t forget to be creative and have fun 😊

All analyses must be typed in your own original writing. If you pass off others’ work as your own, it constitutes academic dishonesty and will result in disciplinary action.
EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENT (Choose Only 1 of 3)

1) **Attitude of Gratitude**
You need 3 weeks' worth of material. (It can be more than 3 weeks but not less than 3)
Each week write down 5 things that happened to you that week that you are grateful for. It should be a sentence or two about your feelings and reflection on it. E-mail me if you need more clarification.
I will collect your notes in the end of a semester.

2) **Self Appreciation Exercise**
You need 3 weeks worth of material. (It can be more than 3 weeks but not less than 3)
Each week write down 5 qualities that you love and appreciate about yourself, things that you have done that week that made you feel good about yourself (From helping out a friend, to doing something good for a stranger, it does not have to be a grandiose thing it can be driving around your grandparents, cooking your parents' favorite meal for them, opening a door for someone etc.) Along the way you may discover positive personality traits that you were not even aware of. This is not a selfishness exercise it is merely allowing yourself to appreciate and love who you are. Love for others starts from love of self.

AFTER YOU COLLECT ALL THE DATA (this applies only to the Extra credit #1 and #2) YOU NEED TO WRITE A SHORT ESSAY ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. No particular format is required. Write it as a journal entry or whatever style you choose. Answer all the following questions.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER AFTER COMPLETING THE ASSIGNMENT**

"Attitude of Gratitude" and "Strengths I have that I am grateful for/Self Appreciation Exercise"
Assignment Questions You need to Answer!

1) What was the Most challenging part of doing the assignment?
2) Are you going to incorporate it into your daily life? If yes, why? If no, why not?
3) Did you find it meaningful and useful? How?
4) Did it change anything in your thought process or behavior? How?
5) What is 1 thing you took away from this assignment? (You can talk about more than one thing :-)

3) Think of a potentially interesting TV character to focus on (perhaps a favorite character, or one with a particularly vivid or unique personality). Once you’ve selected a character, you should focus on a specific episode of the TV show, series or a movie that features that character. Then, you should write a short (2 to 3 page) essay in which you...

1. Briefly describe the circumstances and plot of the episode, and then devote the remainder of their essay to explaining that character’s behavior in terms of one of the major personality theories (i.e., psychodynamic, humanistic, trait, or cognitive social-learning).
2. You can use more than one theoretical approach if you would like.
3. You are not restricted to characters with negative or maladaptive personalities (i.e., "healthy" characters are interesting, too).
4. Feel free to be creative and original in your application of the theory.
5. No APA format is required! Are not you relieved :-)

Extra Credit is NOT MANDATORY, it is up to you to do. However, if you decide to complete it choose only 1 Extra credit Assignment to do. EACH EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENT IS WORTH UP TO 25 POINTS.

GOOD LUCK :-}