



Course Outline

2026-2027 Catalog

PSY 6 - Abnormal Psychology

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

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Course Description: This course introduces the scientific study of psychopathology and atypical behaviors, broadly defined. Students investigate abnormal behavior from a variety of perspectives including biological, psychological, and sociocultural approaches. An integrative survey of theory and research in abnormal behavior, and intervention and prevention strategies for psychological disorders are also introduced. (C-ID PSY 120).

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Define and use basic biological and psychological terminology to describe psychopathology and atypical behavior and mental processes.
2. Compare and contrast the various theoretical perspectives on etiology and implications for treatment of various psychological disorders.
3. Summarize the major disorder classifications and give concrete examples using appropriate diagnostic terminology (i.e., DSM).
4. Explain specific research methods and the ethical principles for the study and treatment of psychopathology.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic	
	<u>Lecture</u>
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
Psychopathology and Mental Disorders: Historical, Cultural, Social, Scientific, and Ethical Considerations.	8.00
Issues in classification and diagnosis: DSM-V-TR (or current edition).	3.00
Introduction to Clinical Assessment Procedures.	3.00
Research Methodology in Psychopathology: Descriptive, epidemiological, experimental and single-subject research designs.	4.00
Theories and Paradigms in Psychopathology: Biological paradigm, Psychodynamic paradigm, Humanistic and existential paradigm, Behavioral/learning paradigm, Cognitive paradigm.	8.00
Psychological Disorders (characteristics, etiology, and treatment, including: Anxiety disorders, Somatoform and Dissociative Disorders, Mood Disorders, Schizophrenia. Substance-related Disorders, Personality Disorders, Sexual Dysfunctions and Gender Identity Disorders, Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence, Eating Disorders.	13.00
Therapies and treatments, including outcomes and issues related to psychological intervention.	12.00
Total Hours:	51.00

Methods of Instruction

- A. Collaborative Group Work
- B. Discussion
- C. Guest Speakers
- D. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- E. Lecture
- F. Multimedia Presentations
- G. Reading Assignments

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Exams/Tests
- B. Research Projects
- C. Homework
- D. Essays and research papers
- E. Class Discussion
- F. Group Participation

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Study the chapter on a case study through the lenses of biological, behaviorist, and humanist approaches, and provide a 200-word reflection on your insights.
2. Read the chapter on the history of psychosis and provide a 100-word reflection on your insights regarding the four challenges associated with defining "abnormal behavior."

Writing Assignments

1. Write a 2-page, double-spaced essay arguing for or against the use of neuroimaging technology in court cases to determine mental or emotional stability.
2. Imagine the perspective of an individual diagnosed with schizophrenia and, in a 3-page double-spaced essay, describe the type of schizophrenia your fictional person has. Reflect on the potential sensory, emotional, and behavioral experiences they might encounter as a consequence of their condition.

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Attend an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous or a similar open support group meeting and write 200 words on any group norms and rules you witnessed.
2. Observe a drug court calendar session at a superior court and provide a 200-word reflection on the potential mental health issues observed in three of the cases.

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Comer, Ronald J. (2022). Fundamentals of Abnormal Psychology. *Macmillan Learning*, 10th. 978-1319247218.

Barlow and Durand. (2018). Abnormal Psychology, An Integrative Approach. *Cengage Learning*, 8th. 978-1305950443.

Bridley and Daffin Jr. (2023). Fundamentals of Psychological Disorders. <https://opentext.wsu.edu/abnormal-psych/>, 3rd. OER.

Minimum Qualifications

Psychology (Masters Required)

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