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PSYX 340.02: Abnormal Psychology

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Syllabus – Psyx 340 – Spring 2015

Abnormal Psychology

Meeting Location and Times

Chemistry Building, Room 123
Tuesday, Thursday 12:40-2 PM
Instruction dates: January 26-May 8

Final Exam: Friday, May 15, 8:00-10:00 AM

Instructor Information

Instructor: Bryan Cochran, Ph.D.
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Email: bryan.cochran@umontana.edu
Phone: (406) 243-2391
Office hours: Monday 2:30-4:00, Wednesday 9:00-10:30, or by appointment

Teaching Philosophy

Fundamentally, I believe that it is one thing to teach *what psychologists know*, and another to teach *how psychologists think*. In teaching my classes, I attempt to accomplish both of these objectives. There is a certain body of knowledge that you need to master in order progress further in your studies of human behavior. However, long after you have forgotten some of the subtle nuances of the content, I hope you will be able to think critically about human behavior in the manner of a psychologist.

There are many ways of teaching this course as there are instructors; accordingly, I teach with a certain set of biases and assumptions that it is important to make clear. First, I am biased toward *scientific* explanations of human behavior, those that are grounded in both theory and data, and I will focus primarily on these explanations throughout the course. Second, I have a bias in favor of a certain type of students: those who work toward their full potential. I will facilitate your learning of the material in class, in my office hours, via email, and on the discussion board as long as you demonstrate an eagerness to learn. Finally, I believe that students learn best through active engagement with the material. This is reflected in the fact that I supplement material from your text with case studies or anecdotes, I offer extra credit for going above and beyond reading the text for the course, and I welcome in-class discussion (as much as is possible with our cozy group of 75 or so students).

Course Guidelines and Policies

Disability Modifications

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and [Disability Services for Students](#). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Academic Misconduct

You are expected to adhere to the University's [Student Conduct Code](#) with regard to academic integrity. Academic misconduct in this course will result in an academic penalty commensurate with the offense as well as possible disciplinary action by the University.

Incompletes

Departmental and university policies regarding incompletes do not allow changing "incomplete" grades after one year has passed since the "I" was granted.

Pass/No Pass

For students taking this course P/NP, a P is a grade of A, B, or C. A NP is a grade of C-, D, or F.

Course Description

Psyx 340 is an overview of the major theories, diagnostic categories, and treatment approaches for behavior disorders. Psyx 100 is a prerequisite.

Course Objectives

- To gain a better understanding of, and appreciation for, variations in human behavior
- To understand the historical development of classification systems for behavior disorders
- To develop a basic understanding of our current diagnostic system and to think critically about its strengths and limitations
- To understand the major classifications of mental disorders and to have a basic working knowledge of different diagnoses
- To understand how the basic treatment approaches address the criterion behaviors of each particular disorder
- To explore current controversies in the field of abnormal psychology

Course Grading/Evaluation

The grading scale for this course is based on a 10-point system using plus/minus grades (94-100% is an A, 90-93% is an A-, 87-89% is a B+, etc.). Your grade in this course will be computed from **four equally-weighted** exams. The first three exams will be administered during class, the last during the time allotted by the University for our Final. No exams will be given before the scheduled date, and there will be no make-up exams except in the event of an *emergency* (with a note documenting the emergency) or *required university-sanctioned activity*.

The exams will be primarily composed of multiple choice questions, but there will also be a few (5-6) short answer questions for each exam. The final exam will focus primarily on material from the last few weeks of class, but a question or two on the short answer portion of the final will ask you to reflect on

material learned throughout the semester. Bring a clean **Psychology Scantron form (available in the bookstore, Think Tank, and other venues on campus)** and a **#2 pencil to each exam**.

Extra credit will be made available on the Moodle site for the class (see *Supplemental materials* below). Each of the first three extra credit assignments can add up to three points to the exam that follows it; extra credit for each unit must be turned in on the dates noted on p. 3-4 of this syllabus. The fourth extra credit is based on in-class brief assignments that include short questions and reactions to topics discussed in class or in the reading. You cannot lose points for these brief assignments, but your scores on them (up to 1 point each) can add up to 5 points to your grade on the final exam.

Required Materials

Comer, R. J. (2014). *Abnormal Psychology, Eighth Edition*. New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

Supplemental Materials

A website for the course is available through Moodle. Here you will find a copy of this syllabus, all materials needed to complete extra credit assignments, and a discussion board for posting/answering questions about the class. Grades will be posted on the site. I will also post suggestions for optional readings if you are interested in further information about a particular topic.

Course Schedule

Dates	Topics and Required Reading (Worth Chapters)	Extra credit available (see website for details)
Week 1 (1/27, 1/29)	History of abnormal psych. (Ch. 1)	
Week 2 (2/3, 2/5)	Research methods (Ch. 2)	
Week 3 (2/10, 2/12)	Theoretical perspectives (Ch. 3)	Extra Credit #1 Psychology in the News Due 2/12
Week 4 (2/17, 2/19)	Exam 1: Tuesday 2/17 Assessment (Ch. 4)	
Week 5 (2/24, 2/26)	Anxiety disorders (Ch. 5)	
Week 6 (3/3, 3/5)	Stress-related disorders (Ch. 6)	
Week 7 (3/10, 3/12)	Somatic/Dissociative Disorders (Ch. 7)	Extra Credit #2 Answering questions with PsycInfo Due 3/12
Week 8 (3/17, 3/19)	Exam 2: Tuesday 3/17 Mood disorders (Ch. 8)	
Week 9 (3/24, 3/26)	Treatment of mood disorders, suicide (Ch. 9, 10)	
Week 10 (3/31, 4/2)	Spring Break!	

Dates	Topics and Required Reading (Worth Chapters)	Extra credit available (see website for details)
Week 11 (4/7, 4/9)	Eating disorders (Ch. 11) Substance use disorders (Ch. 12)	
Week 12 (4/14, 4/16)	Substance use disorders (Ch. 12, cont.) Exam 3: Thursday, 4/16	Extra Credit #3 Case study assignment due 4/14
Week 13 (4/21, 4/23)	Disorders of sex and gender (Ch. 13) Schizophrenia and Treatments (Ch. 14, 15)	
Week 14 (4/28, 4/30)	Personality Disorders (Ch. 16)	
Week 15 (5/5, 5/7)	Personality Disorders (Ch. 16, cont.); Ethical and Legal Issues (Ch. 19)	Extra Credit #4 is based on in-class <i>brief</i> assignments
	Exam 4: Friday, 5/15, 8-10 AM	