

**Psychology 325 (003) - Abnormal Psychology
Course Syllabus - Spring 2018**

INSTRUCTOR	Leah M. Adams, Ph.D. <u>Office:</u> 3057 David King Hall <u>E-mail:</u> ladamse@gmu.edu <u>Phone:</u> (703) 993-4118
MEETINGS	Tues & Thurs 9:00am – 10:15 am (Krug Hall 242)
OFFICE HOURS	Tues 11:00am – 12:00pm (or by appointment)
DEADLINES	January 29 is the last day to add/drop this class with no tuition penalty February 12 is the last day to drop this class with 33% tuition penalty February 23 is the last day to drop this class with 67% tuition penalty

* Official Communications via GMU E-mail: Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of current theories and research on the causes and treatment of mental health problems. We will also spend time learning about how mental health problems are *currently* classified and assessed within the mental health field. This is an interactive class – you will have the opportunity to participate in class discussions and exercises. In order to do well in this course, you are encouraged to think like a *clinical scientist* – be open-minded, while also maintaining a healthy dose of skepticism. A diversity of viewpoints is welcomed and encouraged throughout the semester. Topics we discuss will be, at times, controversial and sensitive. As you make comments and ask questions, please assume that someone in the room has personal experience with the topic and avoid making sarcastic or rude comments about mental illness.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Evaluate various definitions of “abnormal” behavior and mental disorders
- Describe the signs and symptoms of specific psychological disorders, being able to compare and contrast disorders
- Understand the subjective experience of mental health problems
- Understand how social context can influence the manner in which mental health problems are experienced and viewed
- Describe and discuss psychological theory and research related to different forms of mental health problems, with an emphasis on the biopsychosocial perspective
- Critically examine theoretical and research questions in this field

COURSE FORMAT

Given class size, the format of this course is primarily lecture-based. However, classes will also include discussion, in-class exercises, and media.

REQUIRED TEXT

There is no required textbook, but there are readings! Required readings can be found on Blackboard in the Course Content tab.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

Attendance & Participation: Your involvement is key to the success of this class! Although I won't be taking formal attendance, you should realize that failure to attend class usually results in poor performance on exams. Information and announcements communicated in class will not necessarily be repeated over e-mail or over Blackboard.

Assigned reading: In lecture, class discussion and in exams, I will assume that you have completed your assigned reading. All assigned reading can be found on Blackboard in the Course Content tab.

Cell phones & Laptops: The use of cell phones, including text messaging, is unacceptable during class time. If there is an emergency that may require you to be contacted, please let me know at the beginning of class. The use of laptops is limited to note taking.

Exam & Homework Policy: There are four (4) scheduled exams for the course. Your lowest exam grade will be dropped. If you miss an exam, that will be the grade that is dropped. There are **no** makeup exams or makeup assignments in this course without arrangements made beforehand with me (e.g., missing class for a religious holiday). There will be no extensions or makeups without penalty except in instances such as the following:

- Hospitalization or illness that has been documented and judged by me as preventing you from a) preparing adequately for an exam, b) attending class, or c) completing an assignment
- Death or serious illness in your family
- Court appearances

Documentation must be provided by health officials (e.g., a physician or member of the student health center staff) in the case of illness; an immediate family member in the case of death or serious illness in the family; and official paperwork in the case of court dates. Decisions regarding extensions and makeups under these circumstances will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Cancellation Policy: If class is cancelled, you will be notified via your GMU email. I will provide details regarding coursework and/or assignments.

Honor Code: All students in this course are to become familiar with and follow the University's honor code, which does not tolerate any form of cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Exams and assignments are expected to be individual efforts unless otherwise noted. Violations of the GMU Honor Code can result in failure of an assignment or exam, depending on the severity of violation. **All** violations will be reported to the Honor Committee. I reserve the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation, but c'mon, let's not let it come to that. For more information on the Honor Code please visit: <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Grades will be determined based on the number of points you earn out of a total of **400 points**. Grades will be assigned as follows:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
97 – 100%	93 – 96%	90 – 92%	87 – 89%	83 – 86%	80 – 82%	77 – 79%	73 – 76%	70 – 72%	60 – 69%	< 60%

Exams (300 out of 400 points): There will be four exams, each worth 100 points. Three will be given during class time and the last one will be given during our assigned final exam time period. Exam grades will be made up of your three highest exam grades.

- Exam 1 will be given in class on **TUESDAY FEBRUARY 13TH**
- Exam 2 will be given in class on **THURSDAY MARCH 8TH**
- Exam 3 will be given in class on **TUESDAY APRIL 10TH**
- Exam 4 will be given during normal class time on **THURSDAY MAY 10TH**

All exams include multiple choice questions, and may also include short answer questions that involve defining or applying key concepts. Exams will not be cumulative.

Reaction Paper Assignment (100 out of 400 points): There will be four required reaction papers, each worth 25 points, that you will submit through Blackboard (in the Assignments tab). You can choose to write a reaction paper on any of the topics that we will discuss, but you must complete at least one before Spring break. The reaction paper must be submitted within 24 hours of class time (e.g., if you wanted to write a reaction paper on the 3/20 Feeding & Eating disorders topic, it must be submitted by Wednesday 3/21 at 10:15am). Reaction papers should be brief (1-2 double spaced pages, 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font) and are an opportunity for you to think deeply about the material and share your ideas. Reflections that are clear, thoughtful, and relevant will receive full credit. You do not have to answer each of these questions, but to get you thinking in line with the assignment, potential questions for you to consider in your reaction papers are: 1) What about the reading and lecture material

stood out or surprised you, and why? 2) What connections can be made between the reading and lecture material covered and your experiences? 3) What questions or issues did the material raise that you would want to learn more about?

Extra Credit: You can earn up to 8 points (not percentage points!) of extra credit that is added onto your point total for the class. There are two ways you can earn these points, but you cannot complete both.

- Your first option is to participate as a volunteer for four hours in psychology department research (2 points per hour). Students may sign up for research studies through the GMU Sona Systems web page (<http://gmu.sona-systems.com/>). Select **Psyc325-003** to apply these hours toward extra credit. Your last day to participate in research is **Saturday, May 5**.
- Your second option is to write a (3-4 double spaced pages, 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font) paper analyzing a portrayal (film, book, etc.) of a person living with mental illness. In the paper, you will describe the character, and detail the accuracy of the portrayal, along with the implications (negative, positive, mixed) for the public's perception of psychological disorders. This paper should be turned in through Blackboard (in the Assignments tab) and is due by **Tuesday, May 8 at 10:15am**.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Student Support Services: Although you may believe that you or a loved one has a disorder covered in this course, you are strongly encouraged not to “diagnose” yourself or others. On the other hand, if you find that you are strongly relating to any particular disorder and/or you have symptoms that are causing you significant distress or impairment in your life, please note that George Mason University does offer services to support students’ academic and emotional development. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), located in SUB I room 3129 (<http://caps.gmu.edu/>), offers workshops in academic skills, stress management training, and individual and group counseling for students who would like some help with social, emotional, or educational concerns. Consider taking advantage of these resources if you need them.

Sexual Misconduct & Interpersonal Violence: In this course, we may discuss sexual assault and interpersonal violence in reference to course material. As such, I’d like to make it clear that George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living, and working environment that is free from discrimination, and we are committed to a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted, or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. University Policy 1202 Sexual Harassment and Misconduct (<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy/>) speaks to the specifics of our process, our resources, and the options available to you. Confidential student resources are available on campus at the Student Support and Advocacy Center (<http://ssac.gmu.edu/>), Counseling and Psychological Services (<http://caps.gmu.edu/>), and Student Health Services (<http://shs.gmu.edu/>). All other members of the University community (including faculty, except those noted above) are **not** considered confidential resources and are **required** to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator. For a full list of resources, support opportunities, and reporting options, contact Dr. Jennifer Hammat, Title IX Coordinator, at <http://diversity.gmu.edu/title-ix>, at (703) 993 – 8730, or in the Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics office in the Aquia Building, Suite 373.

Accommodation of Disabilities: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Services (DRC) at (703) 993-2474. **All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.** Note that this provision includes the range of disabilities, including physical, psychiatric, and learning disabilities.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Reading assignments due for each class period are posted to Blackboard in the Course Content tab!

DATE	TOPIC
WEEK 1: 1/23	Introduction to Abnormal Psychology
1/25	Historical & Modern Perspectives
WEEK 2: 1/30	Research Methods in Psychology
2/1	Research Methods in Psychology
WEEK 3: 2/6	Assessment & Diagnosis
2/8	Assessment & Diagnosis
WEEK 4: 2/13	EXAM 1 – IN CLASS
2/15	Anxiety, Trauma-, and Stressor-Related Disorders
WEEK 5: 2/20	Obsessive-Compulsive and Impulse Control Disorders
2/22	Somatic Symptom and Dissociative Disorders
WEEK 6: 2/27	Somatic Symptom and Dissociative Disorders
3/1	Depressive and Bipolar Disorders
WEEK 7: 3/6	Depressive and Bipolar Disorders
3/8	EXAM 2 – IN CLASS
WEEK 8: 3/13	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK ☺
3/15	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK ☺
WEEK 9: 3/20	Feeding and Eating Disorders
3/22	Gender Dysphoria
WEEK 10: 3/27	Sexual Dysfunctions and Paraphilic Disorders
3/29	Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders
WEEK 11: 4/3	Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders
4/5	Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders
WEEK 12: 4/10	EXAM 3 – IN CLASS
4/12	Personality Disorders
WEEK 13: 4/17	Personality Disorders
4/19	Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence
WEEK 14: 4/24	Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence
4/26	Aging and Neurocognitive Disorders
WEEK 15: 5/1	Legal, Ethical, Professional Issues
5/3	You Pick the Topic! and Semester Wrap-Up!
EXAM 4 (FINAL):	In class Thurs 5/10 from 9:00 – 10:15am Just a note: By the time we get to this day, you should've already turned in 4 reaction papers and (if applicable) your extra credit assignment!