A close up of a sign

Description automatically generated**Abnormal Psychology**

George Mason University

PSYC 325 – DL1 (3 Credits)

Blackboard/Online

Spring 2021 (1/25 – 5/10)

\*Please note that date/times in this course refer to Easter Standard Time (EST)

Instructor Information

Instructor: Tahani Chaudhry Email: [tchaudh@gmu.edu](mailto:tchaudh@gmu.edu) Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

What you can call me: “Tahani”

Office Hours: Virtual via [Zoom](https://its.gmu.edu/service/zoom/) by appointment

*I believe my role as a teacher is not only to impart knowledge of the course material but also to learn from you. I strive to create a classroom environment that is open, comfortable, and conducive to shared learning. My aim is to make this course as accessible and flexible for students in order to support everyone in achieving their learning goals. My hope is for students to walk away with both knowledge of the course material and the ability to apply this knowledge to real-life contexts outside of the classroom. I will do this by guiding you through this course content, sharing resources and providing feedback for students to expand their knowledge and skill sets. I encourage students to take ownership of this learning process by asking questions, reflecting on course content and providing feedback to me to improve this course and my teaching. My teaching style is informal, and I want my students to feel comfortable asking me questions, asking for help, and offering suggestions.*

Textbook Requirement

The following access is required to be successful. You must purchase the LaunchPad to complete assignments for this course. E-text is included in that purchase.

LaunchPad Access: [Comer, R. J., & Comer, J. S. (2018). *Abnormal Psychology.* (10th Edition). Macmillan Learning.](https://www.macmillanlearning.com/college/us/product/Abnormal-Psychology/p/1319066941)

* **Six Month Access ISBN:**9781319067236

Course Description and Objectives

*Recommended Prerequisite: PSYC 100 and either PSYC 211, 231, or 324 or permission of instructor*

This course is designed to provide an overview of the study of psychopathology. We will discuss the theoretical concepts behind mental illness, diagnosis, classification, and treatment. You should leave the course with a basic understanding of these concepts as well as the symptoms of major forms of psychopathology. By the end of the course, it is expected that you will be able to:

1. Differentiate between abnormal and normal behavior
2. Describe different assessment tools and what information they can provide.
3. Define diagnoses and differentiate between diagnosis and assessment.
4. Describe the similarities and differences between different orientations to conceptualization and treatment.
5. Identify symptoms of common mental disorders and describe empirical support for a treatment that is determined.

*The course is offered fully online. Each student will have to take considerable responsibility for pacing their progress and learning the material. To succeed in this course, you will need to exert a lot of effort to keep yourself on a timeline that will allow you to complete material in a timely manner. More information can be found in the “Course Format and Technology” section.*

Grading and Assignments

Final grades are entered according to the following scale.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A+ | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D | F |
| >96 | 93-96 | 90-92 | 87-89 | 83-86 | 80-82 | 77-79 | 73-76 | 90-72 | 60-69 | <60 |

Your grade will be based on points earned through several activities. Each graded activity is described below. Your grade is calculated out of a total of 300 points. **Please note:** **In order to maintain a consistent and fair grading policy for everyone enrolled in the course, I will *not* make changes to any of the grading policies outlined below.** I will round up if your average is XX.5 or above. For example, if your points average out to be 89.5, I will round that up to a 90%.

Quizzes = 15% Discussions = 25% Clinical Choices = 35% Applied Infographic Project = 25%

***Quizzes (15%)***

Students are assigned a quiz each week covering the course material via BlackBoard. Quizzes are designed to test your knowledge and understanding of key points in the readings, lectures, and other assigned supplements. Each quiz will largely focus on the content of its respective week, but it is possible you will see some questions from previous topics that you have already learned in the course. Quizzes are available on their assigned weeks and close at 11:59pm on Sunday of that week. You are welcome to use any resources during the quiz, but you MAY NOT use other individuals, notes/resources that belong to other individuals, the internet, or electronics beyond accessing the quiz. Therefore, you should be taking and writing your own notes by hand if you wish to use them during the quiz. **The sharing of quiz content in any form is unacceptable. This includes but is not limited, verbal discussion, screen shots (unless sending me a technology issue), copying/pasting questions, posting them to platforms such as Quizlet (that one is copyright infringement), etc. Partaking in this practice counts as an honor violation and will be dealt with accordingly even if discovered after the fact.** Finally, the quizzes are timed with a maximum time of 60 minutes and can only be completed in one sitting. Once you start you may not stop and come back later.

**No make-up and Late quizzes will be permitted for any reasons. However, the lowest two quiz grades will be dropped and not counted against your grade to accommodate any unforeseen circumstances.**

***Discussion (25%)***

Students will complete 6 discussions on topics as scheduled. Please read this section very carefully.

**Posting Discussions (Where/How):** In the BlackBoard course, you will navigate to the Discussion Board. You will see thread appear when there is a discussion assignment. You will reply to the thread’s prompt which facilitates your discussion and interactions with one another. Please do not create a new thread. Make sure you adhere to the Respect Policy. It is okay to disagree and still be respectful.

**Class Interaction (What):** Using the prompt and course material as your guide, you are to interact with one another and have a virtual class discussion within the thread. You are to respond first to the prompt that is given to you by me. This should be done with thought and substance. Although there is no official word count requirement, posts are expected to be long enough to respond appropriately to the prompt (quality matters!) This original post is due by Thursday of its assigned week at 11:59pm. You are also required to respond to 4 peers by Sunday of its assigned week at 11:59pm. Your responses should, again be thoughtful and respectful. Although there is no official word count requirement, replies that consist only of responses such as “You make an excellent point” or “Good example” do not demonstrate significant thought or effort on your part and will be graded accordingly. Again, the overall substance and depth of your overall interaction/posts will determine your grade (see rubric). Social moments, tangents, and use of supporting sources are welcome if relevant. See below for due date explanation and look at the uploaded rubric for additional details.

Posts and responses should be grammatically correct, and without spelling errors. I recommend that you compose first in a word- processor so that you can check for grammar and spelling correctness, then copy and paste the post in the forum. Please, do not use fragments or abbreviations such as you use in text messages to friends. This is a college course and you are expected to correspond as an educated adult.

Plagiarism (copying text and/or ideas from another source) is not tolerated. Posts that are reasonably believed to be plagiarized will be assigned a grade of 0 and considered an honor violation. If you think you need to include a citation, please do so and provide the reference. This goes for both the posts and responses. Note that the parenthetical citation cannot be included in your word count.

**Due Dates (When):** You should be starting your discussion as early as possible, especially if you want to get the full quality out of it. Your original posts are due on the Thursday of their assigned week and the peer responses are due Sunday of the assigned week.

**Discussion posts may not be turned in late or made-up. Your peers are relying on you to do your part. Your lowest discussion will be dropped to accommodate any unforeseen circumstances.**

***Clinical Choices Assignments (35%)***

You have the opportunity to apply the material critically and practically by completing the clinical choices assignments. Clinical choice assignments ***must be completed in the LaunchPad*** where you have access to the e- textbook. They can take anywhere from 30 minutes to 90 minutes depending on the content and your pace in answering the questions, so make sure you set aside time to complete. The assignments consist of multiple choice and multiple response components as well as short-answer response questions. Some questions will allow you to reattempt when you get it wrong, but not all of them. Please input an answer for EACH item to receive credit. You are required to answer all questions/prompts. It will not let me grade it or show me your attempt unless everything is answered. If you choose to not answer a question (which you’ll lose credit for), put “n/a” so the system will still submit it for grading. These assignments are due on Sunday at 11:59pm of their assigned week – if LaunchPad has a date incorrectly listed, please let me know!! Finally, know that the LaunchPad gradebook is NOT accurate. It assigns grades based on completion until I go in and do grading, which I will post in the BlackBoard gradebook.

**You may not submit a clinical choice assignment late or make it up, however, I will drop the lowest two.**

***Applied Infographic Project (25%)***

You will embark in a semester long individual project that focuses on a particular topic/issue, evaluates relevant research and developmental implications, suggest evidenced based solutions. This topic requires you to critically think, apply, and synthesize the course material. Additional and specific details are available in Canvas.

There are three phases to this project (see course calendar for due dates):

1. A half to full page (double spaced, Times New Roman, 12pt font) proposal (15%) indicating the issue you would like to investigate and why it is relevant to developmental psychology. You will be given feedback and suggestions on this.
2. Submission of a preliminary fact sheet with some references. This is nowhere near a finished draft. Rather, it is a check to make sure the appropriate work and effort is being put into it and gives me the opportunity to make sure you are going in the right direction. This focuses on summarizing what the research says about the issue. This is submitted as a Word or PDF document. Double spaced, Times New Roman 12, APA format.
3. A final infographic and an updated fact sheet and references. An infographic is a visually appealing document that summarizes and concisely synthesizes data and information. You could think of it like a poster, but it is an electronic document. The infographic must be submitted as either one single Word document or one single PowerPoint Slide (I’ll accept PDF versions as well, but it must be 1 page/slide). Revised fact sheet and references are submitted in the same manner as Phase 2.

**Phase 1 and 2 have some late acceptance parameters with point deduction. For each day past the due date, 5% will be deducted from your grade. Phase 3 cannot be turned in late due to the quick grading turn around for final grades.**

***\*\*\*EXTRA CREDIT \*\*\****

For extra credit, you may sign up to participate in two hours worth of research participation credit via the psychology department SONA system. Or, you may find something in the news that is relevant to the materials in one of the chapters and write a one-page description about how this news item relates to a concept discussed in the textbook. Either option is worth five points. Extra credit, if you choose to do it, needs to be turned in to me by May 10th.

Course Format and Technology Requirements

This course if fully online, meaning there are no physically required face-to-face encounters. Your Learning Management System (LMS), BlackBoard, serves as your “Classroom” for this course. It is in BlackBoard that you will have access to your course materials, with the exception of your textbook which is purchased separately. Please read through this section carefully as it details the technology requirements of the course. The schedule at the end of the syllabus will detail the week-to-week breakdown of the semester.

***Hardware***

You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. For the amount of Hard Disk Space required taking a distance education course, consider and allow for:

1. the storage amount needed to install any additional software and
2. space to store work that you will do for the course.

If you consider the purchase of a new computer, please go to [Technology Buying Guide](http://compstore.gmu.edu/pdfs/TechGuide.pdf) <http://itservices.gmu.edu/services/view-service.cfm?customel_dataPageID_4609=6233> to see recommendations.

Students owning Macs or Linux should be aware that some courses may use software that only runs on Windows. You can set up a Mac computer with Boot Camp or virtualization software so Windows will also run on it. Watch [this video](http://support.apple.com/kb/VI54?viewlocale=en_US) about using Windows on a Mac. Computers running Linux can also be configured with virtualization software or configured to dual boot with Windows.

***Software***

This course uses Blackboard as the learning management system (LMS). You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the [myMason Portal](http://mymason.gmu.edu). (See [supported browsers and operating systems](https://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_SP_10_and_SP_11/Student/002_Browser_Support_SP_11).) You will certainly need plugins that will allow you to stream videos through Kaltura and YouTube. You will also need PowerPoint and Acrobat reader.

It is possible that course materials may need additional software such as [Flash](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/), [Java](http://www.java.com/en/download/), and [Windows Media Player](http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/products/windows-media-player), [QuickTime](http://support.apple.com/downloads/#quicktime) and/or [Real Media Player](http://www.real.com/realplayer/search). Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software for free [here](http://antivirus.gmu.edu/).

You also need to download and install [Zoom](https://its.gmu.edu/service/zoom/) as this is how you will meet with your instructor for office hours and appointments. It is available to students for free through your GMU credentials.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

**Course and Institution Policies**

***Respect Policy***

I encourage everyone to share thoughts and ask questions throughout the class. Disagreement is completely acceptable when engaging in discussions with both the instructor and your classmates. However, as you make comments and ask questions, please be mindful of other’s potential situations and respectful of their beliefs/values/choices. I challenge everyone to keep in mind both their hardships and privilege and practice perspective taking when reflecting and engaging in discussions. Discriminatory or hateful comments will not be tolerated. Failure to comply with this policy may result in a significant grade penalty or other actions as deemed appropriate.

***Email***

If you have any questions, please post them on the Ask the Professor Forum on Blackboard. For any personal questions, email is the best way to get in contact with me. Official Communications via GMU Email: 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 email account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly. Please be patient as you await a response (usually within 1 business day). Make sure to include a subject line in your email mentioning your course/section. (e.g., PSYC 200 – 001) and sign your first and last name. Please be professional in your emails. Emails written in “text-speak,” disrespectful tone, or inappropriate interactions will not be tolerated. In such events, I will kindly ask you to review and attempt to send your email again in a professional manner before I answer your question.

***Trigger Warning***

Some topics in the field of psychology can facilitate undesired emotions or feelings. This could include, but is not limited to, anxiety, sadness, discomfort, or symptoms of post-traumatic stress. Be sure that you have looked over the course objectives, topics, and schedule to make sure you understand what information this course covers and consider how it may or may not affect you. Students should be mindful of themselves and their experiences when navigating through the course topics and be sure they are practicing self-care and utilizing necessary resources, such as reaching out to a mental health professional, when needed.

***Course Withdrawal Policy***

The course calendar details dates that correspond with add/drop and the institution withdrawal periods. Students should also check the campus academic calendar for the most up-to-date information.

***Cancelation Policy***

Barring a major disruption of Blackboard, the virtual classroom will not be canceled, and all assignments are due as stated in the syllabus unless the instructor has sent an email/announcement. University holidays will not affect our schedule given that you can work within the timeline provided and adjust the pace as you see fit. Inclement weather will not be a factor in regard to course progression.

***Blackboard Policy and Grading***

It is expected that you check the Blackboard regularly for possible announcements, the most up-too-date documents, and to see your grades on individual assignments. The instructor will make an effort to post individual grades. However, note that the Blackboard gradebook may not always be completely accurate/up to date. Students are encouraged to calculate their grades on their own or contact the instructor if they are uncertain of its accuracy. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor if they notice an error in the Blackboard gradebook.

In the event that assignments require students to challenge their thoughts and consider positions and viewpoints that may be different from that of the instructor’s, students should not feel discouraged in offending the instructor for simply having a differing viewpoint, as this will not influence grading. Grading will always be based on the quality of the content, supporting evidence when necessary, and the alignment of the submission with the assignment’s requirements. However, adherence to the respect policy is ALWAYS required.

*BlackBoard Login.* Online materials for this class can be accessed through Blackboard. You must check our course webpage frequently for course content, assignments, and discussions. Blackboard can also serve as your access to the LaunchPad site. This course is 100% online. Access to [MyMason](http://mymason.gmu.edu) and GMU email are required to participate successfully in this course. Check [the IT Support Center](http://itservices.gmu.edu/) website. Navigate to [the Student Support page](https://coursessupport.gmu.edu/Students/) for help and information about Blackboard. In the menu bar to the left you will find all the tools you need to become familiar with for this course. Take time to learn each. Make sure you run a system check a few days before class. Become familiar with the attributes of Blackboard and online learning.

***Honor Code***

George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. It is every student’s responsibility to familiarize himself or herself with the Honor Code. The Honor Code is available at: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. Students are encouraged to study together as much as possible throughout the course, however, no assistance, sharing of information, or discussion of exam items or answers between students may take place. For all work, the name that appears on the paper must be the author. Violations of the Honor Code will not be tolerated in this course and will be immediately reported according to GMU procedures. The instructor reserves the right to use software to determine the extent to which the work is that of the students. The instructor for this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation. Additionally, students may not reproduce (including uploading to the Internet) any portion of the exam. Students who attempt to photograph or in any way capture information about the exam or other graded materials for others’ use will be reported for an honor violation.

***Students with Disabilities***

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit http://ds.gmu.edu/ for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474”

***Student Privacy and Additional Resources***

Information about Student Privacy and Student Rights under FERPA can be found at: <http://registrar.gmu.edu/ferpa/>

A variety of student services are available:

* Distance Education Services, University Libraries (http://library.gmu.edu/distance )
* Writing Center (http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/ )
* Learning Services (<https://learningservices.gmu.edu>)
* Counseling and Psychological Services (http://caps.gmu.edu/)

***University Counseling Services***

Life is stressful and we all need a little support sometimes. Students are encouraged to contact Counseling & Psychological Services (3129 Student Union Building I, http://caps.gmu.edu/) at 993-2380 for assistance with any kind of psychological/life problem or crisis.

***Cultural/Religious Holidays***

Students may receive accommodations on an individual basis for observing religious and cultural holidays of special importance and the activities of said observation interferes with completing a course assignment on time. Accommodations could include extensions, make-ups, or early takes. **If a student wishes to invoke this accommodation**, please communicate this to the instructor in advance via email. The following link will take you to GMUs religious holiday calendar (<https://ulife.gmu.edu/religious-holiday-calendar/>).

*\*\*By being enrolled in this class, you understand that you are agreeing to adhere to the policies and actions required of you by both me and the institution. You are agreeing to the content and regulations of the most recent student/institution handbook.*

Course Calendar

Here you will find the tentative schedule for the semester and other important dates. You should be familiar with this information to complete your assignments on time and be successful. Remember Discussion Due Dates are Thursday and Sunday (see assignment details)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Dates** | **Text** | **Main Topics** | **Due *in addition to weekly quizzes*** |
| Week 1 | 1/25 – 1/31 | Access; Ch. 1 – 2 | Welcome Folder; Abnormal Psychology: Past and Present; Research in Abnormal Psychology | Introduction Discussion Post and Welcome Quiz |
| Week 2 | 2/1 – 2/7 | Ch. 3 | Models of Abnormality | **Discussion:** Let’s Talk About the Name of This Course! (Mental Health Stigma) |
| Week 3 | 2/8 – 2/14 | Ch. 4 | Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment | **Discussion:** Multiple Perspectives |
| Week 4 | 2/15 – 2/21 | Ch. 5 | Anxiety, Obsessive-Compulsive, and Related Disorders | **Clinical Choices:** Priya’s Case  **Infographic Project:** Proposals |
| Week 5 | 2/22 – 2/28 | Ch. 6 | Disorders of Trauma and Stress | **Discussion:** Portrayals in Entertainment Media |
| Week 6 | 3/1 – 3/7 | Ch. 7 – 9 | Depressive and Bipolar Disorders; Suicide | **Clinical Choices:** John’s Case |
| Week 7 | 3/8 – 3/14 | Ch. 14 – 15 | Schizophrenic and Related Disorders | **Discussion:** Diathesis Stress Theory and Treatment Approaches |
| Week 8 | 3/15 – 3/21 | Ch. 10 | Disorders Featuring Somatic Symptoms | **Clinical Choices:** Joanne’s Case |
| Week 9 | 3/22 – 3/28 | Ch. 11 | Eating Disorders | **Clinical Choices:** Jenny’s Case  **Infographic Project:** Preliminary Factsheet and Reference List |
| Week 10 | 3/29 – 4/4 | Ch. 12 | Substance Use and Addictive Disorders | **Discussion:** Addiction Beyond Substance |
| Week 11 | 4/5 – 4/11 | Ch. 13 | Sexual Disorders and Gender Variations | **Clinical Choices:** Cheryl’s Case |
| Week 12 | 4/12 – 4/18 | Ch. 16 | Personality Disorders | **Clinical Choices:** Alicia’s Case |
| Week 13 | 4/19 – 4/25 | Ch. 17 | Disorders Common Among Children | **Discussion:** Diagnosing Children |
| Week 14 | 4/26 – 4/30 | Ch. 18 | Disorders of Aging and Cognition | **Clinical Choices:** Fred’s Case |
| Week 15 | 5/1 – 5/10 |  | Work on Final Project | Final Project Deliverables 5/7 at 11:59pm |

Important Dates:

1/25: First Day of Classes

2/1: Last Day to Add Classes

[Please utilize the institution’s Academic Calendars for the most up-to-date information on withdrawal dates.](https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars)