

**PSYCHOLOGY 325: Abnormal Psychology  
SPRING 2006**

**Instructor: Holly Zanville, B.A.**  
**Office: David King 1004G**  
**Phone: 703-993-4753**  
**Office Hours: Mon. 11-12 or by appointment**  
**Office: David King 1004G**  
**email: [hzanvill@gmu.edu](mailto:hzanvill@gmu.edu)**

**Day: Mon, Wed, Fri**  
**Time: 9:30-10:20**  
**Location: Enterprise Hall 276**

**Text:**

Comer, R. J. *Fundamentals of Abnormal Psychology* Fourth Edition (paperback)

**Supplemental Readings:**

- Gleaves, D. H. (1994). On "The reality of repressed memories." *American Psychologist*, 49(5), 440-441.
- Livesley, W.J., Schroeder, M.L., Jackson, D.N., & Lang, K.L. (1994). Categorical distinctions in the study of personality disorder: Implications for classification. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 103, 6-17.
- Loftus, E. F. (1993). The reality of repressed memories. *American Psychologist*, 48(5), 518-537.
- Stice, E., Schupak-Neuberg, E., Shaw, H. E. & Stein, R. I. (1994). Relation of media exposure to eating disorder symptomatology: An examination of mediating mechanisms. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 203(4), 836-840.
- Tucker, G. J. (1998). Putting DSM-IV in perspective. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 155(2), 159-161.

\*More readings may be assigned during the semester.

**Course Description and Objectives**

Welcome to abnormal psychology! The goal of this course is to present and introduce an overview of abnormal psychology. During the course of the semester, you will be exposed to concepts of abnormality, theoretical orientations, phenomenology, epidemiology, and treatment. We will also explore the portrayal of mental illness in the media and in popular culture.

**Course Expectations**

Attendance and Participation – Due to the interactive nature of the course, participation is necessary. The majority of your participation grade will be based upon attendance which will be taken via a sign up sheet. Active participation will enhance your grade and be taken into consideration if your final grade is borderline. Throughout the course of the semester, we will encounter controversial topics in abnormal psychology. In order to present both sides of these issues, we will sometimes have in class debates. Participation in these debates will be part of your participation grade. The more students participate, the more interesting and dynamic class discussion will be, I promise. Additionally, failure to attend class often results in poor performance on exams.

Assigned Reading – You are expected to complete reading assignments *before* class each week. The majority of readings will come from the text. Supplemental readings will be journal articles that can be found online through the GMU database. These readings are meant to spark discussion and will often be related to controversial issues in abnormal psychology.

Exams – There will be four equally weighted exams during the semester. Your lowest exam grade will be dropped, however if you miss an exam, that exam will count as a zero and be your lowest grade. No make-ups will be given unless under **extreme** circumstances. In such cases,

documentation must be given to me and you must see me in person to discuss the situation. Exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions.

Writing Assignment – There will be one short writing assignment on a topic of your choice. The purpose of this assignment is for you to gain greater understanding of a particular topic in abnormal psychology and to improve your research and writing skills. You will be required to base your research on scholarly journal articles and to use a *minimum* of 3 sources. Papers must be 4-6 pages in length, typed and double-spaced, **must be written in APA style**, and must include a bibliography. You must have your topic approved by me no later than **March 22**. You may have your topic approved before this deadline. Papers will be due on **April 17**. My policy on late papers is as follows: Papers turned in after class ends on April 17 will be considered late. For each day your paper is late, up to 4 days, I will subtract 10 points from your grade. If your paper is more than 4 days late, I will subtract 50 points up until a week late. Papers will not be accepted more than a week late. I will go over grading criteria in more detail in class as well as what makes an acceptable topic.

Presentation - We will be covering a wide array of mental disorders during the course of the semester. For most disorders, we will only skim the surface. In order to gain a better understanding of the disorders we study and to examine how mental illness is portrayed in the media, each student must choose ONE of the following two assignments. You must make a decision by **February 10**.

1. Group Presentation: Analysis of a Biography, Literary Work or Popular Movie  
In groups of 4-5, you will choose a biography, literary work or popular movie that includes a portrayal of mental illness and critically analyze it. As a group you must select two potential topics and turn them into me by **February 10**. This will ensure that no two groups present on the same topic. You may e-mail me your topics or hand them in during class. I will then assign presentation dates according to your topic and the lecture topic. Presentations should be 15-20 minutes in length and should be accompanied by a 5-6 page paper, due the day of your presentation. Each group will hand in one paper. Details of this assignment will be distributed separately as well as a list of possible topics.

2. Personal Experience Presentation

If you choose this option, you will present to the class a personal experience relevant to abnormal psychology. The purpose of this assignment is to illustrate how common mental illness is and how many of us have either personal experiences with it or are close to those who have. Possible topics include, “How I recovered from an eating disorder,” “How I overcame a drinking or drug problem”, or “My sister’s struggle with depression.” Each presentation will be 15-20 minutes in length and will include your personal experience as well as a short summary of current scientific understanding of your topic. If you are willing, we will also include a short question and answer segment. You will hand in an outline of your presentation. If you decide to do this option, you must submit a one paragraph proposal to me by **February 10** briefly describing what you would like to present. I will then assign you a presentation date according to your topic and the lecture topic.

**An important note:** You should not volunteer for this kind of presentation unless you have resolved the issues involved. It is very hard to present these kinds of experiences to a large group of classmates. Please think carefully before volunteering. If at any point before the presentation, you change your mind and decide not to go forward, you may do an individual activity instead. Details will be distributed if necessary.

Extra Credit - You may earn up to 10 extra credit points for participating in a psychology or related discipline research project if you are willing to provide me with a write-up regarding your

participation. The write-up should be 1-2 pages in length and should include the hypothesis of the research project and a brief statement of what your participation entailed. You can locate studies through the Experimetrix web page on the GMU website ([www.experimetrix.com/gmu](http://www.experimetrix.com/gmu)).

## Grading

Your grade will break down as follows:

Exams – 60% (20% each)

Paper – 15%

Presentation – 15%

Participation – 10%

Grades will be assigned as follows: 93-100 = A; 90-92 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 83-86 = B; 80-82 = B-; 77-79 = C+; 73-76 = C; 70-72=C-; 65-69 = D; below 65 = F.

If a student's grade is borderline, improvement over the course and active participation will likely result in the higher grade.

## Class Format

Class will be mostly lecture. However, class discussion and participation are integral pieces of the course and are expected. Discussion will be based on assigned readings and other relevant topics. There will also in class activities and debates as well as video clips. I will present lectures via PowerPoint slides and will cover material from the readings as well as material not found in the text.

## Honor Code

The Honor Code of George Mason University deals specifically with cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Students should be familiar with the code and connected policies, set out at <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies>. This course will be conducted in accordance with those policies.

## Accommodations for students with disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

## Tentative Class Schedule

Schedule is subject to change

**LAST DAY TO ADD: February 7**

**LAST DAY TO DROP: February 24**

Class Date	Topic	Assignment
01/23	Introduction	
01/25	Abnormal Psychology: Past and Present	Chapter 1
01/27	Models of Abnormality	Chapter 2
01/30	Models of Abnormality	Chapter 2
02/01	Models of Abnormality	Chapter 2
02/03	Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment	Chapter 3
02/06	Clinical Assessment,	Chapter 3

	Diagnosis and Treatment	Tucker, 1998
02/08	Anxiety Disorders	Chapter 4
02/10	Anxiety Disorders	Chapter 4 <b>Presentation Topics Due</b>
02/13	Anxiety Disorders	Chapter 4
02/15	<b>EXAM 1</b>	Chapters 1-4
02/17	Somatoform and Dissociative Disorders	Chapter 6
02/20	Somatoform and Dissociative Disorders	Chapter 6
02/22	Mood Disorders	Chapter 7
02/24	Mood Disorders	Chapter 7
02/27	Mood Disorders	Chapter 7
03/01	Mood Disorders	Chapter 7
03/03	Personality Disorders	Chapter 13 Livesly et al.
03/06	Personality Disorders	Chapter 13
03/08	Personality Disorders	Chapter 13
03/10	<b>EXAM 2</b>	Chapters 6,7,13
<b>03/13;03/15;03/17</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
03/20	Schizophrenia	Chapter 12
03/22	Schizophrenia	Chapter 12 <b>Paper Topics Due</b>
03/24	Schizophrenia	Chapter 12
03/27	Eating Disorders	Chapter 9
03/29	Eating Disorders	Chapter 9
03/31	Eating Disorders	Chapter 9 Stice et al., 1994
04/03	Substance Related Disorders	Chapter 10
04/05	Substance Related Disorders	Chapter 10
04/07	<b>EXAM 3</b>	Chapters 9,10,12
04/10	Suicide	Chapter 8
04/12	Suicide	Chapter 8
04/14	NO CLASS	
04/17	Child and Adolescent Disorders	Chapter 14 <b>Papers Due</b>
04/19	Child and Adolescent Disorders	Chapter 14
04/21	Child and Adolescent Disorders	Chapter 14
04/24	Trauma and PTSD	Chapter 5 pp. 136-148; 156-161
04/26	Trauma and PTSD	Loftus, 1993 Gleaves, 1994
04/28	Disorders of Aging and Cognition	Chapter 15
05/01	Disorders of Aging and Cognition	Chapter 15
05/03	Sexual Disorders and Gender Identity Disorder	Chapter 11
05/05	<b>EXAM 4</b>	Chapters 5,8,11,14,15