

## Psychology 325: Abnormal Psychology Spring 2006

<b>Instructor:</b>	Heidi L. M. DeLoveh, MPhil.	<b>Class Schedule:</b>	Thursday 7:20-10:00 PM
<b>Office:</b>	1004F David King Hall	<b>Class Location:</b>	Lecture Hall 2
<b>Phone:</b>	703-993-4753	<b>Office Hours:</b>	Thursday 6:00-7:00 PM
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:hdeloveh@gmu.edu">hdeloveh@gmu.edu</a> **best way to reach me**		

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### Course Description

Welcome to Abnormal Psychology! This course is designed to provide you with an overview of current theories and phenomenology in the field of abnormal psychology. Over the course of the semester, we will discuss the nature of mental illness, classification, assessment, and treatment. We will focus on specific forms of mental “disorders” as classified by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Forth Edition, Text Revisions (DSM-IV-TR).

### Learning Objectives

- To familiarize students with basic concepts, principles, and research in abnormal psychology with emphasis on an integrated (or biopsychosocial) model.
- To develop students’ understanding of the continuity between normal and abnormal behavior and factors that influence these definitions.
- To enhance students’ ability to critically examine theories and research within the field.
- To enhance students’ ability to critically examine presentations of psychopathology in the media.
- To introduce students to some of the controversial topics within abnormal psychology.

### Class Format

Due to class size, this course will be primarily lecture based. However, in-class discussions, exercises, and films will also be included. Lectures will cover the themes presented in the text, clarify difficult material, answer questions, provoke discussions, and present information not covered in the text that will be on exams.

### Required Texts

- Barlow, D. H. & Durand, V. M. (2005). Abnormal Psychology: An Integrative Approach (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Halgin, R. P. (2005). Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Abnormal Psychology. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

### Course Requirements and Grading

**Exams (200 points):** There will be three exams in the course, two of which will be counted toward your final grade. Your lowest exam grade will be dropped. In the event that you miss an exam, that exam will be the one dropped. There will be no make-up exams offered in this course. If you are satisfied with your grades on the first two exams, you may opt not to take the final.

The first two exams will focus primarily on material covered since the previous exam, however, you may be asked to integrate new information with previously learned material. For example, you could be asked to compare and contrast the features of two disorders. The final exam will be cumulative and include information from the entire semester. Exams will be a combination of multiple choice, true-false, and short answer questions.

**Paper (100 points):** “Abnormal Psychology in Public Media.” Research into the origins, diagnosis, and treatment of various mental and emotional disturbances is a continuous process. Typically, the results of these studies are published in scientific, peer reviewed journals. While this provides a wealth of information for those in psychology and related fields, the general public usually does not read or have the scientific background to understand these studies. Therefore, the popular media (i.e. newspapers, magazines, books, movies, television, etc.) plays an important role in providing information to the general public, and often in influencing perceptions. For this assignment, you are required to find a recent (within the past two years) article from the popular press (newspaper or magazine) that describes a psychological disorder and critically evaluate it using scientific research. The popular media article can focus on new research findings or on people who have a particular disorder. Based on your

research, you should determine the accuracy of the article as well as how the presentation of the article might influence public knowledge and opinions concerning the disorder and people with the disorder. The paper should be 5-7 pages (double spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, with 1 inch margins) and must be written in APA style. You will be graded on your ability to demonstrate an understanding of the disorder you have chosen, your understanding of the scientific literature, the quality of your evaluation, and your ability to support your arguments. Basic writing skills will also be taken into account. More details will be given later in the semester.

This paper is due Thursday March 30<sup>th</sup>. Any paper not received by the end of the class period on that day is considered late. Each calendar day that your paper is late will result in a loss of 10 points. Papers will not be accepted after Tuesday April 4<sup>th</sup>.

**In-Class Assignments (50 points):** Throughout the semester, a number of graded assignments will be given in class on a random basis. In-class assignments are designed to assist you in developing a comprehensive understanding of the material and to help you prepare for the exams. If you miss an in-class assignment, you will not be able to make it up unless you can provide official documentation of extraordinary circumstances beyond your control. There may be times when less severe circumstances cause you to miss or be late to class (i.e. severe traffic, cold/flu, etc.). In these cases, please use the extra credit provision to make up the missed assignment.

**Extra Credit (Maximum of 10 points):** You may earn 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 approximately 3 paragraphs in length and should include the title and hypothesis of the research project, a brief statement of what your participation entailed, and how the project (or what you did) relates to abnormal psychology. You can locate studies through the Experimentrix web page on the GMU website ([www.experimentrix.com/gmu](http://www.experimentrix.com/gmu)). You may also participate in outside activities such as seminars or lectures provided that you can demonstrate the relevance of the activity to this course in your write-up. A maximum of 10 points can be earned – 2 points for each hour of research participation or activity.

## Grading

There are a total of 350 points for the course. Remember that one exam will be dropped and extra credit is available.

Exam 1	100
Exam 2	100
Paper	100
In-class Assignments	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>

The grading scale is as follows:

A	93-100%	B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%
A-	90-92%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	60-66%
		B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	F	Below 60%

## Policies and Expectations and Other Information

**Attendance and Participation:** Attendance for this course is not specifically required or graded. Nonetheless, it is to your benefit to attend lectures. As previously mentioned, information may be presented which is not in the text but will be on the exams. Lectures are also a time for you to ask questions and gain clarification on the material. Additionally, the in-class assignments will not be announced ahead of time and cannot be made up without documentation of extreme circumstances.

**Retention of Materials:** It is the student's responsibility to retain a copy (paper or electronic) of all work that has been handed in, with the exception of in-class assignments. It is also the student's responsibility to retain returned materials that have been graded.

**Reading Assignments:** Class lectures and discussions will begin with the assumption that you have already read the material assigned for that day.

**Honor Code:** This course will be conducted in accordance with the George Mason University Honor Code, which is available for review at <http://www.gmu.edu/org/honorcouncil/guidelines.htm>. Exam performances and all

assignments must be each student's own work, but students may use any means they prefer when learning the material. Studying in groups is encouraged. No written material may be used during the exams. If you have any questions concerning the honor code or permissible use of materials or collaboration, please see me.

**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.

**Activation of GMU Email:** Activation of GMU email is required. Students are responsible for checking email regularly as notices or other information relevant to the class may be dispersed via this method. If you do not regularly check your GMU email, please have your mail forwarded to another account.

**Class Discussions:** Throughout this course we will touch on a variety of potentially sensitive and controversial topics. In fact, due to the nature of the material, any of the topics covered in class could be sensitive to some people. Remember that we are dealing with a continuum of human behavior from mental health to mental illness. I expect the class to maintain a mature and respectful atmosphere. You are encouraged to ask questions, offer opinions, and comment on statements made by others as long as it is done in a respectful manner. If you find yourself experiencing negative feelings associated with the content of this course, please be aware that counseling services are available to all students through the George Mason University Counseling Center (SUB I, Room 364; 703-993-2380) <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csdc/>.

**Optional Psyc 328:** You may choose to enroll in Psyc 328, Psychology in the Community, and earn one hour of course credit. If you elect to enroll in this course, you must speak to me and contact Dr. Michael E. Hurley ([mhurley2@gmu.edu](mailto:mhurley2@gmu.edu)) prior to registering.

## Tentative Schedule of Classes and Topics

Please note that what follows is a *tentative* schedule and thus may change. It is your responsibility to become informed of any changes as well as any other announcements or information presented in class. Unless otherwise specified, the reading assigned for each week should be completed prior to that week's class.

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>READING</b>
Week 1	1/26	Class Overview	
		Introduction to Abnormal Psychology	Chapter 1
Week 2	2/2	Theories of Psychopathology and an Integrative Approach	Chapter 2
		<b>LAST DAY TO ADD CLASSES – FEB 7</b>	
Week 3	2/9	Research Methods	Chapter 3
		Assessment and Diagnosis	Chapter 4
			Taking Sides – Issue 2
Week 4	2/16	Anxiety Disorders	Chapter 5
Week 5	2/23	Anxiety Disorders Continued	
		<b>LAST DAY TO DROP CLASSES – FEB 24</b>	
Week 6	3/2	Somatoform and Dissociative Disorders	Chapter 6
			Taking Sides – Issue 7
Week 7	3/9	<b>EXAM 1</b>	
Week 8	3/16	<b>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS</b>	
Week 9	3/26	Mood Disorders	Chapter 7
			Taking Sides – Issue 9
Week 10	3/30	Eating Disorders	Chapter 8
		<b>PAPER DUE</b>	
Week 11	4/6	Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders	Chapter 10
Week 12	4/13	Personality Disorders	Chapter 12
Week 13	4/20	<b>EXAM 2</b>	
Week 14	4/27	Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders	Chapter 13
Week 15	5/4	Legal and Ethical Issues	Chapter 16
		Review	Taking Sides – Issue 20
<b>Final</b>	<b>5/11</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM: 7:30-10:15</b>	