Course Syllabus

Abnormal Psychology
Psychology 352 (Section T)

SPRING 2012

Professor: Dr. Michael Alessandri
Office: FLP 238
Office Hours: T&TH 3:00-4:45 PM but also available most days/times
Email for Personal Appointment as this is a large class!
Contact Info: 305-284-6558; malessandri@miami.edu
Meeting Place & Time: FLP 536; TTH 5:00 PM – 6:15 PM

Course Description: This course will introduce you to a wide variety of psychological disorders and theoretical concepts that underlie them. You will learn the presenting symptoms, criteria, possible causes and treatments for each disorder discussed. By the end of this course, you are expected to have learned important information related to the study of abnormal behavior and you should be able to think critically about the topic. This course is designed in a stimulating way to increase your knowledge about how clinical psychologists approach work in their field and how abnormal psychology guides our understanding of mental processes that may disrupt lives.

Required Textbook:

Title: Abnormal Psychology (7th Edition) (Hard cover or looseleaf binding)
Author: Ronald J. Comer

NOTE: There are both required and recommended readings from the textbook. The required readings reflect the chapters that we will cover in class; the recommended readings are those chapters that we will not have sufficient time to cover but that may be of interest to you. You will not be tested on these recommended chapters, only the required readings and related lectures.

Textbook Website: Visit the following website for instructional materials, chapter outlines, quizzes, etc.
http://bcs.worthpublishers.com/comerabpsych7e/
Writing Credit:

You must be a senior on track to graduate this semester in order to be considered for Writing Credit. A note from your advisor indicating that you require a writing credit in order to graduate is required. The writing credit assignment(s) are noted below.

Honors/Pink Sheeting:

This course is NOT available for Honors “pink sheeting.”

Course Requirements:

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<th>Required:</th>
<th>Four non-cumulative multiple choice exams: 100 points each</th>
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<td>Highly Recommended:</td>
<td>One face-to-face office appointment with Dr. Alessandri</td>
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Course Grading Scale (% of Total Points – 400 possible total points):

| A+ 98-100 | B+ 88-89 | C+ 78-79 | D+ 68-69 | F <60 |
| A 93-97 | B 83-87 | C 73-77 | D 63-67 |
| A- 90-92 | B- 80-82 | C- 70-72 | D- 60-62 |

Final Grades:

Final letter grades will be based on the above scale. Your final average will be based on ALL 4 exams. No final grades will be lower than that indicated by the total number of points earned. Furthermore, in order to obtain a certain grade, you must earn no less than the minimum average stated (e.g., an average of 92.90 would earn a course grade of A-not A; a minimum average of 93 is required for an A). A high level of meaningful participation and an active commitment to enhancing the class discussions through insightful comments and questions, along with fulfilling the recommendation of a face-to-face meeting with Dr. Alessandri may, in some cases, result in a borderline grade being raised.

Extra Credit Opportunities:

Extra credit opportunities may be offered randomly in class throughout the semester.

Attendance:

Highly recommended as exam questions will be based in large part on class lectures. Active class participation is also strongly encouraged and highly valued. While this is a lecture course, active interaction and discussion are encouraged and appreciated. Note
that numerous videos will be used in class to depict the psychological disorders and treatment approaches. These videos will **ONLY** be available during lectures. As noted above, extra credit opportunities will also only be available during lectures.

**Academic Honesty:**

It is expected that all students will maintain the standards of academic honesty. Cheating or plagiarism can be reason for failure of this course.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
<th>Recommended Reading</th>
<th>Exam Date</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Section One:</strong> History of Abnormal Psychology; Theoretical Paradigms; Assessment &amp; Diagnosis</td>
<td>January 17 – February 7</td>
<td>Chapter 1 Chapter 3 Chapter 4</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td><strong>THURS FEB 9</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Section Two:</strong> Anxiety Disorders; Stress Disorders; Dissociative Disorders</td>
<td>February 14 – March 6</td>
<td>Chapter 5 Chapter 17 (only pp. 551-553) Chapter 6 Chapter 7 (Dissociative Disorders section)</td>
<td>Chapter 7 (Somatoform Disorders)</td>
<td><strong>THURS MAR 8</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Section Three:</strong> Mood Disorders; Eating Disorders;</td>
<td>March 20 – April 3</td>
<td>Chapter 8 Chapter 17 (only pp. 553-557) Chapter 9 Chapter 11</td>
<td>Chapter 12; Chapter 13 (Sexual Dysfunctions)</td>
<td><strong>THURS APR 5</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Section Four:</strong> Sexual Disorders; Schizophrenia; Personality Disorders</td>
<td>April 10 – April 26</td>
<td>Chapter 13 (Paraphilias section) Chapter 14 Chapter 15 Chapter 16</td>
<td>Chapter 18</td>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAM</strong></td>
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**Power Point Presentations:** Each lecture presentation will be posted on Blackboard. When printing, please print as handouts (3 or 6 to a page depending on your preference) prior to class.
Writing Credit Options:

Research Paper (OPTION 1)

1. Choose any psychological disorder covered in course (must be recognized by DSM-IV-TR) and using at least 10 psychology scientific journal articles (e.g., Journal of Abnormal Psychology) (preferably no earlier than 2005), your textbook, and DSM-IV-TR as references, discuss the following:

   a. primary characteristics and related features of the disorder
   b. research-supported causal theories
   c. empirically supported treatment options and their relative effectiveness.

Case Study (OPTION 2)

2. Choose any psychological disorder (must be recognized by DSM-IV-TR) and write a creative case study that provides:

   a. a description of the “patient” and his/her presenting symptoms; be sure to include primary characteristics and related features
   b. a brief summary of how you “assessed” the client’s presenting problems
   c. a multiaxial DSM-IV-TR diagnosis
   d. your hypothesis about the cause(s) of their dysfunction; be sure to support this hypothesis with research-based evidence about the disorder’s causes
   e. develop an integrated treatment plan based on what you learned in class for this client (make sure the treatment plan is consistent with your client’s presenting symptoms and also with what research tells us is effective for the client’s presenting disorder.
   f. discuss your expectations regarding prognosis for the case

NOTE:

- Papers should be in APA format
- Papers should be 12-15 double-spaced, typewritten pages.
- Papers should not exceed 15 pages (excluding references).
- Margins should be one inch on all sides.
- 5 points will be deducted for every page less than 12.
- Paper will be graded on content as well as presentation. Thus, spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence and paragraph structure will be assessed very carefully.
- Writing Credit will be awarded to papers earning a grade of 85 or better only.