

**Abnormal Psychology  
Psychology 311  
Fall 2009**

Instructor: Leanne Parker, Ph.D.  
Office Hrs: Tuesday 12-4, or by appointment  
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Meeting Times: Monday, Wednesday, 1:30 – 2:45 p.m.  
Class Meeting Place: SAC 144  
Final Exam Date: Monday, December 14, 1:30 p.m.

**Text Required:**

Sue, D., Sue, D. W., & Sue, S. (2005). *Essentials of understanding abnormal behavior*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

**Purpose:** Abnormal Psychology is a junior level course designed to introduce students to the field of psychopathology, including overviews of history and treatment. Controversies and limitations of current conceptualizations of psychopathology will be reviewed, with the goal of providing a broad and diverse base for understanding the contexts within which the field currently operates.

**Objectives:**

- 1) Be able to articulate the contextual and subjective nature of abnormality.
- 2) Be able to articulate general principles of clinical treatment.
- 3) Demonstrate critical thinking skills regarding controversies in the field.
- 4) Demonstrate knowledge of general areas of psychopathology (e.g., anxiety, depression).

A note to persons with disabilities: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. My office location, office hours, phone number, and email address are noted above.

Grading:

Movie writing assignment	175 points
Powerpoint Presentation	50 points
Reflections on Powerpoint Presentations	TBD
Tests (3 total, multiple choice, short answer, essay)	400 points total (2 @ 100 points, comprehensive final @ 200 points, approximately)
	_____
	TBD

Extra credit options:

Addendum to movie writing assignment, treatment of disorder depicted in film	50 points
Biography/Autobiography Reading	50 points

Other miscellaneous points or extra credit options may be added at professor's discretion.

Grading:	93 – 100%	= A	77 – 79.9%	= C+
	90 – 92.9%	= A-	73 – 76.9%	= C
	87 – 89.9%	= B+	70 – 72.9%	= C-
	83 – 86.9%	= B	67 – 69.9%	= D+
	80 – 82.9%	= B-	60 – 66.9%	= D
			59% & below	= F

### Elaboration of assignments

**General:** All papers must be typewritten, with no more than 1 inch margins. Assignments must be turned in to me in hard copy form; NO assignments will be taken on disk, through email, or any other format. **As always, grammar/punctuation/spelling are important and count as part of the total grade on any assignment.** Late papers will be accepted for up to **3 days** after the assignment is due; 10% of the paper's worth will be taken for EACH day the paper is late (e.g., if a paper is 2 days late, 20% of the paper's worth will be deducted before any other grading). **NO PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED MORE THAN 3 DAYS LATE.** If not turning in a paper during class, take it to the Social Sciences Division office, have it date stamped by one of the Administrative Assistants, and place it in my box. All papers must be in APA format. Please note that APA format was revised summer, 2001. You must use the most recent revision. If you are not familiar with APA format, please see me.

### **There are no makeup exams.**

**PLEASE NOTE:** I have a standing offer to briefly review any paper that has an upcoming due date and give you feedback about whether you are on the right track, improvements you could make, or anything else about which you have a question. To exercise this option, you must give me no more than a 3 page excerpt to review at least a week before it is due, and it must be typewritten.

**Note on attendance:** You are responsible for anything covered in class during your absence. This includes lecture material, handouts, and any announcements or revisions made to the reading schedule. Please consult with a peer or myself when class is missed.

**Powerpoint Assignment:** There are many controversial issues in abnormal psychology. Select an issue from the list provided (either alone or with a partner), and utilize the book *Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Abnormal Psychology* to understand the 2 positions. Create a 5 min powerpoint presentation that summarizes the view chosen, as expressed in the text (if you do this assignment alone, you will create 2, 5-minute presentations of each position). Present your powerpoint to the class, such that they understand the position, and the arguments that support that position.

Powerpoint presentations must not be plagiarized from the text, but presented in a summary, outline fashion that captures the essence of the issue, and your understanding of the arguments that support each position. Each person should use the 1<sup>st</sup> slide to introduce the controversy, use the 2<sup>nd</sup> slide to state the position you are taking, then utilize enough remaining slides to explain the theory or data that supports that position. Remember, you are trying to persuade others that your position has merit, and is the "correct" way the issue should be viewed.

*Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Abnormal Psychology* is on reserve in the library.

50 points, broken down as follows:

Grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.	10 points
Clarity	25 points
Comprehensiveness	15 points

**Powerpoint Reflections:** By the next class period, write a reflection on the controversial issue presented in class, taking your own position about which side has the most merit, and why. You can introduce your own reading, understanding, or personal experience in this reflection, as well as commenting on the arguments made in class. These are to be no less than 1 page, and no more than 2 pages. Please use a cover sheet with your name, date, and the issue you are discussing. 10 points each

**Movie writing assignment:** From a list I provide, you will select one film in which some form of psychopathology is presented. Based upon your viewing of the film, you will write a diagnostic report that includes the following in 3 clearly labeled sections:

1) a description of the character and a clear multiaxial diagnosis of the behavior depicted. Make it clear how the behaviors portrayed in the movie fit the criteria for the diagnosis according to DSM-IV. Thus, you will utilize the diagnostic criteria listed in the DSM-IV, and examine each criterion and how it was or was not portrayed in the movie. Give specific examples of how the diagnostic criteria were or were not met. In general, the more detail provided the better the paper.

Choose only one diagnosis (the best and clearest), and only one character upon which to focus your paper. Each axis of the multiaxial diagnosis must be covered in detail.

2) a discussion of the reasons this diagnosis was chosen over others. What other diagnoses were considered? Why weren't they chosen? In each DSM-IV description there is a section where "differential diagnoses" (i.e., other diagnoses that should be considered) are discussed. Pick at least 3 of these differential diagnoses and discuss why they are not as good a "fit" as the one selected. Give plenty of specific details to support your contentions.

3) what information you would need to make a more definitive diagnosis. Hollywood often "glamorizes" mental illness, or leaves out/minimizes key pieces of information. What information is missing in the movie that would help you do a better job in diagnosing this person? For example, what diagnostic criteria weren't met that would have made your job easier? Or perhaps there are details about the person's life about which you wish you had more information?

There is no minimum as to paper length, however, I would be surprised if you could do a good job in less than 10 pages.

Thus grading will be as follows:

Information from #1 above	75 points
Information from #2 above	25 points
Information from #3 above	25 points
Grammar/punctuation/use of APA style, etc.	25 points
Clarity and comprehensiveness	25 points

\*\*\* Examples of 2 high quality movie assignment papers are on reserve in the library.

**Extra credit options:** You MUST decide if you are taking part in an extra credit option by October 5, and notify/clear it with me by that time. We will discuss the option(s) you have chosen. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

#1 - Treatment of disorder presented in movie: This is an extension of your movie writing assignment above. In addition to the diagnostic report, you may report on at least 2 ways to treat the disorder. You must include details about the treatment process, and the likelihood of success. This is considered a research paper, and will require a minimum of 4 supporting references from peer-reviewed sources. As you will likely have to request some resources from Interlibrary Loan, you should decide as early as possible about this option, see me, and begin your research. See me for more detail. It is expected that this option will be a minimum of 6 pages.

Please do NOT focus on treating the character in your movie. The focus on this extra credit option is how to treat the disorder in general.

#2 – Biography/Autobiography Reading: From the instructor's list, pick one book that is either written by an actual person who has a mental disorder, or a book that is written about an actual person with a mental disorder. This will likely contrast sharply with the movie depiction of mental illness that is the subject of your major paper above. After reading the book write a paper that includes, in clearly marked sections:

- 1) a general description of the mental disorder the subject of the book had, utilizing characteristics discussed in the DSM-IV,
- 2) the symptoms they manifested,
- 3) the types of treatments they tried and how successful they were,
- 4) how their life was affected by the mental disorder (which includes social life, occupational life, family life, etc.), and
- 5) your personal thoughts/reactions to reading about the book and the person's experience.

There is no minimum or maximum to this paper; it is done when you've thoughtfully and thoroughly covered the topics above.

**Tentative Assigned Reading Schedule and Due Dates:****Week of:**

- August 24:** Review syllabus; Chapter 1 – Abnormal Behavior
- August 31:** Chapter 1 (continued)  
Chapter 2 – Abnormal Behavior: Models and Treatments
- September 7:** **No class on September 7, Labor Day**  
Chapter 2 (continued)
- September 14:** Chapter 3 – Assessment and Classification of Abnormal Behavior
- September 21:** Monday, wrap-up  
**Wednesday, September 23, Exam 1 (Chapters 1 – 3, Lectures)**
- September 28:** Chapter 4 – Anxiety Disorders
- October 5:** Chapter 4 (continued)  
Chapter 5 – Dissociative and Somatoform Disorders
- October 12:** Chapter 5 (continued)
- October 19:** Chapter 10 – Mood Disorders
- October 26:** Chapter 10 (continued)
- \*\* October 30, last day to withdraw from class(es) or college for the semester.**  
Please note that I will not support petitions for late withdrawal except under unusual or extraordinary circumstances.
- November 2:** **Exam 2 (Chapters 4, 5, and 10)**  
Begin Chapter 11 – Schizophrenia
- November 9:** Chapter 11 (continued)
- November 16:** Chapter 7 – Personality Disorders
- November 23:** Chapter 7 (continued)
- November 30:** Chapter 15 – Legal and Ethical Issues in Abnormal Psychology  
**Movie writing assignment due Friday December 4th, in my box in Spalding Hall 101A by 5 p.m. \*\*Extra credit option #1, if chosen, should be attached.**
- December 7:** Topics to be announced
- December 14, 2009: 1:30, Final Exam (comprehensive), AND \*\* Extra Credit Option #2 due at exam time (if chosen)**