

# PSY 5310 ADVANCED ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

Fall 2020 Syllabus

**Where:** Online via Zoom.

**When:** MW 2:00pm – 03:20 pm

**Professor:** Dr. Amitai Abramovitch

**Office:** UAC 253C

**Office Hours:** Via Zoom, by appointment.

**Campus Telephone:** 512-245-2236

**Email:** [abramovitch@txstate.edu](mailto:abramovitch@txstate.edu)

**Abramovitch Lab:** [www.neuropsychopathology.com](http://www.neuropsychopathology.com)

**Course Website:** <https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1433578>

**Prerequisite:** PSY 3315 (Abnormal Psychology) or equivalent.

## **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK & RESOURCES:**

1. Brown, T. A., & Barlow, D. H. (2016). *Casebook in abnormal psychology (5<sup>th</sup> edition)* Cengage Learning. (e-book available).

You can purchase/access the e-book via the course Canvas website under 'module'. [Click here](#) to get there directly

2. American Psychiatric Association (APA). (2013) *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-5 (Fifth edition.)*. American Psychiatric Association.

You can access the DSM-5 online via the TXST library website:

<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.libproxy.txstate.edu/lib/txstate/reader.action?docID=1811753>

## **COURSE MODALITY:**

The course will be taught remotely via zoom using this permanent link

<https://txstate.zoom.us/j/92710454696>. You can log in via the course Canvas site (via the Zoom button in the [Home Page](#) on the menu). You will need a password to join class. The password can be found in the Course Overview page on Canvas, which you can access directly or click the 'Start Here' button on the course [Home Page](#).

## **ONLINE LEARNING ETIQUETTE: THE DO AND DON'TS**

1. Choose a quiet place to participate in class.
2. Earbuds/headset are preferable as they reduce environmental noise and feedback.
3. Mute if you are not talking.
4. Please turn on your video.
5. You can leave and come back freely like in a regular class.
6. Same dress code as in regular class.
7. Similar to regular class, if you choose to attend the synchronous class, please don't be late.

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Psychopathology is pervasive, and it has substantial impact on individuals' personal, vocational, social, and educational lives. It also has a major impact on local communities and society as a whole. Given this backdrop, all people must interface with mental health in some capacity at some point in their life. However, abnormal behavior is often characterized inaccurately in contemporary discourse and popular media. For this reason, contemporary understanding of psychopathology/abnormal psychology must incorporate strong clear critical thinking skills.

The primary aim of this advanced graduate level course is twofold: On one hand students will be immersed in prominent aspects of abnormal psychology such as the definition and classification of psychopathology, and experience an in-depth study of theories and research on causes, treatment, and assessment of mental disorders. At the same time, this course will utilize multiple critical perspectives regarding the definitions of psychopathology, myths, and common misunderstanding using evidence-based science and best practices. The emphasis on this critical perspective will be highlighted throughout the course, and students are expected to take an active part in weighing the quality of information using clear, critical scientific thinking and examination of scientific work. Thus, this course will equip students with in-depth knowledge about psychopathology as well as provide tools to evaluate information critically and independently in the context of psychopathology, and more broadly. This includes an examination of concepts such as "chemical imbalance", psychopathology as a form of medical illness, the nature of inferences from imaging studies, and correlation versus causation in neuroscience, to name a few. Students should expect to dispel prevailing myths and to challenge their own perceptions.

In order to focus on more complex subjects, students are required to do their reading (either cases from the casesbook or DSM entries) **before class**. Each case from the casebook spans 10-14 pages and considering how well written and interesting the cases are, weekly reading of 2 cases on average is completely doable. This is an essential component of the course that will allow us to spend less time on the descriptive level, and instead focus on more in-depth learning.

**The course has four interconnected overarching themes that align with the course goals of obtaining proficiency in:**

- 1) *Understanding concepts, definitions, and major approaches to abnormality/mental disorders.*
- 2) *Primary psychological disorders, their assessment, etiology, and treatments.*
- 3) *Incorporating complex concepts such as comorbidity, polypharmacy, and the intersections between clinical psychology and neuroscience.*
- 4) *Rigorous critical thinking about psychopathology (and 'myth busting').*

## **Course Learning Objectives:**

1. *Assess and differentiate between classification methods, assessment techniques, and approaches in mental disorders.*
2. *Identify and analyze major DSM-5 conditions, their etiology, symptom clinical course, treatment, and prognosis.*

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3. *Exercise critical thinking regarding psychopathology. Independently evaluate and disentangle myths from evidence-based scientific knowledge, particularly in the realm of abnormal psychology.*

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

The Department of Psychology has adopted expected student learning outcomes for the undergraduate major, the graduate major, and for PSY 1300, a general education course meeting a requirement for the social and behavioral science component. These expected student learning outcomes are available for your review at the following website:

<http://www.psych.txstate.edu/assessment/>

## **MUTUAL GOALS**

*To facilitate attainment of the course's learning objectives and departmental learning outcomes it is important that we set our mutual expectations. I expect you to attend our zoom classes, complete your assignments on time, study hard for exams, and come well prepared to every class by doing your reading, (for extra credit take the quizzes) PRIOR to class. I also strongly encourage all of you to take an active part in class discussions (which is part of your grade).*

***I am passionate about teaching, especially about teaching Abnormal Psychology, and am truly interested in your views. I encourage you to express your opinion, to ask questions and to contribute to class discussions. On my end, I am committed to teach cutting edge updated materials, to share real-life examples from my clinical and research experience with you, and to work hard together toward your success. I am also highly committed to being available to you, either via email or Zoom office hours.***

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

*Texas State University Policy:* "Violation of the 'Honor Code' includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials." (UPPS 07.10.01 <http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-07-10-01.html>)

*Psychology Department Policy:* The study of psychology is done best in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Academic dishonesty, in any form, destroys this atmosphere. Academic dishonesty consists of any of a number of things that spoil a good student-teacher relationship. A list of academically dishonest behaviors include: (1) passing off others' work as one's own, (2) copying off of another person during an examination, (3) signing another person's name on an attendance sheet, (4) in written papers, paraphrasing from an outside source while failing to credit the source or copying more than four words in sequence without quotation marks and appropriate citation.

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## **DISABILITY POLICY**

If you are a student with a disability who will require an accommodation(s) to participate in this course, please contact me as soon as possible. You will be asked to provide documentation from the Office of Disability Services. Failure to contact me in a timely manner may delay your accommodations.

## **RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF MATERIALS**

The lecture slides I use in this course are my intellectual property and are protected by copyright laws. Please feel free to use those in order to assist you in the learning process. However, please do not share these slides with anyone outside the class, and please do not post them on any website or other media – as this would constitute a violation of copyright laws.

In addition, my lectures are protected by copyright law. They are my own original expression and I record them at the same time that I deliver them in order to bring them under the protection of the U.S. copyright laws. Although you are authorized to take notes in class and create a derivative work from my lecture, the authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use. You are authorized, however, to share notes with other students in the class. Although you are authorized to view class video recording, you are not authorized to independently record my lectures, to share the class video in any way shape or form, and to provide your notes to anyone else outside the class, or to make any commercial use of them without my express prior permission. Thank you for respecting my intellectual property.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Please note that attendance is not mandatory per se, but I expect you to attend classes and participate in discussions (both of which are included in your final grade).

## **GRADING\***

The final course grade will be determined by students' **grade on 2 regular within-term exams, a class presentation, a (non-writing intensive) final paper** where you will be asked to diagnose a movie character, **attendance and participation**, and optional **extra credit reading quizzes (20 short 5-item reading quizzes)**.

## **Exams**

The two exams will include multiple choice questions. Most questions will pertain to a brief case description. That is, you will be presented with a brief 'case' and will be asked several questions related to the case/the disorder. Each exam makes up 20% of the course grade (2 exams = 40% of the course grade) and will include 25 questions. Exams are not cumulative and each exam will

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include materials covered in class since the previous exam. Exams will take place (i.e., open to take online) on scheduled class days and students will be able to take the exam starting from 06:00 am and must complete the exam by 3:30pm on the same day. Please see exam dates below and make sure to clear those time slots to take the exams. Once you started taking the exam you will have 60 minutes to complete it. Exams are to be taken independently without consulting any outside sources (including your peers) or looking for answers online. You may have your notes handy but given the time constraints and the nature of the questions, you must study for the exam in order to succeed!

### Students' Presentations

The primary goal of this task is to independently explore central issues concerning or related to abnormal psychology from a clear critical perspective. Students' ability to weigh evidence and to arrive to an informed position on a matter will be at the core of this assignment, as well as the ability to communicate critical thinking, and to handle question by informed audience. In the final 3 classes of the semester each student will deliver a presentation and a short Q&A discussion on a preselected subject. Detailed guidelines are provided in the Assignment Section of our Canvas course website ([direct link](#)). Note that I will be more than happy to provide feedback on the initial bulletpoint plan for the presentation, as well as the presentation itself if submitted to me according to the guidelines. Please be aware that students that do not run their presentation bullet point plan by me tend to get much lower grades on this item. I will be more than happy to help out and also review your actual presentation if you send it to me well in advance. In addition, please feel free to set up a time to meet and to discuss the subject you have selected.

Subjects for class presentations:

At the beginning of the semester students will pick one of the 10 subjects for their presentations, and students will pick a date for their presentations out of the three classes. These subjects will have titles only, and on October 22, I will open a page on our website where students can find information relevant to their subject. The information will include a list of questions, ideas, and themes to think about related to each subject, as well as one or more resources to get you started (including published papers, articles, links etc.). Each presentation should be at least 15 minutes but no more than 20. Immediately after the presentation each student will lead a brief Q&A session. Student participation in this discussion will be part of your 'attendance and participation' grade component. It is **strongly recommended** that you send me an outline (bullet point list is preferable) of your presentation no less than two weeks before your presentation date. Then once you get my OK, if time permits, I will be happy to review your final ppt presentation.

[Click here](#) for detailed instructions regarding students' presentation and for the list of subjects.

### Final Paper

The goal of the final paper is to watch a movie focusing on the main character, and determine:

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1. What is the primary DSM disorder.
2. What is a possible comorbid (secondary) disorder.
3. What is a disorder that you considered but eventually ruled out.
4. What is the suggested treatment for the primary disorder.

For this task you will watch a movie (link to the streamable movie will be provided when you get the detailed instructions 3 weeks before the deadline).

Most of the work on this paper revolves around examining the potential disorders, looking at your class notes, presentations, cases from the casebook, and the DSM itself. There would be relatively little writing, just enough for me to understand your thought process, and to be able to understand how you reached your diagnostic decisions (i.e., which aspects of the case were used by you as evidence for meeting each criterion).

Detailed guidelines, movie link, and a sample paper will be released on or before November 15th and is to be submitted no later than Sunday, December 6 at 11:59 pm. We will review those guidelines and do a Q&A session regarding the paper in the November 16<sup>th</sup>'s class.

Please do not google the movie name once you have it to look for diagnoses, the stuff that is available online is by and large wrong. This is more than a code of conduct violation, looking for 'the answer' would reduce your learning experience, and given that you need to justify every criterion, obtaining the 'main diagnosis,' even if true, is not helpful. Again, there are many reasons why it is in your interest to not look for information regarding the diagnosis online.

### **Assignments Contributing to Final Grade\***

2 Midterm Exams	<b>40%</b>	Each exam = 20%
Class Presentation	<b>20%</b>	
Final Paper:	<b>30%</b>	
Participation and Attendance	<b>10%</b>	
Total	100%	
Extra credit	<b>5%</b>	Completing all 20 5-item reading quizzes with a score of $\geq 90\%$ (these are simple questions and you can take each quiz as many times as you like)

### **Letter Grade Calculations**

Your final grade will be on the following scale.

90% and above	A
80% - 89%	B
70% - 79%	C
60% - 69%	D
Below 60%	F

\*Grades will not be curved, or normalized so that with sufficient effort, every student can get an A.

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## **STUDENT ABSENCE AND LATENESS POLICIES**

In cases full credit will be given when missed deadlines were due to one of the following reasons:

- a. Documented injury or illness requiring treatment at home or in a hospital including any temporary medical condition (e.g., pregnancy).
- b. Death of a family member.
- c. Required participation in a University-sponsored activity (See [UPPS 02.06.03](#)) – must inform your instructor at the beginning of the semester.
- d. A field trip or off-campus activity required for a non-elective course essential to the student's degree program.
- e. Required participation in active military service (See [UPPS 02.06.03](#)).
- f. Official religious Holy Days (See [UPPS 02.06.01](#)).

Documentation (e.g., doctor's note) must be provided to receive full credit for the late work. Please make every effort to inform me in advance if work will be missed due to emergency.

## **EXTRA CREDIT (5% on top of your final grade) \***

### **Extra Credit Reading Quizzes**

There are 20 short reading quizzes that accompany class content. [All but two quizzes are scheduled to be taken before the respective classes](#) (see course schedule tables for details). To obtain 5% extra credit on top of your total class grade, you must complete all quizzes on time, and get a total grade  $\geq 90\%$  (out of a total of 100 questions). You will have unlimited attempts, and these are straight forward informative question about the cases you read. So with the 90% requirement you may miss out on two deadlines or get 10 questions wrong in total. There will be no way to complete a quiz after the deadline passes. Deadlines for all quizzes will be set to two hours before the relevant class. Only two quizzes (Quiz #2, 'Assessment and Diagnosis', and Quiz #3, 'Antipsychiatry') are to be taken after the respective class. Given that some classes do not require reading, and some require reading two cases (see schedule), it will be wise to get going with the reading, and perhaps to get ahead of schedule with reading. All quizzes will be open starting from the first day of classes.

\* NO OTHER OPTIONS FOR EXTRA CREDIT WILL BE GIVEN.

----- [See course schedule on the next page](#) -----

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## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE\*

\* Subject to changes

Note that class presentations will be uploaded after class

Quizzes are not mandatory but highly recommended (and it's easy extra credit)

Date	Topic	Assigned Reading and assignments <b>before class!*</b>
August 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course overview</li> <li>• Definitions of abnormality</li> </ul>	1) Review the 'Welcome: Begin Here!' Module completely. 2) Take 'Get to know you' quiz <b>by August 24 at 1 pm</b>
August 26	<b>Module 2</b> Theories and treatment	1) Review module #1 & take Quiz #1) 2) Watch 'The Baloney Detection Kit video' in Module 2
August 31	<b>Module 3</b> Assessment and diagnosis	<i>After class: Take Quiz #2 in Module #3</i>
September 2	<b>Module 4</b> Antipsychiatry movement	1) Before Class: Take Quiz #2 in Module #3 2) <i>After Class: Take Quiz #3 in Module #4 – you will have until September 4 at 11:59 pm to take the quiz.</i>
September 7 <b>Labor Day</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
September 9	<b>Module 5</b> PTSD and Anxiety Disorders	1) Read Case #4 and take Quiz #4 2) Read the DSM-5 section on specific phobia (see Module 5.5 for a direct link) and take Quiz # 5)
September 14	<b>Module 5</b> Anxiety Disorders	Read Case #3 and take Quiz #6



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September 16	<b>Module 5</b> Anxiety Disorders	Read Case #2 and take Quiz #7
September 21	<b>Module 5</b> Anxiety Disorders	Read Case #1 and take Quiz #8
September 23	<b>Module 5</b> OCD & Related Disorders	Read Case #5 and take Quiz #9
September 28	<b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>Study for EXAM 1</b>
September 30	<b>Exam 1</b>	Covers all the materials studied so far
October 5	<b>Module 6</b> Affective Disorders	Read Case #9 and take Quiz #10
October 7	<b>Module 6</b> Affective Disorders	Read Case #10 and take Quiz #11
October 12	<b>Module 6</b> Affective Disorders and Suicide	No reading!
October 14	<b>Module 7</b> Dissociative Disorders	Read Case #8 and take Quiz #12
October 19	<b>Module 8</b> Schizophrenia	Read Case #16 and take Quiz #13
October 21	<b>EXAM 2</b>	Materials covered since Exam 1
October 22	<b>Presentation related materials available</b>	<b>Link will be provided</b>
October 26	<b>Module 9</b> Personality Disorders	1) Read the DSM-5 section on General Personality Disorder (see Module 9.1 for a direct link)  2) Take Quiz # 14)
October 28	<b>Module 9</b> Personality Disorders	Read Case #15 and take Quiz #15
November 2	<b>Module 9</b> Personality Disorders	No reading
November 4	<b>Module 10</b> ADHD	Read the DSM-5 section ADHD (see Module 10 for a direct link)

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November 9	<b>Module 10</b> ADHD: A different perspective	No reading
November 11	<b>Module 11</b> Developmental disorders: Autism, conduct impulse and disruptive disorders	Read Case #17 and take Quiz #16
November 15	<b>Final Paper: Detailed instructions, link to movie, and sample paper released.</b>	
November 16	Final paper guidelines: Review and Q&A  <b>Module 12</b> Eating disorders	1) Read Case #11 and take Quiz #17 2) Read Case #12 and take Quiz #18  Carefully review Final Paper instructions and sample paper
November 18	<b>Module 13</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substance use disorders</li> <li>• Alcoholism and its treatment – A critical perspective</li> </ul>	Read Case #14 and take Quiz #19
November 23	Student Presentations	<b>Class may be longer than 80 minutes</b>
November 25	<b>THANKGIVING NO CLASS</b>	Best get to work on the final paper...
November 30	Student Presentations	<b>Class may be longer than 80 minutes</b>
December 2	Student Presentations	<b>Class may be longer than 80 minutes</b>
<b>Sunday December 6</b> <b>by 11:59 pm</b>	<b>SUBMIT FINAL PAPER</b>	<b>Submit by 11:59 pm</b>

- All tasks are to be completed before class other than the ones where it is indicated to completed after class (blue font)

**!** Please note that we will not have a class on exam days. Following an exam, students' cognitive status is not ideal in terms of the ability learn effectively. This is why I strive not to have a class on exam days. However, this is subject to changes, depending on our progress.

**GOOD LUCK!!**