

Caltech, Humanities and Social Sciences
PSY 16: Understanding Psychological Disorders
Fall 2008
Mon and Wed 10:30-12:00
Meeting Place: Baxter 25

Professor:

Lynn K. Paul, Ph.D.
lkpaul@hss.caltech.edu
Office phone: (626) 395-4470

Teaching Assistant:

Alexandra Velian
velian@caltech.edu

Required Text:

Abnormal Psychology: an integrative approach (5th Ed)
D.H.Barlow, V.M.Durand

This class is designed to maximize participation and critical thinking, while minimizing busy-work. Attendance is required.

Course Description

This course introduces theoretical and practical knowledge regarding mental illness and “abnormal” behavior. Utilizing a scientist-practitioner perspective, we will explore the multidimensional nature of psychiatric diagnosis, understanding, treatment, and prevention.

Course Requirements

Discussion Questions – You will receive a list of questions for each reading assignment. Your answers will not be turned in, BUT students will be called on to answer them. If you are absent or unable to answer a question adequately when your name arises, you will receive a 0 for that class-period.

Summary Quiz – At the end of most class periods you will receive a brief quiz regarding content from that day’s class. These are each worth 30 points and your lowest 3 scores will be dropped. If you must miss class, your score for that day will be zero.

Group Presentation – Students must participate in a group presentation regarding one of the psychiatric conditions. Presentations will involve watching a film and utilizing clips from the film to illustrate: presenting problems, diagnostic criteria, differential diagnosis, intervention/treatment, course of diagnosis, and prognosis/outcome. Presentation should also include additional information about research, ethical issues, or other related topics. Groups will consist of 2 - 3 members. Presentations should take 15 minutes, with an additional 15 minutes of class discussion led by the presenters.

Journal – (turn in Friday by 5pm) Each week you will turn in a 1 – 2 page (typed, double-spaced) reflection paper regarding the reading and class discussions from that week. This is a **confidential** place for personal reflection, which will only be read by Dr. Paul.

Journals should include discussion of any of the following: a. your experiences with the conditions discussed and how the course has shaped your understanding, b. how key concepts from the week have impacted or challenged your worldview, c.

personal insights gained, and d. questions or concerns that you would like to have addressed in class (or in private).

These will only be read by Dr. Paul, who will respond via written comments, addressing a topic in class (protecting your anonymity), and/or offering referrals to outside resources. Journals will receive a designation of credit or no-credit (✓ or 0). Journal entries that exhibit particularly rich insights and application of the course material may receive extra-credit (+) that will be used to elevate final grades that fall on a borderline.

Attendance will be taken at each class to help decide a grade when the numbers are on the border between two grades. There may be three guest lectures this quarter (November 17, 19, and 24th). Attendance at these classes is mandatory (no excuses are accepted).

Grading	Points
Discussion Questions	200
Summary Quiz - 15 total (can drop 3)	360
Group Presentation	340
Journal – 10 weeks (credit/no-credit)	100
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Total	1000

Tentative guide of grades

- A: 910-1000 points
- B: 810-909 points
- C: 710-809 points
- D: 650-709 points

Academic Dishonesty

Any student caught cheating on a quiz, plagiarizing in your presentations, or engaging in any other form of academic dishonesty, will receive a grade of “F” for the course.

Special Needs

Any student with disabilities or other special needs that may require special accommodations for this course should make this known to the instructor the first week of class.

FYI - Personal Counseling Available on Campus

Many students find that this course raises questions regarding their own behavior and/or the behavior of loved ones. If you are concerned about your own psychological stability or simply want to gain better self-understanding and coping skills, please contact the Health and Counseling Services program at Caltech (x8831). They offer excellent care that is covered by the Caltech health plan.

COURSE CALENDAR

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment/Presentation
Week 1			
29-Sep	Intro to the Course & "Disorder"		
1-Oct	Theoretical Understanding	Ch. 1 & 2	Summary Quiz
Week 2			
6-Oct	Assessment & Research	Ch. 3 & 4	Summary Quiz
8-Oct	Anxiety Disorders	Ch. 5	Summary Quiz; Presentation
Week 3			
13-Oct	Somatoform & DID	Ch. 6	Summary Quiz; Presentation
15-Oct	PTSD		Summary Quiz; Presentation
Week 4			
20-Oct	Depression	Ch. 7	Summary Quiz; Presentation
22-Oct	Bipolar Disorder		Summary Quiz; Presentation
Week 5			
27-Oct	Eating & Sleep Disorders	Ch. 8	Summary Quiz
29-Oct	Physical Disorders & Health	Ch. 9	Summary Quiz
Week 6			
3-Nov	Personality Disorders	Ch. 12	Summary Quiz; Presentation
5-Nov	Sexual & Gender Identity Disorders	Ch. 10	Summary Quiz; Presentation
Week 7			
10-Nov	Developmental Disorders	Ch. 14	Summary Quiz; Presentation
12-Nov	Schizophrenia	Ch. 13	Summary Quiz; Presentation
Week 8			
17-Nov	Learning Disabilities		Guest Lecture
19-Nov	Schizophrenia		Guest Lecture
Week 9			
24-Nov	Cognitive Disorders	Ch. 15	Guest Lecture
26-Nov	Happy Thanksgiving! No Class		
Week 10			
1-Dec	Substance-Related Disorders	Ch 11	Summary Quiz; Presentation
3-Dec	Legal & Ethical Issues in Mental Health	Ch.16	Summary Quiz

Group Presentations

Format

- Introduce the character that is being diagnosed: Name, age, gender, etc ...
- Utilize clips from the film to illustrate the following:
 - * presenting problem and apparent etiology
 - * examples of how the character meets diagnostic criteria, include discussion of differential diagnosis and of the expected course of the disorder
 - * examples of intervention/treatment from film,
- Discuss the appropriateness of this type of intervention, describe alternative approaches recommended, and explain how the ideal treatment would differ from what was done in the film.
- Describe your evaluation of the prognosis and outcome for the character.
- Explore issues related to family dynamics, social and cultural issues, ethical concerns, current research and other related topics of interest.

Grading criteria for Presentation

- Effective use of film clips
- Involvement of all group members
- Accuracy of diagnostic examples & critical thinking regarding differential diagnosis
- Evaluation of treatment in film & discussion of “ideal” treatment approach
- Exploration of additional topics in ethics, research, and systemic impact (family & society)
- Clarity and preparation of presentation
- Ability to engage the class in meaningful discussion

Topic	Film suggestions
Anxiety Disorders	As Good as it Gets
Somatoform Disorders & Dissociative Identity Disorder	Primal Fear
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	Reign Over Me
Depression	Ordinary People
Bipolar Disorder	Mr. Jones
Personality Disorder	Girl Interrupted
Sexual & Gender Identity Disorders	Ma Vie en Rose
Developmental Disorders	Rainman; Martian Child
Schizophrenia	Beautiful Mind; Benny & Joon
Substance-Abuse	When a Man Loves a Woman

Groups can choose an alternate film or TV episode with professor's prior consent.