

# COURSE SYLLABUS

## Psychology 360: Abnormal Psychology

Fall Semester 2017

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 4:00pm – 5:50pm  
Stauffer Science Lecture Hall (SLH), Room 200

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**Please read this syllabus! It has lots of important information in it, and it will answer many of your questions about the course.**

### Prerequisite:

Psychology 100 or its equivalent (e.g., AP Psychology, or transfer course from another college/university) must be completed in order for you to register for this course. This is a departmental requirement. To see if an equivalent course will fulfill this requirement (e.g., transfer course, AP course), please consult with your undergraduate academic adviser.

### Course Description:

This course will provide an overview of the scientific study of mental illness (also known as psychopathology). About 25% of the course will cover basic concepts and definitions, historical perspectives on psychopathology, different theoretical models of psychopathology, the assessment and diagnosis of mental illness, and research methods for studying mental disorders. The remaining 75% of the course will concern the leading categories of mental disorders among adults, children and adolescents, including the description and classification of these disorders, the leading theories and evidence explaining their origins, and some of the treatments for these disorders. Legal and ethical issues pertaining to the assessment and treatment of mental illness will be discussed, as well as the role of culture and diversity in assessment and treatment. The course will at various times touch upon theory, empirical research, and clinical practice. Material will be presented via lectures, readings, DVDs, and class discussions and exercises. (The course is worth 4 units. The section number is 52565R.)

### Learning Objectives:

- (1) Students will learn the categories and descriptions of the leading mental disorders.
- (2) Students will learn the different theoretical models explaining the causes of the disorders, and the empirical evidence linking biological, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and sociocultural factors with each disorder.
- (3) Students will learn how mental disorders are assessed in individual cases, and the leading evidence-based methods of treatment.
- (4) Students will learn how to use critical reasoning skills to apply theoretical concepts and empirical evidence to the understanding of mental health issues, including hypothetical clinical cases.

## Readings:

- (1) The required textbook is: **Comer, R. J. (2015). *Abnormal Psychology* (9<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York: Worth Publishers.** Available through Amazon or the USC Bookstore.
- (2) There are additional supplemental readings listed in the syllabus. These are required readings for the course. Some of these may be subject to change. Any changes to these readings will be posted in advance by email or on Blackboard.

In the course outline in this syllabus, chapter references and page numbers refer to Comer's *Abnormal Psychology* textbook.

**Class Attendance:** You should make every effort to attend every class. If you miss a class, you should obtain notes from a classmate. Class notes are NOT available from the instructor. Questions are always encouraged during class, in office hours, and by e-mail.

**Taking Notes:** It is highly recommended that you take detailed notes during lectures, because many of the exam questions will be based on lecture material. There will also be exam questions based on the reading assignments and video material shown in class. The PowerPoint slides will be available after each class and posted on Blackboard.

**Blackboard:** All students enrolled in the class should be enrolled in Blackboard. PowerPoint slides shown in class will be available on Blackboard. Required supplementary readings will be available and accessible on Blackboard. Finally, important announcements will be made on Blackboard throughout the course, including announcements related to exams.

**Course Requirements:** In this course, there will be three midterm examinations, and the final examination. Class participation will also be factored into the final grade. No paper is required for this course. Opportunities to earn extra credit points will also be available (see below).

**Exams:** Two of the three midterms and the final exam will include multiple choice and short essay questions. These 3 exams will be closed book, closed note. The exams will cover all material from the course, including the lecture material, assigned readings, and video material shown in class. More information about all of the exams will be available as the time of the exams approaches.

Students often ask what material from the course is the most important for the exams. The order of priority is as follows: (1) Material covered in both the lectures and readings will be the most emphasized; (2) material in the lectures only is the second most important; (3) material that appears in the readings only will be less emphasized, but there will definitely be some questions on the exams from the readings. Some exam questions will require recall of information, while other questions will require students to solve problems using concepts from the course.

Only two of the three midterms will count toward the final grade (i.e., the two highest scores). You will be allowed to drop your lowest midterm test score. If you miss a midterm, you may drop that score. No make-up exams will be given for ANY reason, and you may NOT drop the final exam for any reason.

The midterm exams will be non-cumulative, and will cover only those lectures, readings and videos for that segment of the course. **However, the final exam will be cumulative and will cover all lectures, readings, and video material.**

**Final Exam Date:** You must take the final exam on **12/7/17 at 4:30pm**. This is stated explicitly in this syllabus, and on the USC Schedule of Classes. **You do NOT have permission to take the final on any other date**, for any reason, including that you have multiple finals on that same day. Please don't ask to take the final on a different day or time; the answer will be no.

**Class Participation:** Interactive class discussions are an important part of this class. There are at least 3 ways in which students are asked to participate:

- (1) Making comments or asking questions during class – Always encouraged and welcomed!
- (2) Participating in exercises during class – These will usually include pairing up with other students in the class and sharing your thoughts about DVDs shown or discussion questions presented, or writing a brief “one minute paper” at the end of class.
- (3) Discussing supplemental readings – On those days when a supplemental reading is assigned, there will be discussion questions about the readings posted on Blackboard. About 10-12 students will be asked in advance to be the “experts” on that reading for that day. This will require those students to (1) put a comment on the Blackboard discussion board about the reading for that day, and (2) be available during that class to share their thoughts about the reading with the class. All other students are also welcomed and encouraged to comment on the readings in class.
- (4) All class participation counts toward the participation part of the final grade (i.e., 15%). The more participation, the higher the point total for this part of the grade. The calculation of the participation grade in the course is based on the participation of students relative to one another, based on the factors enumerated above. The final participation grade in the course is determined in the instructor’s sole discretion.

**Extra Credit:** There will be 2 ways to earn extra credit points in this class, for a maximum of 5 extra points added to the lowest midterm exam score:

- (1) Psychology subject pool – Volunteering in psychology studies through the Psychology Department, for a maximum of 5 credits. Details about how the subject pool works will be made available on Blackboard.
- (2) Joint Educational Project (JEP) – Volunteering for a project in the community through the JEP Office on campus, and completing a brief paper related to this experience. A representative from JEP will come to class and explain more details about this program. **To get the full extra credit for participating in JEP, you must satisfy and complete all tasks required by JEP.**
- (3) These are the only ways to earn extra credit. No “extra credit paper” can be written to earn extra points.

**Grading:** The allocation of the final grade will be as follows:

Task	Points	% of Final Grade
Midterm 1 (highest midterm score)	100	25%
Midterm 2 (second highest midterm score)	100	25%
Final Exam	100	35%
Class Participation	100	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

Subject to the qualification below, final grades will be based on the following percentage ranges: A: 93-100%; A-: 90-92%; B+: 87-89%; B: 83-86%; B-: 80-82%; C+: 77-79%; C: 73-76%; C-: 70-72%; D+: 67-69%; D: 63-66%; D-: 60-62%; F: 59 & below.

**Qualification:** Final grades may not necessarily be based strictly on the above point totals or percentages. In cases where a student is on the borderline between two grades, the instructor reserves the right to adjust the grade on the basis of multiple factors (e.g., student effort, requests for help, evidence of improvement over time, etc.).

If you wish to contest the grading of your midterms, you must do so in person with the instructor or TA no later than ONE WEEK after each midterm is returned in class. After that point, the grade is final. The deadline for contesting final exam grades and final grades for the course is ONE WEEK after the final grades are posted.

**Class Etiquette and Electronics Policy:** Out of courtesy and consideration for your instructor and fellow classmates, please turn off or silence all cell phones or any other electronic devices during class. Please refrain from phoning, texting, web-surfing, or Facebooking during class. If you have to make or receive a call or check a message, you are welcome to go outside the classroom at any time.

### Course Outline

<b>Week/Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Readings</b>
<b>Week 1</b> 8/22	1. What is “normal” vs. “abnormal”? Course Overview & Requirements	Ch. 1, pp. 1-8
<b>Week 1</b> 8/24	2. Historical Perspectives on Abnormal Behavior: Etiology & Treatment	Ch. 1, pp. 8-27
<b>Week 2</b> 8/29	3. Models of Psychopathology I: Psychodynamic; Humanistic; Behavioral	Ch. 3, pp. 55-72
<b>Week 2</b> 8/31	4. Models of Psychopathology II: Cognitive; Biological; Sociocultural	Ch. 3, pp. 72-95
<b>Week 3</b> 9/5	5. Clinical Assessment & Diagnosis I	Ch. 4, pp. 97-113;
<b>Week 3</b> 9/7	6. Clinical Assessment & Diagnosis II	Ch. 4, pp. 113-127; Rosenhan, <i>On Being Sane in Insane Places</i>
<b>Week 3</b> 9/8	<i>Last day to register, add a class, drop a class without mark of “W”, change to Pass/Not Pass</i>	
<b>Week 4</b> 9/12	7. Research Methods	Ch. 2, pp. 29-53
<b>Week 4</b> 9/14	<b>Midterm #1</b>	
<b>Week 5</b> 9/19	8. Depressive Disorders I	Ch. 7, pp. 215-240; Styron, <i>Darkness Visible</i>
<b>Week 5</b> 9/21	9. Depressive Disorders II	Ch. 8, pp. 253-275; Ch. 19, pp. 656-657
<b>Week 6</b> 9/26	10. Bipolar Disorders I	Ch. 7, pp. 240-251; Fisher, <i>Shockaholic</i>
<b>Week 6</b> 9/28	11. Bipolar Disorders II	Ch. 8, 276-281; Jamison, <i>An Unquiet Mind</i>
<b>Week 7</b> 10/3	12. Anxiety Disorders I	Ch. 5, pp. 129-143

<b>Week 7</b> 10/5	13. Anxiety Disorders II	Ch. 5, pp. 143-161; 172-175 (except OCD)
<b>Week 8</b> 10/10	<b>Midterm #2</b>	
<b>Week 8</b> 10/12	14. Obsessive-Compulsive & Related Disorders	Ch. 5, pp. 161-173; 175
<b>Week 9</b> 10/17	15. Trauma & Stress-Related Disorders	Ch. 6, pp. 177-196, 211-213; O'Brien, <i>The Things They Carried</i>
<b>Week 9</b> 10/19	16. Schizophrenia I	Ch. 14, pp. 465-491; Lopez, <i>The Soloist</i>
<b>Week 10</b> 10/24	17. Schizophrenia II	Ch. 15, pp. 493-517; Ch. 19, pp. 645-651
<b>Week 10</b> 10/26	18. Substance Use Disorders I	Ch. 12, pp. 381-405
<b>Week 11</b> 10/31	19. Substance Use Disorders II	Ch. 12, pp. 405-423; Talbot, <i>The Addicts Next Door</i>
<b>Week 11</b> 11/2	20. Suicide	Ch. 9, pp. 283-315; Jamison, <i>Night Falls Fast</i>
<b>Week 12</b> 11/7	<b>Midterm #3</b>	
<b>Week 12</b> 11/9	21. Personality Disorders	Ch. 16, pp. 519-561
<b>Week 12</b> 11/10	<i>Last day to drop a class with mark of "W"</i>	
<b>Week 13</b> 11/14	22. Dissociative Disorders; Eating Disorders	Ch. 6, pp. 196-211, 213; Ch. 11, pp. 349-379; Collins, <i>Cravings</i>
<b>Week 13</b> 11/16	23. Disorders Common Among Children & Adolescents	Ch. 17, pp. 563-605
<b>Week 14</b> 11/21	24. Disorders of Aging & Cognition	Ch. 18, pp. 607-633
<b>Week 14</b> 11/23	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday – NO CLASS</b>	
<b>Week 15</b> 11/28	25. Somatic Symptom & Related Disorders; Disorders of Sex & Gender	Ch. 10, pp. 317-337; Ch. 13, pp. 425-445, 456-461; Solomon, <i>Far From the Tree</i>
<b>Week 15</b> 11/30	26. Violence & Mental Health; Law & Ethics; Technology & Other Future Trends	Ch. 19, pp. 635-645, 660-667
<b>Week 16</b> 12/7	<b>FINAL EXAM: Thursday, 4:30PM – 6:30PM, in SLH 200</b>	

**Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. (Their offices have moved to GFS 120, at 3601 Watt Way.) A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP:

[http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html), (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX), [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu)

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions re located in Appendix A.

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.