

ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

Tuesday/Thursday | 4:00-5:50 PM | MRF 340

Prerequisite: PSYC 100: Introduction to Psychology.

Recommended preparation: Previous experience reading scientific journal articles (in any field)

why might some people feel, think, and act in ways that are different from the norm?

what does it mean for someone to be "normal," anyway?

what can clinical science tell me about effectively caring and advocating for myself and those around me?

how can I use that knowledge to contribute to a kinder, healthier, more inclusive society?

If these questions (especially the last two) keep you up at night, this is the perfect section of Abnormal Psych for you. Over the course of the semester, you'll grapple with these questions and learn the basics of science communication and advocacy—skills that will benefit you through college and beyond, regardless of your major or ultimate career path.

As an overview of the scientific study of mental illness, we will cover everything from the neuroscience behind antidepressants to the current state of the mental healthcare system, as well as the scientific methods that help clinical researchers make discoveries related to the causes and treatment of mental illness. (See the course calendar on the last page for a full listing of topics.) Throughout the semester, you will be highly encouraged to apply your knowledge of the material to your own lives, as well as the world around you.

INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM



Professor: Leslie Berntsen, Ph.D.

Please call me: Leslie or Dr./Prof. Berntsen (pronouns: she/her)

How do you pronounce that? Like the English words "burnt" and "sin"

Ask me about: Anything related to the class, real world applications of psychology, becoming a psych major, getting involved in research, graduate school and other psych-based careers, being a first-generation college student

E-mail: (expect a response within 24-48 hours)

Office hours: Monday, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM, and by appointment

Make an appointment at:

Office:



TA: Vita Droutman, Ph.D.

Please call her: Dr. Droutman or Dr. Vita

Ask her about: Writing assignments, exam study strategies and review

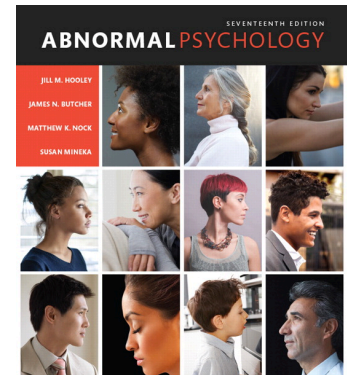
E-mail:

Office hours: Tuesday, 12:00-2:00 PM, and by appointment

Office:

COURSE MATERIALS

Hooley, J. M., Butcher, J. N., Nock, M. K., & Mineka, S. M. (2017). *Abnormal Psychology*, 17th Edition. Pearson.



Please note that the book is required for this course. Lectures will consist of the portions of each unit that I think are the most fun to think about as a group or those that benefit from professional explanation, but there will be a non-negligible amount of material for which you will be independently responsible. (In other words, I will not be reciting the textbook to you during class and I promise you will need to read/ internalize it in order to do as well as you hope in this course.)

THE MORE YOU KNOW: Two copies of the textbook are available on reserve behind the circulation desk at Leavey Library, and I can request additional copies if the need arises during the semester. You can check out the book (for in-library use only) for up to three hours at a time.

If accessing a copy of the textbook is going to be prohibitive for you in any way, please come talk to me and I'll do what I can to help you out.

Blackboard (accessible through myUSC) is where you'll be able to find all the materials for this class: lecture slides, online quizzes, assignment descriptions and rubrics, etc.

Piazza (linked on Blackboard under "Course Logistics") is a Wiki-style website that your TA and I will use to send announcements and reminders (via email blast). As a bonus, you can also use Piazza to crowdsource answers to any questions you may have about the class. Highly recommend using it to ask (and answer!) questions as you're studying for exams.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT

WHAT WILL YOU ACCOMPLISH IN THIS CLASS?

1
Exhibit mastery of the principles of abnormal psychology

2
Accessibly communicate empirical research on mental illness

3
Defend opinions on the real-world implications of course material

How will your success be measured?



COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ONLINE QUIZZES

At the end of every week, there will be an online, non-cumulative quiz covering both the lecture material and accompanying textbook pages from the previous two class days. There will be material in the textbook that will not be covered during lecture, as well as topics addressed during lecture that do not appear in the textbook. You will be responsible for the information from both sources.

Because these are unsupervised online quizzes, you are free to use your lecture notes and textbook and/or work together with a classmate. However, I highly recommend taking each quiz for the first time without any outside assistance to see how much (and what kinds of) information you retained from the previous week. Then, when taking the quiz again, use your resources to help you answer the questions you got incorrect (and take note of the topics these questions addressed to help yourself study for the respective exam). You may re-take each quiz as many times as you'd like. I will only count your highest score for each quiz and there are no penalties for additional attempts.

Quiz questions will be multiple-choice and your three lowest quiz grades will be dropped before computing your final grade at the end of the semester. Quizzes will be made available on Blackboard every Friday, and must be completed by the beginning of class (4:00 PM) the following Tuesday.

EXAMS

This course will have four equally weighted multiple-choice exams: **three non-cumulative midterms and one cumulative final exam**. I will provide answer sheets for all of these exams—please do not buy any of the versions stocked at the bookstore. Your single lowest exam grade out of the four will be dropped before computing your final grade at the end of the semester.

~SAVE THE DATES~

September 24th
October 29th
December 3rd
December 12th

WRITING

This course will have two brief writing assignments (750-1000 words each). The first will be focused on summarizing original empirical research for a general audience (a science communication, or SciComm, piece) and will be worth 12% of your final grade. For the second, you will use multiple empirical studies to support a well developed opinion related to mental health/illness (an op-ed piece), which will be worth 18% of your final grade.

Each of these assignments will be broken up into smaller components over the course of the semester to help you work your way towards your final draft. More details about each of them will be provided in a separate assignment description.

PRO-TIP: The style of writing required for these assignments is likely very different from what's been expected of you in other PSYC classes.

Resources will be provided every step of the way, but many students have found [The Writing Center](#) invaluable in this process.

EXTRA CREDIT

RESEARCH HOURS

For this class, each SONA research credit you earn will add 0.25 percentage points to your final grade, and you can complete a maximum of five credits for a total of 1.25 extra points.

To receive these points at the end of the semester, you must tell SONA to allocate your credits to this specific section of PSYC 360. If you don't do this (and we have to fix it for you by hand at the end of the semester), you'll only receive credit for 50% of the SONA studies that you completed. More information on registering for SONA and signing up for studies will be provided in the first weeks of class and posted to Blackboard.

If you would like to complete an alternative written assignment (an additional SciComm piece written on one of the other articles posted to Blackboard) instead of participating in research, you must make this choice (and email me/and CC the TA to let us know) by September 24th.

IT'S IN THE SYLLABUS.

This syllabus is your friend! If you have a logistical question about this class (or even about all the campus resources available to you), the answer is very likely somewhere in this document. (I know it's a lot, but I wrote it all to help you, I promise.)

So, to preemptively reward all of you for your excellent syllabus-reading habits, each of you will start off with one percentage point of extra credit (which will be added to your final grade at the end of the semester). But here's the catch: Every time you email me or the TA with a question that is objectively and definitively answered somewhere in this syllabus (e.g., "Do I need to bring my own answer sheets to the exams?"), you will lose a quarter of that point. (May the odds be ever in your favor.)

Of course, we are more than happy to answer other (non-syllabus) questions via email and any questions in-person before/after class or during office hours, so please do feel free to ask us things. Just also try to do your part to make sure the question hasn't already been answered for you before sending an email. (Pro-tip: This document is fully searchable 😊)

GRADING POLICIES

Final percentage scores will be rounded up/down to the nearest whole number from .50 and letter grades will be assigned according to the table below:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	<60

We will not entertain individual appeals for "personalized rounding schemes" nor will we create "extra assignments" for anyone to attempt to raise their grade in the final weeks of the course. (Each such request will be subject to a deduction from the "it's in the syllabus" extra credit point described above.)

PRO-TIP: There is absolutely no shame in needing or seeking help. If you become concerned about (or would simply like to improve) your performance in the class at any point, please reach out as soon as you can.

TURNING IN ASSIGNMENTS

Unless otherwise specified, assignments (e.g., online quizzes, writing assignment components) should be completed or submitted through Blackboard by the start of class (4:00 PM) on the due date listed on the course calendar.

LATE/MISSED WORK POLICY

Because dropped grades are built into the design of this course and because all due dates are provided at the beginning of the semester, extensions and makeup exams will only be granted under specific circumstances: (1) medical, personal, or family emergencies; (2) USC-sponsored extracurricular activities; and (3) religious holidays or other days of conscience. Just come talk to me if any of those apply to you.

If you know you will have an excused absence on the day of an exam, please let me know as soon as possible so we can make alternate arrangements. If unforeseen circumstances preclude you from attending class on an exam day, please email once you are able. If you know you will be absent on the day an assignment is due, you are still responsible for completing and submitting it on time.

Unexcused absences on exam days will result in no credit for the exam. (Remember you get one free drop out of the four exams.) Late assignments (that have not been granted an extension for one of the reasons listed above) will incur a penalty of 20% off of the maximum score for every day (or portion thereof) late, including non-class days and weekends.

THE MORE YOU KNOW: If life happens in such a way that you find yourself struggling to stay afloat in all of your classes, you can reach out to [Campus Support & Intervention](#) at (213) 821-4710. Among other services, they can send official notifications to your professors informing us (very broadly) that you're in need of support and flexibility.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

CAMPUS OFFICE	SERVICES	LOCATION	PHONE	EMAIL
Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity	General help with college coursework, including study skill tips, test-taking strategies, and stress management	STU 311	(213) 740-7884	kortschakcenter@usc.edu
The Writing Center	Specific help with writing, including free one-on-one consultations	THH 216	(213) 740-3691	writing@usc.edu
American Language Institute	Credit-granting courses, one-on-one tutoring, and free informal conversation groups for English language learners	PSD 106	(213) 740-0079	askali@usc.edu
Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice	Lifestyle Redesign program to help foster time management, decrease procrastination, manage stress and anxiety, etc.	ESHC 452	(323) 442-3340	otfp@med.usc.edu

A NOTE ON COMMUNITY AND WELLNESS

It is my goal to foster an environment of mutual respect in which everyone can feel comfortable voicing their opinions, sharing their stories, and learning about potentially heavy or personally relevant material. During your first lab session, you'll work together as a group to create community guidelines for your time together. If, at any point, you feel like information covered in this class triggers thoughts, feelings, or concerns that you would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, the TA, Student Counseling Services, or the (free and anonymous) National Suicide Prevention Hotline.

Student Counseling Services

Consultations: (213) 740-7711
24/7 support: (213) 740-9355
Location: ESHC 304

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

1-800-273-8255

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

As an instructor, I strive to create an environment in which every student is given an equal opportunity to excel. If you are in need of certain accommodations (e.g., extra time on assessments, adaptive technology, class note-taker, etc.) due to any physical or mental health condition, please contact Disability Services and Programs (and let me know you have done so) as soon as possible. Remember that any information you share regarding accommodations is confidential and will not be shared with other students.

Once you provide me with an official accommodations letter from DSP, we can work together to ensure that your needs are met from that point forward. Please note that academic accommodations cannot be granted retroactively or by "working something out" personally with a professor without an approved accommodations letter.

Of course, if there is anything that I can do to make my teaching more accessible and inclusive, please don't hesitate to let me know at any time.

Disability Services and Programs

Hours: M-F, 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Location: GFS 120
Phone: (213) 740-0776

THE MORE YOU KNOW

Mental illnesses "count" for disability accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Please reach out to DSP if you feel you could benefit from accommodations.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY: THE GOLDEN RULE

You are more than welcome to bring laptops, tablets, or any other assistive technology to class if it will help you take notes to the best of your ability. (Laptops can be borrowed from the Information Commons on the bottom floor of Leavey Library for up to four hours at a time.)

During structured discussions or in-class activities, I'll ask that non-essential technology be set aside to allow for full engagement. Please also note that I reserve the right to revoke your individual technology privileges at any time if you appear excessively/inappropriately distracted or if your technology use appears to be distracting those around you. If you were speaking to a group of people about something you genuinely care about, you'd probably want them to pay full attention to you. Please just be kind.

ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE, IDENTITY-BASED HARM, AND OTHER PERSONAL CRISES

If you ask me, this is the single most important part of the syllabus and I need to know that people are aware of this information, so let's try something. If you have read this far, please email me (Dr. Leslie Berntsen) your favorite GIF of Olivia Benson (the fictional sex crimes detective from Law & Order: SVU). This is not a joke, and I am 100% serious. (You will lose a quarter of a point from the aforementioned "it's in the syllabus" extra credit point if you do not do this.) Now, the important information...

If you experience sexual violence, identity-based harm, or any other personal crisis at any point during the semester, please don't hesitate to reach out so I can (1) help you get caught up in class, (2) put you in contact with the appropriate resources and services, and (3) answer questions to the extent that I am qualified to do so. But, if you'd rather not talk to your professor about these issues, I completely understand. Here are some of those resources (all hyperlinked) that I would have ended up telling you about.

[Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention & Services](#)

[Student Counseling Services](#)

[Campus Support & Intervention](#)

[Title IX Office](#)

[Office of Equity & Diversity](#)

[Department of Public Safety](#)

[Asian Pacific American Student Services](#)

[Center for Black Cultural & Student Affairs](#)

[La CASA](#)

[LGBT Resource Center](#)

[Office of Religious Life](#)

And finally, for information about your legal rights under Title IX: [Know Your IX](#)

THE MORE YOU KNOW: Faculty and TAs are required by both university policy and federal law to report all disclosures of sexual violence to the appropriate campus authorities. But please know that I am qualified and more than willing to support survivors throughout the process. If you have general questions, please ask any time.

ON BASIC NEEDS

If you ever find yourself struggling to afford food and/or secure a safe and stable place to live and feel like such circumstances are impacting your performance in this class, please speak to me or your TA (if you feel comfortable) so that we can provide whatever resources and support we can. For additional information and support, you can also contact [Campus Support & Intervention](#) at (213) 821-4710.

THE MORE YOU KNOW: There is an [emergency food and toiletry pantry](#) located in Parkside Apartments #135.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICIES

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment that fosters general principles of academic honesty. These include respecting the intellectual property of others, submitting your own individual work unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and protecting your own academic work from misuse by others. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles and be aware of the possible sanctions, which are summarized in [Part B of SCampus](#).

For this class, specific examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: conferring with another student, looking at someone else's paper, or using any outside source during in-class exams; submitting any graded material that has been written by another person (including yourself for a previous class) or lifted from the internet, either in part or in full; and falsifying lab attendance or completing an activity for someone who wasn't present during the lab section.

If you have any questions about these policies or academic dishonesty in general, your TA and I would be more than happy to answer them, so please do ask.

PRO-TIP: If any part of you feels even slightly tempted to engage in academic dishonesty for the sake of a better grade, come talk to me or your TA and we will give you all sorts of tips and tricks to earn that grade you're hoping for.

If you cheat, you could be putting your entire degree in jeopardy.

Please do not do it. Please.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that the information in the "Lecture Topics" column is a general guide to the organization of this course. We may spend longer than originally allotted on some topics, and we may finish earlier than expected when it comes to other topics.

For live updates on what has been covered on class on a given day (including slide/textbook page numbers), you can always check the "[Live Class Calendar](#)" [Google doc](#). Online quiz and exam questions will always reflect what we have covered, rather than what I expected to cover, meaning you can always check the live calendar doc to learn exactly what you'll be held accountable for.

Any major revisions to the schedule will be announced during class and posted to Piazza.

DAY	DATE	WHAT'S DUE?		LECTURE TOPIC	TEXTBOOK CHAPTERS
		Quizzes	Writing		
T	August 27 th			Welcome & Introduction	1
R	August 29 th			Clinical Research Methods	1
T	September 3 rd	#1		History of Abnormality	2
R	September 5 th		SC #1	Causal Factors & Viewpoints	3
T	September 10 th	#2		Causal Factors & Viewpoints	3
R	September 12 th		SC #2	Assessment/Diagnosis	4
T	September 17 th	#3		An Overview of Treatment Approaches	16
R	September 19 th			An Overview of Treatment Approaches	16
T	September 24 th	#4		EXAM #1 (Chapters 1-4, 16)	
R	September 26 th		SC #3	Stress, Trauma, & Mind-Body Interactions	5
T	October 1 st	#5		Panic, Anxiety, & Obsessions	6
R	October 3 rd		SC #4	Panic, Anxiety, & Obsessions	6
T	October 8 th	#6		Mood Disorders, Suicide, & Self-Harm	7
R	October 10 th		Final SC	Mood Disorders, Suicide, & Self-Harm	7
T	October 15 th	#7		Mood Disorders, Suicide, & Self-Harm	7
R	October 17 th			NO CLASS: FALL BREAK	
T	October 22 nd	#8		Somatic & Dissociative Disorders	8
R	October 24 th		OE #1, #2	Substance Use Disorders & Addiction	11
T	October 29 th	#9		EXAM #2 (Chapters 5-8, 11)	
R	October 31 st		OE #3	Eating Disorders & Obesity	9
T	November 5 th	#10		Eating Disorders & Obesity	9
R	November 7 th			Schizophrenia & Psychotic Disorders	13
T	November 12 th	#11		Pediatric Mental Illnesses	15
R	November 14 th		OE #4	Pediatric Mental Illnesses	15
T	November 19 th	#12		Neurocognitive Disorders	14
R	November 21 st		OE #5	Personality Disorders	10
T	November 26 th	#13		Law, Society, & Practice	17
R	November 28 th			NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK	
T	December 3 rd	#14		EXAM #3 (Chapters 9-10, 13-15, 17)	
R	December 5 th		Final OE	Flex Day	
R	December 12 th			FINAL EXAM (4:30-6:30 PM)	

Reminder: Online quizzes and writing assignment components are due (to Blackboard) by the start of class (4:00 PM).