



COURSE OUTLINE

Course Number
PSY 210

Course Title
Abnormal Psychology

Credits
3.0

Hours:
lecture/Lab/Other
Lecture/15 weeks

Co- or Pre-requisite
ENG 101
PSY 101

Implementation
sem/year
Fall/2008

Catalog description (2006-2009 Catalog):

Discusses the question: What is abnormal behavior and when does this behavior become a diagnosable disorder? The history of psychological disorders and early treatments are examined, as well as the current classifications of psychological disorders, as defined by the American Psychological Association. Theories of causation, prevalence and treatments will also be explored.

Is course New, Revised, or Modified? Revised

Required texts/other materials:

Durand, V.M., Barlow, D.H. (2006). *Essentials of Abnormal Psychology* (4th ed). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Revision date:
July 2008

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Information resources:

The library has an extensive collection of resources that students may use for extra reinforcement of the concepts being taught in this course.

Other learning resources:

Online Companion website: http://psychology.wadsworth.com/durand_barlow4e/

Course Competencies/Goals

The student will be able to:

- I. Define and analyze abnormal behavior (psychological disorder) and describe psychological dysfunction, distress, and atypical or unexpected cultural responses.
- II. Demonstrate understanding of assessment, etiology, symptoms, and treatments of the major psychological disorders presented within the DSM-IV
- III. Demonstrate familiarity with research methods and ethical considerations appropriate for the study of abnormal psychology.
- IV. Identify and apply major psychological theories/perspectives and findings of empirical studies to explanations of psychopathology.
- V. Describe cultural, social, and developmental influences on abnormal behavior.
- VI. Develop writing skills in conjunction with the use of APA format.

Course-specific General Education Knowledge Goals and Core Skills.

General Education Knowledge Goals

Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Goal 5. Social Science. Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.

Goal 8. Diversity. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

Goal 9. Ethical Reasoning and Action. Students will understand ethical issues and situations.

MCCC Core Skills

Goal A. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.

Goal B. Critical Thinking and Problem-solving. Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.

Goal C. Ethical Decision-Making. Students will recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.

Goal D. Information Literacy. Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

Units of study in detail.

Unit I Introduction and Abnormal Psychology in Historical Context

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Define abnormal behavior (psychological disorder) and describe psychological dysfunction, distress, and atypical or unexpected cultural response.(CG I; GE 5)
- Trace the major historical developments and underlying assumptions of the biological approach to understanding abnormal behavior.(CG I; GE5)
- Describe the different approaches of the psychological tradition (i.e., psychoanalysis, humanism, and behavioral) with regard to their explanations of abnormal behavior. (CG IV; GE 5, B).
- Explain the importance of science and the scientific method as applied to abnormal behavior. (CG III, IV; GE 1, 5).
- Describe the multidimensional-integrative approach to diagnosing and evaluating abnormal behavior and explain why it is important. (CG I, II; GE 1, 5, 8).

Unit II Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis and Research Methods

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Describe the nature and function of clinical assessment and the concepts that determine the value of assessment. (CG II, III, V; GE 1, 5, 8, B, C).
- Explain the nature and purposes of psychiatric diagnosis and how the DSM is used to help therapists and counselors make an accurate psychiatric diagnosis. (CG I, II; GE 1, 5, 8, B, C).
- Describe and explain the basic components of research in psychopathology and the importance of ethical principles in the research process. (CG III, IV; GE 1, 5, 9).
- Evaluate the various scientific methodologies in terms of advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches. [CGIII, IV; GE 5, A, B]
- Compare and contrast experimental research, descriptive research, and correlational research. [CG ; GE 5, B]
- Explain how studying behavior over time and across cultures fits within the research design and the research process more generally. (CG III, V; GE 5, 8, B).

Unit III Anxiety Disorders

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Describe psychological and biological similarities and differences between anxiety, fear, and a panic attack. (CG I, II, V; GE 1, 5).
- Recognize the difference between anxiety disorders and phobias. (CG I, II, V; GE 1, 5).
- Identify the genetic and biological vulnerability factors that are known to influence the development of anxiety disorders. (CG I, II, V; GE 1, 5).
- Describe the essential features of generalized anxiety disorder, its proposed causal factors, and available treatment approaches. (CG I, II, V; GE 1, 5, B).
- Describe the essential features of panic disorder. (CG I, II, III; GE 1, 5, 8).
- Identify the principal causes of phobias and the most typical strategies used to treat them. (CG I, II, IV; GE 5).
- Describe the essential features of posttraumatic stress disorder, its proposed causal factors, and available treatment approaches. (CG I, II, V; GE 1, 5).
- Describe the symptoms, defining characteristics, and integrative model of obsessive-compulsive disorder. (CG I, II, V; GE 1, 5).
- Describe biological and psychological approaches that have been successful in treating anxiety-related disorders. (CG I, II, V; GE 1, 5, B).

Unit IV Somatoform and Dissociative Disorders

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Identify the defining features of somatoform disorders and distinguish the major features of hypochondriasis and somatization disorder. (CG I, II, V; GE 1, 5).
- Describe sensory, motor, and visceral symptoms that characterize conversion disorder. (CG I, II, V; GE 1, 5).
- Describe important etiological and treatment factors, including important known cultural influences on each disorder. (CG I, II, V; GE 1, 5, B,C).

- Describe and distinguish between the five types of dissociative disorders. (CG I, II, V; GE 1, 5).
- Describe the problems with diagnosing dissociative identity disorder, and in determining the validity of cases of recovered childhood memories. (CG II, III, IV; GE 1, 5, B).

Unit V Mood Disorders and Suicide

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Differentiate a depressive episode from a manic and hypomanic episode. (CG I, II; GE 5).
- Describe the clinical symptoms of major depression and bipolar disorder. (CG I, II; GE 5).
- Differentiate major depression from dysthymic disorder and distinguish bipolar disorder from cyclothymic disorder. (CG I, II; GE 5, B).
- Describe the differences in prevalence of mood disorders across the life span. (CG I, II, V; GE 1, 5, 8).
- Describe the biological, psychological, and sociocultural contributions to the development of unipolar and bipolar mood disorders. (CG I, II, V; GE 1,5,8).
- Describe medical and psychological treatments that have been successful in treating mood disorders. (CG II, III, IV; GE 1, 5).
- Describe the relationship suicide and mood disorders, including known risk factors and approaches to suicide prevention and treatment. (CG I, II, V; GE 1, 5).

Unit VI Eating and Sleep Disorders

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Describe the defining features and clinical manifestations of bulimia nervosa. (CG I, II; GE 5).
- Describe the clinical manifestations and medical complications associated with anorexia nervosa. (CG I, II; GE 5).
- Compare the symptoms and psychological features of binge eating disorder and bulimia. (CG I, II, IV; GE 5).
- Describe the possible social, psychological, and neurobiological causes of eating disorders. (CG I, II, IV, V; GE 5).
- Compare the use of medications with psychological therapies for the treatment of eating disorders. (CG II, IV, GE 5, B).
- Identify the critical diagnostic features of each of the major sleep disorders. (CG I, II; GE 5).
- Describe the nature of REM and non-REM periods of sleep and how they relate to the parasomnias. (CG I, II; GE 5).
- Define circadian rhythms and explain its relation to the sleep-wake cycle. (CG I, II; GE 5).
- Describe the medical and psychological treatments used for the treatment of sleeping disorders. (CG I, II; GE 5).

Unit VII Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Describe how sociocultural factors influence what are considered "normal" sexual behaviors. (CG I, V; GE 5, 8).
- Describe the defining clinical features, causes, and treatments of gender identity disorder, and distinguish gender identity disorder from transvestic fetishism. (CG I, II, IV; GE 5, B).
- Describe the defining clinical features and known causes of sexual dysfunctions, including important gender differences. (CG I, II; GE 5).
- Describe the psychosocial and medical treatments for sexual dysfunctions, including what is known about their relative effectiveness. (CG II, IV; GE 5).
- Identify the common clinical features of each of the major paraphilias. (CG I, II; GE 5).

- Explain what is known about the causes and treatments (medical and psychosocial) of paraphilias and relative effectiveness. (CG II, IV, V; GE 5).

Unit VIII Schizophrenia and related psychotic disorders

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Define Schizophrenia and explain the difference between schizophrenia and psychosis. (CG I, II, IV; GE 1, 5).
- Discuss the history of schizophrenia research, including the contributions of Kraepelin and Bleuler. (CG III, IV; GE 1, 5).
- Distinguish between positive, negative, and disorganized symptoms of schizophrenia. (CG I, II; GE 1, 5).
- Describe the clinical characteristics and major subtypes and prevalence of schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders. (CG I, II; GE 1, 5).
- Identify the potential genetic, neurobiological, developmental, and psychosocial contributions and risk factors for schizophrenia. (CG II, III, V; GE 5).
- Describe biological and psychosocial treatments for schizophrenia, and the general goals of therapy. (CG II, IV; GE 1, 5).

Unit IX Personality Disorders

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Describe the essential characteristics of each of the Cluster A (odd/eccentric) personality disorders, including information pertaining to etiology and treatment. (CG I, II; GE 1, 5).
- Describe the essential characteristics of each of the Cluster B (dramatic/erratic) personality disorders. (CG I, II; GE 1, 5).
- Identify the differences between psychopathy and antisocial personality disorder. (CG I, II; GE 1, 5, B).
- Describe the essential characteristics of each of the Cluster C (anxious/fearful) personality disorders, including information pertaining to etiology and treatment. (CG I, II, IV; GE 1, 5).
- Describe the essential features of personality disorders according to the DSM-IV TR and why they are listed as Axis II disorders. (CG I, II, IV; GE 1, 5).

Evaluation of student learning:

Exams:

- Students will be required to take a series of tests (at least two), each of which may consist of multiple choice, true-false, matching, completion, or essay type questions of any combination of the above.

Writing assignments:

- Students will be required to complete a series of writing assignments to assess specific knowledge, critical thinking skills, and the ability to apply psychological theory to everyday life. These writing assignments may consist of ongoing journaling or film critique, reflection or reaction papers, research or position papers. At least one assignment should incorporate information and computer literacy. In addition, students will be introduced to APA format and will be expected to incorporate this publication style into their writing assignments.

Academic Integrity Statement:

The issue of academic honesty is taken very seriously at Mercer County Community College and in this class. Cheating on assignments or exams and/or plagiarism is not to be tolerated. Students are expected to be responsible for their own work. In this course, cheating/plagiarism will result in, at minimum, a zero for that exam/assignment. Clear cases of intentional cheating will result in failure in the course. See the MCCC student handbook for a complete description of MCCC's academic integrity policy [<http://www.mccc.edu/pdf/handbook.pdf>].