

Virginia Western Community College

PSY 215

Psychopathology

Prerequisites

PSY 200 or departmental approval

Course Description

Explores historical views and current perspectives of abnormal behavior. Emphasizes major diagnostic categories and criteria, individual and social factors of maladaptive behavior, and types of therapy. Includes methods of clinical assessments and research strategies.

Semester Credits: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

General Course Purpose

Students will acquire a broad understanding of the etiology, epidemiology, assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of major psychological diagnostic categories.

Required Materials

1. Textbook
2. Internet access
3. Canvas
4. Microsoft word
5. Synchronous online sections: Video camera and audio

Textbook:

Comer, Ronald. (2021). *Abnormal Behavior*. 11th Edition. Worth. New York, NY.

Other Required Materials:

None

Course Objectives:

At the completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Civic Engagement
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical implications of mental health diagnoses and treatment
 - Identifying personal and collective actions that could be taken to address injustices related to stigma
- Critical Thinking
 - Critically examine theoretical perspectives and research questions in this field
 - Critique myths and misconceptions of psychological diagnoses
 - Apply critical thinking skills to the methods used to diagnose and treat individuals with mental/behavioral disorders
- Quantitative Literacy
 - Interpret and apply basic statistical information in order to support conclusions about etiology, diagnostic criteria, and treatment standards
- Scientific Literacy
 - Describe and differentiate research methods used in psychopathology, explaining strengths and limitations of each
 - Discuss the role of evidence-based research as it applies to diagnosis and treatment of mental/behavioral disorders
- Written Communication
 - Develop, convey, and exchange ideas relevant to psychopathology through writing

Major Topics to be Included:

- Abnormality
 - Broadly differentiate between normal and pathological mental processes
 - Evaluate various definitions and models of mental/behavioral disorders
- Historical and current models and perspectives
 - Describe viewpoints, figures, and milestones in the history of psychopathology
 - Explain how diagnosis and treatment have changed over time
 - Compare and contrast current schools of thought relevant to psychopathology
- Research methodology
 - Describe different research methods used in psychopathology and identify strengths and limitations of each
 - Discuss the role of evidence-based research as it applies to diagnosis and treatment of mental/behavioral disorders
 - Interpret and apply basic statistical information in order to support conclusions about etiology, diagnostic criteria, and treatment standards

- Assessment and Diagnosis
 - Describe assessments used to diagnose mental/behavioral disorders
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) through
 - Describing features of the DSM
 - Outlining the general timeline of the DSM's development
 - Discussing strengths and limitations of the DSM

- Mental/Behavioral Disorders
 - Differentiate the etiology, epidemiology, and diagnostic criteria for the continuum of mental/behavioral disorders through a diverse selection from the following DSM categories:
 - Anxiety
 - Mood
 - OCD and related
 - PTSD and stress- and trauma-related
 - Schizophrenia and related
 - Personality
 - Neurodevelopment
 - Eating
 - Sexual and gender identity
 - Dissociative
 - Somatic symptom and related disorders
 - Substance-related and impulse control
 - Neurocognitive
 - Apply knowledge of the DSM classification system to case studies in psychopathology

- Treatment
 - Distinguish the different approaches to treating mental/behavioral disorders, including psychotherapy and biological therapies
 - Compare and contrast the effectiveness of different evidence-based treatments

- Ethical and legal issues
 - Explain and evaluate ethical issues involved in research and treatment in the field of psychopathology
 - Identify legal issues related to psychopathology

- Social, cultural, and individual context
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the subjective experience of individuals with mental/behavioral disorders
 - Distinguish social and cultural contexts in defining psychopathology, in the presentation of symptoms, and in the treatment of disorders

Notes to Instructors

None

[ADA Statement \(PDF\)](#)

[Title IX Statement \(PDF\)](#)

