

**PSY 250: PSYCHOPATHOLOGY**  
(FORMERLY PSY 221: ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY)  
MWF 9:30-10:20; N 205

**Instructor:** Ian MacFarlane, Ph.D.  
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**Office Hours:** M 11-12:30; T 12:30-2; Th 2-3:30; or by appointment

**Course Description:**

This class is designed to investigate the phenomenon of mental illness. You will learn how mental health professionals think about the terms “abnormal psychology,” “mental illness,” and “mental disorder.” We have all been exposed to mental illness in some form or another, either our own issues, those of our friends and families, or through media. Through this course, you will learn to separate myths and pop culture ideas about mental health from professional opinion and empirical evidence. We will use *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* (also known as the DSM) just like mental health professionals to guide our exploration of human experience. While we will use the DSM to make diagnoses, we will also challenge the limitations of our current diagnostic process, the difficulty of arriving at a valid diagnosis for people with complex symptomologies, and whether diagnosis is really useful for the clinician or the client. This course is an excellent foundation for those thinking about a career in mental health or other helping fields, but will also help you be a more informed citizen and, hopefully, an empathic ally to those with mental health issues. At the least, anyone with an interest in better understanding the depths of the human condition will find this class fascinating.

This course will use a variety of instructional formats to help you best master the material. Reading your textbook is an important source of information for this class. You are responsible for that material and should plan to spend a significant amount of time studying it. In lecture, I highlight the information from the textbook that is most likely to be confusing or misunderstood, so for example, we will not often go through the list of the exact DSM criteria for a disorder because you can easily read and understand those on your own. I also present material to expand upon and enrich the content in the textbook. Most class sessions will consist of lectures interspersed with small group and class discussions. We will also make use of lab days, where you will practice your diagnostic skills on case studies.

**Course Student Learning Outcomes:**

- Define the term “abnormal” using historical and current perspectives.
- Critically analyze information about simulated clients and use the DSM-5 to provide a reasonable differential diagnosis.
- Articulate reasonable theories of the etiology for mental disorders, broadly and specifically, from multiple theoretical orientations (e.g., behavioral, cognitive).
- Critically evaluate the portrayal of mental illness in popular media.
- Present diagnostic information using methods similar to professional communication.

**Psychology Department Student Learning Outcomes:**

- To be able to critically analyze, synthesize and evaluate ideas.
- To be able to conduct independent psychological research and apply psychological and methodological concepts to novel research ideas.
- To be able to effectively convey their evidence based analysis of psychological research and theories through oral and written formats.
- To be able to describe the nature of the relationship between brain, thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
- To be able to describe and apply the different theories and schools of thought of psychology (e.g., behaviorism) and to be able to place them in a historical perspective.

**Required Materials:**

American Psychiatric Association (2013). *Desk reference to the diagnostic criteria from DSM-5*. Washington, DC: Author.

Comer, R. (2016). *Fundamentals of abnormal psychology* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Worth.

Additional readings and resources will be posted via Canvas.

**Assignments:***Exams (210 points)*

There will be 3 exams given throughout the semester, each worth 70 points. Exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer items, typically focusing on definitions of important terms, development of critical thinking skills, and application of course concepts to real life situations. Exam items will cover material from lecture, assigned readings, and in-class activities. Roughly 15-20% of material will come from information covered in the textbook only, 15-20% of material will come from information covered in lecture only, and the remaining 60-70% will be covered in both places.

*Case Study Labs (80 points)*

Over the course of the semester we will have nine lab days where we will practice applying diagnostic criteria to real case studies. These labs will give you a chance to practice your diagnostic skills in a low-stakes environment as you prepare for the more formal diagnostic assessment papers later in the course. Before class on lab days, you will be given one or two case studies to read through and diagnose to the best of your ability. Our class session will start with small group case consultation meetings, where each of you will share your diagnostic decisions and rationales in an environment that mirrors clinical supervision in real therapeutic practice. Then we will discuss the issues of the case(s) as a full class. Just like real clinical practice, where you must be prepared for supervision and case consultation meetings, there will be preparatory work you need to have done before class. These pre-lab assignments will be due at the beginning of class to serve as a check that you are ready for the case consultation meetings. Each lab assignment is worth 10 points. These assignments cannot be turned in late or made up, but I will drop your lowest score. The assignments and rubric will be posted to Canvas.

*Diagnostic Assessment I: Mental Illness in the Movies (60 points)*

Mental illness becoming more and more common in the media, especially in film. This assignment will give you practice in making DSM-supported diagnoses as well as a chance to reflect on the impacts media depiction of mental health has on various stakeholders. For this

assignment you will watch a movie where one of the primary characters has a psychological disorder (i.e., a diagnosable disorder in the DSM). I will provide a list of potential movies for you on Canvas, though this list is non-exhaustive. If you want to use a different movie, it needs to be approved by me first. For this assignment you cannot choose a movie where amnesia, autism, or cognitive deficits (e.g., intellectual deficit disorder, traumatic brain injury, mental retardation) is the primary diagnosis, as this is difficult to code in the DSM and often handled by neurologists. Details of this assignment will be provided in class and posted to Canvas.

*Diagnostic Assessment II: Clinical Vignette (75 points)*

To better mimic how clinicians actually interact with clients and to give you a sense of how diagnosis is a fluid and evolving process, you will be given information about a client from multiple sources that unfolds over time. You will put together a report of no more than 10 pages with your diagnostic impressions and recommendations. Some of this information will be incomplete and other pieces may conflict, so you will need to think carefully and articulate your reasoning for the decisions you make. Details of this assignment will be provided in class and posted to Canvas.

*Final Project – Ethics Presentation (75 points)*

For your final presentation, you will be assigned to small groups and given an ethical dilemma. Using the ethical problem solving model presented in class, your group will go through each of the steps to determine your solution to the dilemma. The presentation will document all of your actions related to this process. Details of this assignment will be provided in class and posted to Canvas.

**Grading:**

There are 500 possible points in this course. Grades will be assigned on a scale no more stringent than the following percentages:

Letter	%	Letter	%
A	> 93%	C	73%
A-	90%	C-	70%
B+	87%	D+	67%
B	83%	D	63%
B-	80%	D-	60%
C+	77%	F	< 60%

**Tentative Course Schedule:**

Date	Class Topic	Readings/Assignments
<b>Week 1</b>		
8/26	M “Abnormal” Psychology	Chpt. 1
8/28	W History of Mental Illness I	
8/30	F History of Mental Illness II	
<b>Week 2</b>		
9/2	M	<i>No Class – Labor Day</i>
9/4	W Clinical Diagnosis	Chpt. 3
9/6	F	<i>No Class – Video Lecture: Treatment</i>

Date		Class Topic	Readings/Assignments
<b>Week 3</b>			
9/9	M	Sources of Pathology I	Chpt. 2
9/11	W	Sources of Pathology II	
9/13	F	Sources of Pathology III	
<b>Week 4</b>			
9/16	M	Sources of Pathology IV	DSM 3-14, 355-375
9/18	W	<b>CS Lab 1: V-codes</b>	
9/20	F	<b>Exam 1</b>	
<b>Week 5</b>			
9/23	M	Major Depressive Disorder	Chpt. 6; DSM 93-114
9/25	W	Etiology of Depression	
9/27	F	Bipolar Disorder	DSM 65-92
<b>Week 6</b>			
9/30	M	Suicide	Chpt. 7
10/2	W	Suicide	
10/4	F	<i>No Class – Fall Break</i>	
<b>Week 7</b>			
10/7	M	<b>CS Lab 2: Mood Disorders</b>	Chpt. 4; DSM 114-128
10/9	W	Anxiety Disorders I	
10/11	F	Anxiety Disorders II	
<b>Week 8</b>			
10/14	M	Obsessive Disorders	DSM 129-140
10/16	W	<b>CS Lab3: Anxiety Disorders</b>	Chpt. 10; DSM 227-237
10/18	F	Substance Use Disorder	
<b>Week 9</b>			
10/21	M	Stress & Trauma	Chpt. 5; DSM 141-153 DSM 155-159
10/23	W	Dissociative Disorders	
10/25	F	<b>CS Lab 4: Trauma Disorders</b>	
<b>Week 10</b>			
10/28	M	<b>Exam 2</b>	Chpt. 12; DSM 45-64 <b>Diagnostic Assessment I</b>
10/30	W	Schizophrenia	
11/1	F	<b>CS Lab 5: Psychotic Disorders</b>	
<b>Week 11</b>			
11/4	M	Personality Disorders I	Chpt. 13; DSM 321-332
11/6	W	Personality Disorders II	
11/8	F	<b>CS Lab 6: Personality Disorders</b>	
<b>Week 12</b>			
11/11	M	Neurodevelopmental Disorders	Chpt. 14; DSM 17-31, 36-44 DSM 219-226 DSM 32-35
11/13	W	Childhood Disorders	
11/15	F	ADHD	
<b>Week 13</b>			
11/18	M	<b>CS Lab 7: Developmental Disorders</b>	Chpt. 9; DSM 169-176 <b>Diagnostic Assessment II</b>
11/20	W	Anorexia Nervosa	
11/22	F	Bulimia Nervosa	

Date	Class Topic	Readings/Assignments
<b>Week 14</b>		
11/25	M <i>CS Lab 8: Eating Disorders</i>	
11/27	W <b>Exam 3</b>	
11/29	F	<i>No Class – Thanksgiving Break</i>
<b>Week 15</b>		
12/2	M APA Ethics Code	Chpt. 16; APA Ethics Code
12/4	W Common Ethical Issues	
12/6	F <i>CS Lab 9: Ethics</i>	
<b>Final Presentation – Friday 12/13 – 7:30-10:30am</b>		

### Comment on Course Content:

This course covers material related to mental illness, a sensitive topic. Every day there will almost certainly be someone in the class who either is currently or has formerly been diagnosed with the disorder we are covering or has loved ones who are currently or formerly diagnosed. For this reason, please remember to be extra careful of how you ask questions, make comments, etc., in class. I encourage everyone to voice their thoughts and be curious about the subject matter, but do so in a respectful manner. I would also ask those individuals who are currently dealing with mental illness to refrain from discussing your own symptomology or treatment in class. This not only protects your privacy, but also will not pressure other students to reveal aspects of themselves beyond their comfort level and will allow for the carefully constructed examples prepared for class to be used. If you want to discuss a specific situation, please make an appointment with me. It is likely I will not be able to make any definitive statements about your own or someone else's mental health, but I will be happy to hear your concerns and make referrals to resources.

You should also be aware it is perfectly normal to start seeing signs of mental illness everywhere while taking this course, including in yourself. I remember diagnosing myself with at least 6 disorders when I took a similar course as an undergraduate. Go over the criteria carefully, review the definition of disorder in the DSM, and consider the effects of confronting someone about mental illness before taking action. If you have serious concerns about yourself or someone else, please talk to myself or a mental health professional. Here is a list of several resources for mental health issues:

Elizabethtown College Counseling Services:

<http://www.etown.edu/offices/counseling/index.aspx>

717-361-1405

Suicide Crisis Line

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

Psychology Today's Therapist Finder

[http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/prof\\_search.php](http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/prof_search.php)

**Technology**

This course will be web-enhanced through the use of Canvas. Readings, lecture slides, some handouts, and links to other resources will be provided through this system. Unless otherwise specified, you will turn your assignments in via Canvas. You can access Canvas through the following link: <https://etown.instructure.com/login/>. Questions concerning content/postings should be directed to me, while questions regarding access/technical issues should be directed to the Elizabethtown College IT Help Desk (717-361-3333; [helpdesk@etown.edu](mailto:helpdesk@etown.edu)). A PDF viewer is required to view the content posted to the Canvas site. Free Adobe software is available for download via <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

**Policies:***Academic Integrity*

Scholastic misconduct is broadly defined as any act that violates the rights of another student in academic work or that involves misrepresentation of your own work. Scholastic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to): cheating on assignments or examinations; helping another student cheat on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, which means misrepresenting as you own work any part of work done by another; submitting the same paper, or substantially similar papers, to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of all instructors concerned (including papers you have submitted in previous semesters); providing others with copies of your assignments; depriving another student of necessary course materials; or interfering with another student's work.

Plagiarism is a serious offense which will not be tolerated. Most of the time, however, plagiarism happens because students are rushing through assignments and do not leave themselves with sufficient time to properly attribute information taken from other sources. For this class you may cite your sources using either APA or MLA style. If you plan to be a psychology major or minor, I encourage you to get used to APA style, as you will be using this throughout your coursework. Note that for either style, you need to include citations each time you use information from a source. It is incorrect to use information throughout a paragraph and only include a citation at the end. Also, if you use 5 or more consecutive words from a source, you must include quotation marks and include the page number (or paragraph number if you are using an online source) in your citation. Failure to provide the page/paragraph number for a direct quote is a form of plagiarism and will not be tolerated.

You will be required to submit an electronic copy of all major assignments which will be compared with the TurnItIn database. Penalties for scholastic misconduct in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be made at the discretion of the instructor and may range from point deductions on the assignment to failing the class. All academic misconduct (no matter how small) will be reported to the Academic Review Committee, which may impose sanctions up to and including expulsion. Elizabethtown College's full academic integrity policy is available in the Elizabethtown College Catalogue under the Academic Judicial System section of the Academic Policies chapter ([click here to view](#)). If you have any questions about whether something might be considered an academic integrity issue or not, please talk with me about it BEFORE you turn in an assignment.

### *Attendance*

Regular and engaged attendance is critically important to your success in this class. Students who miss more than three consecutive classes without documentation may be dropped from the course at the instructor's discretion. PowerPoint slides will be posted to the Canvas site, but will be outlines which require additional information from lectures or activities. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate. I will post full lecture slides after class, but you will definitely want additional information beyond what is printed on the slides. I am happy to meet with you about course material you missed if you have questions remaining after getting notes from a classmate and completing the reading assignments. If you must arrive late or leave early, please sit near the door so you create a minimal disruption.

### *Changes to the Syllabus*

All aspects of this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Students will be informed in writing of any changes to the syllabus via a post to Canvas.

### *Communication*

Outside of class, I will communicate with you most frequently via your *Elizabethtown College email address*. **It is your responsibility to monitor this address and you are responsible for the information delivered to this address.** I highly recommend you check your email at least daily. I will also post messages to Canvas, so you are encouraged to check Canvas regularly. The best way to contact me is through email. I will always attempt to respond to email promptly, which means within 24 hours. **I typically do not check my email after 8pm**, so if you email me at night, do not expect a response until the next morning at the earliest.

### *Extra Credit*

Extra credit opportunities may be given at the discretion of the instructor. Possible examples of extra credit opportunities include: participation in psychological research, attendance at events relevant to the course, or further research into a topic of interest. The maximum amount of extra credit possible for this class is 7.5 points (~1.5% of your final grade).

- Extra credit assignments may arise during the semester as opportunities to attend campus or community events become available. The amount of points received for attending such events will vary by the time commitment (the points will be posted along with the information about the event). The length of the response paper required will also vary, but will be a minimum of 2 pages.
  - Event Attendance Response Paper Requirements:
    - Describe the event (e.g., where, when, why)
    - Who was the target audience?
    - What did you learn?
    - How does this relate to something we have discussed in class or some other aspect of psychology?
    - If you had been in charge of the event, what would you do plan next as a follow-up? How might the event coordinators continue to build momentum, conduct additional research, etc.?
- Students can also write a short paper on an approved psychology topic for extra credit. Paper topics, length/source requirements, and points awarded for successful completion must be pre-arranged with me. These papers must be proposed no later than 11/5 and turned in no later than 12/5.

### *Incompletes*

An “incomplete” only may be given as a grade for the course when a student has a **passing grade the course** and has an unforeseen and uncontrollable event occur that prevents him or her from earning a significant number of points in the course. Thus, incompletes are rarely given and each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To have an incomplete changed to a different grade all missing work must be completed by the end of the following term.

### *Late Work*

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date listed in the syllabus. I encourage you to start assignments well in advance of the due dates in order to protect yourself from something happening at the last minute. I do, however, recognize unforeseen things come up in life, so each of you gets one “free pass extension” for the semester. This free pass grants you a 24-hour extension on either the Diagnostic Assessment I or II, no questions asked. You do not need to explain the situation. Simply send me an email that says you are using your free pass **at least 24 hours before the assignment is due**. Requests to use the free pass in the 24 hours before the assignment is due will not be granted. The free pass cannot be used for exams or in-class case study discussion preparation assignments. Normal late penalties will accrue after the 24-hour extension period. Papers turned in after class but on the same day will be penalized 5%, with 10% additional penalty for every additional calendar day the assignment is late (thus if the assignment is due on Tuesday but turned in on Thursday the maximum score you could receive is 75%). Assignments will not be accepted more than 7 days after the original due date unless we have pre-arranged a new due date and late penalty. Extensions may be given at the discretion of the instructor, but **no extensions will be given during the 24 hours before an assignment is due**. It is your responsibility to budget your time so you are not working on assignments at the last minute. Assignments turned in more than 7 days after the due date in the syllabus must be emailed to me.

### *Make-Up Exams*

If circumstances prevent you from being in class on the day of an exam, please notify me as soon as you can (BEFORE the exam) in order to arrange to complete a make-up exam. Make-up exams will be scheduled prior to the exam date if possible. Please note **I will require documentation** (e.g., a doctor’s note) explaining your absence from class in nearly all cases. Make-up exams may be different than the original exam and **must be completed within 1 week of the original exam date**.

### *Role of Instructor*

I will provide learning opportunities designed to provide you with information about psychology and foster critical thinking. I have created the course to incorporate different methods of learning and assignments draw upon multiple skillsets to be successful. Every effort will be made to accommodate different learning styles and you are encouraged to provide feedback both formally and informally. I pledge to carefully consider constructive feedback about teaching methods and incorporate suggestions to the extent feasible. I am responsible for treating you in a respectful, professional manner and creating a classroom atmosphere where students treat each other professionally. I will be accessible outside of class and encourage you to meet with me either during office hours or individual appointments to discuss concerns (e.g., about the class, workload, assignments, etc.), conflicts or problems that affect course performance, concepts which need further clarification, additional resources related to course material, or careers in psychology.

*Statement on Classroom Conduct*

All students have the right to a civil, productive, and stimulating learning environment. In turn, as the instructor I have a responsibility to nurture and maintain such an environment. Lively, even heated, discussion is part of a stimulating learning environment. Both instructors and students, however, have a fundamental obligation to respect the rights of each other and an equally fundamental obligation to respect the instructional setting as a place for civil, courteous behavior. We all bring different backgrounds, experiences, assumptions, and opinions into this class. The class will be a better experience for everyone if everyone feels safe enough to share their perspectives. It is encouraged to challenge each other's perspectives, but we will debate ideas and theories using evidence to support our own positions. Repeated behaviors that undermine the learning environment described above may result in being asked to leave the class for a day or, if other interventions do not succeed, you may be dropped from the course at the instructor's discretion.

*Statement on Disabilities*

Etown's syllabus statement on disability services (available [here](#)) states:

Elizabethtown College welcomes otherwise qualified students with disabilities to participate in all of its courses, programs, services, and activities. If you have a documented disability and would like to request accommodations in order to access course material, activities, or requirements, please contact the Director of Disabilities, Lynne Davies, by phone (717) 361-1227 or e-mail [daviesl@etown.edu](mailto:daviesl@etown.edu). If your documentation meets the college's documentation guidelines, you will be given a letter from Disability Services for each of your professors. Students experiencing certain documented temporary conditions, such as post-concussive symptoms, may also qualify for temporary academic accommodations and adjustments. As early as possible in the semester, set up an appointment to meet with me, the instructor, to discuss the academic adjustments specified in your accommodations letter as they pertain to my class. This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request.

*Statement on Diversity*

We will all bring unique perspectives to this course and I hope those who feel comfortable will share insights and alternative interpretations throughout the semester. Cultural perspectives will be explicitly included in many of our discussions and will likely come up in many others. I welcome feedback on ways to increase the diversity of perspectives being provided in class and methods for creating a more inclusive atmosphere through my teaching.

*Statement on Religious Observances*

Etown's syllabus statement on religious observances (available [here](#)) states:

The College is eager to facilitate individual religious beliefs and practices whenever possible while retaining course student learning outcomes. It is your responsibility to meet with the class instructor in advance to request arrangements related to your religious observances that may conflict with this class, and to make appropriate plans to make up any missed work.

*Statement on School Closure*

In the event of a school closure (due to inclement weather or another issue) on a day when we are scheduled to have class, please be sure to check your email for a message from me. I may contact you with instructions for an assignment or activity you could complete using Canvas or other course resources.