**ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE**

**Social Sciences Division**

**PSY 209 – Abnormal Psychology**

**Course Outline**

**Course Number & Name:**  PSY 209 Abnormal Psychology

**Credit Hours:**  3 .0 **Contact Hours:**  3.0 **Lecture:** 3.0 **Lab:**  N/A **Other:**  N/A

**Prerequisites**:  Grade of “C” or better in PSY 101

**Co-requisites:** None **Concurrent Courses:** None

**Course Outline Revision Date:**  Fall 2010

**Course Description**: This course will examine the different types of mental illness that exists within modern society. The influence of heredity and environment upon mental illness is considered and recent therapeutic methods are critically examined.

**Course Goals:** Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. discuss some of the efforts taken to end stigma surrounding mental illness;

2. discuss the challenges in developing a working definition for mental disorder;

3. discern the differences between various types of mental health professionals who treat people with mental disorders; include how they are educated, trained, and related issues;

4. identify the prevailing paradigms of psychopathology, their central assumptions, and key proponents;

5. identify the prevailing therapeutic approaches and their goals for treating psychopathology;

6. discuss the importance of treatment outcome research;

7. identify the various types of assessment measures and tools and their uses beyond helping to make a diagnosis;

8. describe the purposes of a multi-axial assessment and the major categories of psychiatric diagnosis as described in the current version of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – Text Revised* (*DSM IV – TR*); and

9. discuss some of the legal and ethical issues confronting the mental health professional.

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)**: Upon successful completion of this course, students should specifically be able to do the following:

1. Discuss some of the efforts taken to end stigma surrounding mental illness:

1.1 *describe several policy and legislative strategies;*

1.2 *describe several community strategies;*

1.3 *describe mental health and health profession strategies;* and

1.4 *describe individual and family strategies*

2. Discuss the challenges in developing a working definition for mental disorder:

2.1 *distinguish how ‘normal’ behavior and ‘abnormal’ behavior are relative concepts, yet different from mental disorder*; and

2.2 *identify the key characteristics used in defining mental disorder (e.g., personal distress, disability, violation of social norms, and dysfunction)*

3. Discern the differences between various types of mental health professionals who treat people with mental disorders; include how they are educated, trained, and related issues:

3.1 *distinguish how psychiatrists are educated and trained;*

3.2 *distinguish how clinical psychologists and counseling psychologists are educated and trained;*

3.3 *distinguish how psychiatric nurses are educated and trained;*

3.4 *distinguish how social workers are educated and trained;*

3.5 *distinguish how marriage and family therapists are educated and trained;*

3.6 *distinguish how counselors are educated and trained;*

3.6 *distinguish the differences between certifications versus licenses;* and

3.7 *recognize the inherent dilemma in those who refer to themselves as ‘psychotherapists’*

4. Identify the prevailing paradigms of psychopathology, their central assumptions, and key proponents:

4.1 *recognize that the psychoanalytic paradigm, with its focus on the analysis of the unconscious and interpersonal relationships, is represented by Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Alfred Adler*;

4.2 *recognize that the cognitive behavioral paradigm, with its focus on the environment and cognitive processes, is represented by Ivan Pavlov, John B. Watson, B. F. Skinner, Joseph Wolpe, Albert Bandura, Aaron Beck, and Albert Ellis*;

4.3 *recognize that the genetic paradigm’s primary focus is on the role of genes, behavior and molecular genetics, and the reciprocal gene-environment interaction;*

4.4 *recognize that the neuroscience paradigm’s primary focus is on the role of aberrant processes in the brain;* and

4.5 *recognize that the diathesis or vulnerability-stress paradigm is an integrative paradigm that links genetic, neurobiological, psychological, and environmental factors*

5. Identify the prevailing therapeutic approaches and their goals for treating psychopathology:

5.1 *recognize that psychoanalytic and psychodynamic treatments attempt to interpret the person’s early-childhood experiences, the nature of their key relationships, and the patterns of their current relationships*;

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)** (continued):

5.2 *recognize that behavioral therapies attempt to extinguish maladaptive patterns of behavior via exposure and operant techniques*;

5.3 *recognize that cognitive therapies attempt to change how people construe themselves and the world;*

5.4 *recognize that experiential therapies attempt to promote growth by helping clients to understand and value their internal emotions and needs;*

5.5 *recognize that couples therapy is used to ameliorate distress that occurs in marriage and other relationships as a consequence of psychological disorder;*

5.6 *recognize that family therapy is used to address specific symptoms of a given family member, particularly for the treatment of childhood problems;* and

5.7 *recognize that psychoactive drugs are used (often in conjunction with psychological therapies) in treating various forms of psychological disorders*

6. Discuss the importance of treatment outcome research:

6.1 *recognize that treatment outcome research is designed to address the question of whether therapy works;*

6.2 *discuss the importance of providing consumers with empirically-supported treatments;*

6.3 *discuss issues relevant to treatment outcome research (e.g., the need to track which treatments are harmful, the use of treatment manuals, the nature of samples within treatment studies, and the extrapolation of findings to the real world);* and

6.4 *summarize the findings regarding the effectiveness of different therapies*

7. Identify the various types of assessment measures and tools and their uses beyond helping to make a diagnosis:

7.1 *describe the purpose of clinical interviews (e.g., unstructured and structured interviews);*

7.2 *describe the types of personality tests (e.g., self-report personality inventories and projective personality tests) and how they are used;*

7.3 *describe the types of behavioral and cognitive assessments and how they are used;*

7.4 *describe the types of neurobiological assessments (e.g., brain imaging and neuropsychological assessments) and how they are used;*

7.5 *describe the types of intelligence tests used for children and adults and how they are used;* and

7.6 *discuss issues pertaining to reliability and validity of various assessment measures and tools and methods that clinicians use to minimize the negative effects of cultural bias*

8. Describe the purposes of a multi-axial assessment and the major categories of psychiatric diagnosis as described in the current version of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – Text Revised* (*DSM IV – TR*):

8.1 *describe the five axes included in the DSM IV multi-axial classification that helps clinicians plan treatment and predict outcome;*

8.2 *describe the major categories and symptoms of psychiatric disorders (e.g., anxiety disorders, somatoform disorders, dissociative disorders, mood disorders, substance-related disorders, schizophrenia, personality disorders, psychophysiological or stress-related disorders);* and

8.3 *demonstrate familiarity in using the DSM IV – TR*

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)** (continued):

9. Discuss some of the legal and ethical issues confronting the mental health professional:

9.1 *differentiate those issues relevant to criminal commitment (e.g., the insanity defense, competence to stand trial, mental retardation, and capital punishment) versus civil commitment (e.g., the prediction of dangerousness and the rights of patients to refuse treatment);* and

9.2 *identify some of the ethical dilemmas in therapy and research (e.g., informed consent in conducting research and distinguishing the difference between confidentiality and privileged communication)*

**Methods of Instruction**: Instruction will consist of, but not be limited to, a combination of lectures, class discussion, demonstrations and exercises, and media/audiovisual or educational videos. Specific choice of instructional methods is left to the discretion of the instructor.

**Outcomes Assessment:** Quiz and exam questions (if applicable) are blueprinted to course objectives. Checklist rubrics are used to evaluate non-test type assessment instruments (e.g., logs, reaction papers, theme papers, oral/written presentations, and projects) for the presence of course objectives. Data collected will be analyzed to provide direction for the improvement of instruction, viability of class assignments, relevancy of assigned literature, and evaluation of instructional time spent on specific topics.

**Course Requirements:** All students are required to:

1. Maintain regular and prompt attendance to all class sessions.

2. Participate in class discussions.

3.    Complete all readings and assignments and take all quizzes and exams that are scheduled.

4. Follow any specific class requirements mandated by the instructor.

**Methods of Evaluation:** Final course grades will be computed as follows:

**% of**

**Grading Components final course grade**

* **Attendance/Class Participation** **5 – 15%**

Attendance points will be computed based on the ratio of the number of days attending the course during a regular semester (i.e., 28 contact days). A similar procedure will be used to determine participation points.

* Logs 10 – 15%

Logs are written exercises designed to heighten student’s awareness of various psychological phenomena that is experienced, observed, read, or viewed on television. Student must relate experiences to chapters either discussed/not discussed throughout the semester.

**Methods of Evaluation** (continued):

**% of**

**Grading Components final course grade**

* **Reaction Papers 15 – 20%**

Reaction papers are 2 – 3 page written exercises in which students read outside sources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, or “self-help” books in psychology), discuss their “emotional” reaction to the issue or author’s point of view, yet use critical thinking guidelines to assess claims made augmented by scholarly literature.

* **Theme Papers 20 – 25%**

Theme papers are 3 – 5 page written exercises in which students discuss how taking the course has been personally meaningful, beneficial, and relevant to their future professional aspirations. References can be cited using scholarly journals, psychologically-based magazines, or internet sites.

* **Literature Reviews/Research Papers 10 – 20%**

Literature reviews/research papers are written exercise in which students must investigate a particular topic either in the textbook or assigned by the instructor that is related to the course objectives and conduct a review of the psychological literature. Based on the literature review, students are required to develop a thesis/theme and draw conclusions on the topic researched.

* **Introspective Theme Paper/Case Study Analysis 30 – 40%**

The introspective theme paper/case study analysis is a 7 – 10 page written exercise in which students integrate and synthesize concepts to perform an in-depth analysis and demonstrate relevance of various theories to oneself as an emerging theoretical orientation or professional identity. If a child, teenager, adult person(s), or professional is interviewed, students must analyze, synthesize, integrate, and demonstrate relevance of concepts to course objectives.

* **Written/Oral Presentation of Child, Teenager, Adult, 15 – 25%**

**Agency, or Professional in the Field**

The written/oral presentation of the interview of a child, teenager, adult, agency, or professional requires the student to gather information and to determine its relevance to concepts and theories presented in class and related to course objectives.

* **Oral Presentations 15 – 20%**

Oral presentations are based on a topic either discussed/not discussed during the semester, that is relevant to the study of psychology and related to course objectives. The instructor may require a written outline to augment the oral presentation.

**Methods of Evaluation** (continued):

**% of**

**Grading Components final course grade**

* **Quizzes 10 – 15%**

Quizzes will provide evidence of the extent to which students have met course objectives.

* Exams (number of exams and dates specified by the instructor) **20 – 30%**

Exams will provide evidence of the extent to which students have mastered and synthesize course material and have met course objectives.

Note: The instructor will determine (as appropriate) the specific components for the course and provide specific weights which lie in the above-given ranges at the beginning of the semester.

**Academic Integrity:** Dishonesty disrupts the search for truth that is inherent in the learning process and so devalues the purpose and the mission of the College.  Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

* plagiarism – the failure to acknowledge another writer’s words or ideas or to give proper credit to sources of information;
* cheating – knowingly obtaining or giving unauthorized information on any test/exam or any other academic assignment;
* interference – any interruption of the academic process that prevents others from the proper engagement in learning or teaching; and
* fraud – any act or instance of willful deceit or trickery.

Violations of academic integrity will be dealt with by imposing appropriate sanctions.  Sanctions for acts of academic dishonesty could include the resubmission of an assignment, failure of the test/exam, failure in the course, probation, suspension from the College, and even expulsion from the College.

**Student Code of Conduct:** All students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible and considerate adults who respect the rights of others. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. All students are also expected to attend and be on time all class meetings. No cell phones or similar electronic devices are permitted in class. Please refer to the Essex County College student handbook, *Lifeline*, for more specific information about the College’s Code of Conduct and attendance requirements.

**Course Content Outline:** based on the text by A. M. Kring, S. L. Johnson, G. C. Davison, & J. M. Neale (2010). *Abnormal Psychology* (11th edition). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and the text American Psychiatric Association (2000). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – Text Revised: Desk Reference* (4th edition). Washington, DC: Author

Note**:** It is the instructor’s discretion to recommend other references, as appropriate (e.g., student handbooks, textbooks, resources pertaining to careers in psychology, or style/writing manuals).

**Unit Topic**

1 Introduction - The history of psychopathology, differentiating ‘normal’ from ‘abnormal’ behavior, defining mental disorder as per the *DSM IV-TR*, mental health professionals, and stigmatization of persons with mental illness

2 Current Paradigms in Psychopathology – Psychodynamic, cognitive behavioral, genetic, neuroscience, and diathesis or vulnerability-stress

3 Therapy – Psychoanalysis/psychodynamic therapy, behavioral and cognitive therapy, humanistic and existential therapy, biomedical treatments, and treatment outcome research

4 Assessment – Clinical interviews, personality tests, behavioral and cognitive assessment, intelligence tests, neurobiological assessments, assessment of stress, and cultural and ethnic diversity and assessment

5 Diagnosis – *DSM IV-TR* multiaxial assessment, criticisms of the *DSM*, and criticisms in diagnosing mental illness

6 Psychological Disorders – Anxiety disorders, somatoform disorders, dissociative disorders, mood disorders, substance-related disorders, schizophrenia, personality disorders, psychophysiological or stress-related disorders

7 (optional) Legal and Ethical Issues – Criminal versus civil commitment and ethical dilemmas in therapy and research

8 (optional) Miscellaneous – Research methods in the study of psychopathology, psychological disorders: eating disorders, sexual and gender identity disorders, childhood disorders, or cognitive disorders (e.g., dementia and delirium)

Note: In PSY 209, the instructor must cover the first 6 units listed above minimally in any reasonable order throughout the duration of the semester/term. Also, while the instructor may include additional areas based on his/her expertise and/or interest, it is important that areas that overlap with PSY 225 Child and Adolescent Abnormal Psychology (e.g., childhood disorders) **not** be selected for inclusion in PSY 209 (see PSY 225 course outline for all units covered).