

Psychology 331

Abnormal Psychology

Spring 2008

INSTRUCTOR:

Denny E. Fahey, MA, LPC

OFFICE HOURS:

Before and after class

TEXTBOOK:

Comer, Ronald J. (2004) *Abnormal Psychology* (5th Ed). Worth.

COURSE DETAILS:

Class: Tuesday night 5:00 – 7:50 PM
Credit: 3 Hours

COURSE PHILOSOPHY:

Abnormal Psychology is the study of what makes us tick and what constitutes problems in living, including research on disorders, diagnosis, criteria, prognosis, and schools of thought concerning psychopathology.

GOALS:

1. To understand the different approaches to understanding abnormal psychology.
2. To grasp the basics of what a theory is and what purpose it serves in abnormal psychology.
3. To understand the various ways in which disorders develop, progress, and sometimes improve.
4. To learn critical thinking, to be skeptical, and to improve problem-solving abilities.

COURSE FORMAT:

This course will be taught as a lecture and discussion course. Your participation is encouraged.

COURSE EVALUATION:

There will be three exams; all of which will be multiple choice, unless I have to come up with some fill in the blanks. The number of questions will be determined by the material; expect a minimum of 50 questions per test. Each question will be worth one point. Your grade will be determined by the total points accumulated – the person with the highest total points will represent 100% for an “A”, and all other totals within 90% of this total will also be an “A”; from 80 – 89% will be a “B”; 70 – 79% will be a “C”; 60 – 69% will be a “D”; and let’s not contemplate below 60%. Bonus points, if you earn them through attendance, will be added in after the parameters for the grades are determined. In other words, if you have 5 extra credit points and you are only 3 points from an “A” after you test grades are added up, you will receive an “A”. I do not convert scores to the classic 100 points, I only work off total points. If, after three tests, you have 150 total points (used as a theoretical highest score), you would get an “A”. If someone else in the class has 150 total points, and you have 145 points, then you would fall into the 90% range (in this case 135 – 150 points) and you would also make an “A”. If you have 133 points, and have earned the 5 bonus points for attendance, this would boost you to 138 points, and this would also be an “A”.

Make-ups will be taken the next time you come to class, so come prepared to take the make-up exam at that time. I realize that life happens, that some of you will get legitimately sick or have pressing responsibilities at home or work; I do not penalize anyone for this. Just come prepared to take the test, if at all possible. Excuses are not necessary as I have heard them all, but if you have a particularly entertaining one, then by all means, tell me. Just make sure it’s original and witty.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance will be taken at each class, and I will follow university policy of allowing you two absences without penalty. However, my attendance policy also comes with a reward. Should you not miss more than one lecture class, I will give you five points of extra credit toward your final grade. This is based on the assumption that you will have learned at least that much simply by being in class and listening to scintillating discussions and lectures that will be over information that will not wind up on your tests.

I expect adult behavior in class. This includes respecting your fellow students’ desire to learn – keep side-talking to a minimum; no food products, and if you must leave, do so quietly and return quietly. If one of your neighbors appears distracted or upset about your side-talking, either police yourself or expect a comment from me.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

The faculty and administration of Sam Houston expect that students will conduct their studies with honesty and integrity. Failure to do so may result in failing the course and dismissal from the University. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: cheating on a test, plagiarism, collusion – the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit, the abuse of resource materials, and misrepresentation of credentials or accomplishments as a member of the college.

The University's policy on academic honesty and appeal procedures can be found in the manual entitled Student Guidelines, distributed by Division of Student Services (reference section 5.3).

NOTE: You are cheating if I think you are cheating. Don't make me think you are cheating.

NOTICE TO PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State that no individuals otherwise qualified shall, solely by reason of their disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic program or activity. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:

University policy provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy days(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

COURSE OUTLINE (TENTATIVE)

- Unit 1: Intro to the study of abnormal psychology
1. Abnormal Psychology: Past and Present
 2. Research in Abnormal Psychology
 3. Models of Abnormality
 4. Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment

Test 1: February 19th

- Unit 2: Mood Disorders
5. Anxiety Disorders
 6. Stress Disorders
 8. Mood Disorders
 9. Treatments for Mood Disorders
 10. Suicide

Test 2: April 8th

- Unit 3: Substance Abuse, Thought Disorders, and Personality Disorders
12. Substance Related Disorders
 14. Schizophrenia
 15. Treatments for Schizophrenia
 16. Personality Disorders

Test 3: May 13th

NOTE: Last day to drop courses without a failing grade is May 8th. March 11th is during Spring Break; no class will be held. Unless you want to show up by yourself. In which case, I will have a special test for you.