



Department of Psychology

Psychology 431 (L02) – Current Issues in Psychopathology

Winter Session 2006

Instructor:	Stephanie Cassin	Lecture Location:	Scurfield Hall 157
Phone:	210-9438	Lecture Days/Time:	Tuesday
Email:	secassin@ucalgary.ca		11:00-12:15
Office:	Education Block 064		Thursday
Office Hours:	After Class <i>or</i>		11:00-12:15
	By Appointment		

Course Description

This course will focus on current developments and controversies in the assessment, classification, and treatment of psychopathology. Emphasis will be on teaching students how to strengthen their critical thinking skills using controversial issues in the field of abnormal and clinical psychology as a basis for discussion and debate. The format for the class will be primarily lectures, discussion, debate, and group activities.

University of Calgary Curriculum Objectives

Students are encouraged to think critically about the course material and the research literature in abnormal psychology for their position paper, presentation, classroom activities, and exams. Depth and creativity of thought, integration of issues, and critical thinking are some of the criteria for success. Students will be encouraged to think about various interpretations of the data that are presented in the course material, and the implications for the field of abnormal psychology.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- 1) **Critically analyze** research literature pertaining to controversial issues in abnormal psychology.
- 2) **Discuss different perspectives** regarding controversial issues in abnormal psychology.
- 3) **Justify their own position** regarding controversial issues in abnormal psychology.
- 4) **Effectively communicate** their positions in oral and written form.

Required Text

Halgin, R. P. (2005). *Taking Sides: Clashing views on controversial issues in abnormal psychology* (3rd edition). Dushkin/MacGraw Hill.

This textbook is available in the University Bookstore. Other required readings will be posted as PDF files on Blackboard (blackboard.ucalgary.ca), or can be accessed through the University of Calgary Library electronic catalogue.

Other Resources

Outlines of lectures will be made available on **Blackboard** (blackboard.ucalgary.ca) so as to facilitate note taking. The outlines will highlight **ONLY** the main points of the lectures and are not meant to replace class attendance. Class attendance is essential to obtain full coverage of the subjects (e.g., discussion, debate, group activities) and to do well on the exams.

Evaluation

Students are expected to attend class regularly, to do assigned readings prior to class, and to participate in classroom activities. The course evaluation will consist of two (2) non-cumulative examinations, one (1) class presentation, and one (1) position paper, as described below.

- 1) Mid-term exam (75 minutes) (**30%**) - consists of multiple choice and essay questions from the text, lectures, and classroom activities (everything covered from Jan. 10 to Feb. 28).
Date: March 2
- 2) Position paper (**15%**) and Class presentation (**20%**) - A group of 4 students will prepare a position paper and make a class presentation on a contentious issue in clinical psychology. See section entitled "Class Presentation and Position Paper" below for more details. Presentation topics/dates will be selected in class on January 12. **A hard copy of the position paper must be submitted at the time of the presentation.** Points will be deducted for position papers handed in late. Late papers must be turned in to the Psychology main office, 275 Administration Building. Late papers will be subjected to a 10% penalty per day, including weekends. Assignments slipped under office doors or left on desks will not be accepted.
- 3) Final exam (2 hours) (**35%**) - Non-cumulative exam (everything covered from Mar. 9 to Apr. 13) consisting of multiple choice and essay questions from the text and class presentations. The final exam is scheduled by the Registrar during the final examination period (**Apr. 17-28**)

Grading Scale

A+	96-100%	B+	80-84%	C+	67-71%	D+	54-58%
A	90-95%	B	76-79%	C	63-66%	D	50-53%
A-	85-89%	B-	72-75%	C-	59-62%	F	0-49%

As stated in the University Calendar, it is at the instructor's discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of term work and final examinations is between two letter grades. To determine final letter grades, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (i.e., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90%; 89.4% will be rounded down to 89%, etc.). Because students have the opportunity to earn two (2%) bonus credits for research participation (see below), **NO** exceptions will be made to the grading system.

Tentative Lecture Schedule:

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
Jan 10	Are Repressed Memories Valid? Guest Lecturer: Ray Gunter	Issue 7 (p.104-123)
Jan 12	Is Sexual Orientation Conversion Therapy Ethical? Guest Lecturer: Amy Wojtowicz	Issue 20 (p.382-395)
Jan 17	No Class – Meet with your group members to discuss each member’s role in the paper/presentation	
Jan 19	Empirically Supported Treatments Guest Lecturer: Dr. Keith Dobson	Chambless, D. L. & Ollendick, T. H. (2001). Empirically supported psychological interventions: Controversies and evidence. <i>Annual Review of Psychology</i> , 52, 685-716.
Jan 24	Psychotherapy Effectiveness: The Consumer Reports Study	Seligman, M. E. P. (1995). The effectiveness of psychotherapy: The Consumer Reports study. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 50, 965-974.
Jan 26	Who or What Can Do Psychotherapy?	Christensen, A., & Jacobson, N. S. (1994). Who (or what) can do psychotherapy: The status and challenge of nonprofessional therapies. <i>Psychological Science</i> , 5, 8-14.
Jan 31	Should Psychologists Prescribe Medication?	Issue 13 (p.214-237)
Feb 2	Is the DSM a Useful Classification System? Is There Gender Bias in the DSM?	Issue 1 (p.2-13) Issue 2 (p.14-39)
Feb 7	Eating Disorders vs. Obesity	Irving, L. M., & Neumark-Sztainer, D. (2002). Integrating the prevention of eating disorders and obesity: Feasible or futile? <i>Preventive Medicine</i> , 34, 299-309. National Task Force on the Prevention and Treatment of Obesity (2000). Dieting and the development of eating disorders in overweight and obese adults. <i>Archives of Internal Medicine</i> , 160, 2581-2589.
Feb 9	Are Eating Disorders Behavioural Addictions?	Wilson, G. T. (1991). The addiction model of eating disorders: A critical analysis. <i>Advances in Behaviour Research & Therapy</i> , 13(1), 27-72.
Feb 14	Should Addiction/Intoxication Be a Legal Defense?	Rajaratnam, S. M. W., Redman, J. R., & Lenne, M. G. (2000). Intoxication and criminal behaviour. <i>Psychiatry, Psychology, and Law</i> , 7, 59-69. Weiss, K. J. (2004). “Wet” and wild: PCP and criminal responsibility. <i>Journal of Psychiatry & Law</i> , 32, 361-384.
Feb 16	Controlled Drinking vs. Abstinence for Alcoholism	Issue 8 (p.124-137)
Feb 19-26	No Classes—Reading Days	
Feb 28	Should People Be Forced to Undergo Treatment?	Allen, M., & Fox-Smith, V. (2001). Opening Pandora’s Box: The practical and legal dangers of involuntary outpatient commitment. <i>Psychiatric Services</i> , 52, 342-346. Monahan, J., et al. (2001). Mandated community treatment: Beyond outpatient commitment. <i>Psychiatric Services</i> , 52, 1198-1205.
Mar 2	Mid-Term Exam	

Class Presentation Schedule:

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
Mar 7	Class devoted to presentation preparation	
Mar 9	Presentation – Does Media Promote Violence?	Issue 15 (p.258-269)
Mar 14	Presentation – Is Pornography Harmful?	Issue 16 (p.270-297)
Mar 16	Presentation – Does Evolution Explain Why Men Rape?	Issue 18 (p.322-343)
Mar 21	Presentation – Is Divorce Detrimental To Children?	Issue 17 (p.298-321)
Mar 23	Presentation – Should Mental Health Professionals Serve as Gatekeepers for Physician-Assisted Suicide?	Issue 19 (p.344-363)
Mar 28	Presentation – Is Multiple Personality Disorder a Valid Diagnosis?	Issue 3 (p.42-53)
Mar 30	Presentation – Does Post-Abortion Syndrome Exist?	Issue 6 (p.92-102)
Apr 4	Presentation – Is Ritalin Overprescribed?	Issue 11 (p.176-195)
Apr 6	Presentation – Should all Uses of MDMA (Ecstasy) Be Prohibited?	Issue 5 (p.74-91)
Apr 11	Presentation – Is Electroconvulsive Therapy Ethical?	Issue 14 (p.238-255)
Apr 13	Review for final exam	
Apr 17-28	Final Exam Period	

Class Presentation and Position Paper

A group of 4 students will prepare a paper (10-12 pages) and make a presentation (50 minutes) on a contentious issue related to abnormal psychology.

Rationale:

This assignment is intended to give you the opportunity to teach and learn from your peers, to critically analyze different perspectives, and to enhance your writing and presentation skills—all skills which will be of great benefit if you pursue a career in psychology (e.g., conducting literature reviews, writing academic papers, presenting at conferences and workshops, responding to questions).

Topics:

On January 12, students will sign themselves up for presentation topics during class. Prior to this date, take a look at the presentation topics in the course textbook (pp. viii – xiv) and select some topics that may be of interest to you. Note that each group consists of only 4 students, so it may not be possible to get your first choice.

Paper:

- A 10 to 12 page double spaced **paper must be submitted in hard copy at the time of the presentation** (the penalty for late papers will be 10% per day, including weekends).
- **An electronic copy of the paper must also be submitted on the day of the presentation.** Each paper will be posted on Blackboard for other students in the class to download for the purpose of studying for the exam. This will allow you to focus on listening to your classmate's presentations rather than frantically taking notes!
- The paper should present both sides of the debate and provide support for your argument. Please note that it is not sufficient to use the argument that the 'research is flawed' to support your side. All research is flawed in some way. Provide specific criticisms of why research on the topic is flawed, and how this affects the credibility of the evidence.
- Whenever possible, look at the preponderance of evidence (e.g. results from meta-analyses) and not just one or two studies that have findings supporting your position.

- The paper should:
 - Be double-spaced.
 - Adhere to APA format.
 - Use headings to structure the text—Tables or point form can be used to summarize arguments or specific evidence, however, the bulk of the paper should be written in complete sentences like a regular term paper.
 - Have at least 10 references—Review primary source material (original articles) in addition to secondary sources.

Presentation:

- Fifty (50) minutes will be allotted for each group's presentation, followed by a question period.
- Powerpoint or overheads may be used.
- Class participation should be incorporated into presentations (e.g., debate, group activity).

Group work:

Given how difficult it can be to arrange times for all group members to meet, two classes (Jan. 17 and Mar. 7) will be devoted entirely to working on your paper/presentation. On January 17, you are expected to meet with your group to discuss each member's role in the paper/presentation. You will also be given several *brief* opportunities to touch base with your group members during class time. I will arrange to meet with each group to provide guidance and discuss your progress on the presentations.

The majority of students have no problems working together on assignments. However, occasionally a team experiences problems within their group. The most common complaint is that one person is not doing their share of the work. A few suggestions to prevent this from happening are:

- 1) Divide the work up logically with clear expectations on length and quality.
- 2) Set deadlines in advance of the presentation date to review the material within your group. For example, if you are writing a section of the paper, have it ready at least one week before the due date to review, edit, and condense the material to everyone's satisfaction.
- 3) Have open discussions on how the work is going and who in the group should be doing more or less. Electing a team leader is not a bad idea provided the individual delegates work equally and is not expected to do everything themselves.
- 4) Be mindful of individual strengths and weaknesses. Some students are better writers, while others are better at public speaking. Divide up the work according to the strengths of your group members.

If you are experiencing problems within your group and cannot resolve them internally please talk to me as soon as possible and before the presentation date. We can probably work out a solution. Please do not wait until after the presentation is done and the paper submitted to tell me about the problem. At that point there is little I can do grade-wise.

Grading:

Your overall grade will be based on quality of the paper/presentation, soundness of arguments, and use of supporting material. The total 35 marks will be determined as follows:

- **Presentation (20 marks)** – 10 marks for the quality of the presentation (e.g., use of A/V aids, organization, clarity of speakers, flow of presentation, class participation, etc.) and 10 marks for the soundness of the arguments (e.g., use of empirical evidence, justification of opinions, use of material outside of the textbook chapter, etc.).
- **Paper (15 marks)** – content, soundness of arguments, organization, consistent use of APA style, number/appropriateness of references, etc.).

In addition, members of the class will provide written comments about the quality of the presentation so that you have the opportunity to learn from constructive peer feedback. I will provide each group with a summary of their comments, in addition to my own grade and comments.

Reappraisal of Grades

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (position paper, exam, etc.) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within fifteen days of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class. If not satisfied, the student shall immediately take the matter to the Head of the department offering the course, who will arrange for a reassessment of the work within the next fifteen days. The reappraisal of term work may cause the grade to be raised, lowered, or to remain the same.

If the student is not satisfied with the decision and wishes to appeal, the student shall address a letter of appeal to the Dean of the faculty offering the course within fifteen days of the unfavourable decision. In the letter, the student must clearly and fully state the decision being appealed, the grounds for appeal, and the remedies being sought, along with any special circumstances which warrant an appeal of the reappraisal. The student should include as much written documentation as possible.

Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. Consequently, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Students should examine sections of the University Calendar that present a Statement of Intellectual honesty and definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct.

Academic Accommodation

It is a student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation and **have not** registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. If you are seeking academic accommodation, please notify your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the

commencement of the course. Note that the lecturer must approve any tape recordings of lectures.

Absence From A Test

Make-up exams are NOT an option without an official University medical excuse (see the University Calendar). You must contact the instructor before the scheduled examination or you will have forfeited any right to make up the exam. At the instructor's discretion, a make-up exam may differ significantly (in form and/or content) from a regularly scheduled exam. Except in extenuating circumstances (documented by an official University medical excuse), a makeup exam is written within two (2) weeks of the missed exam.

A completed Physician/Counselor Statement will be required to confirm absence from a test for health reasons. The student will be required to pay any cost associated with the Physician Counselor Statement.

Bonus Course Credits for Research Participation

Students in most psychology courses are eligible to participate in Departmentally-approved research and earn credits toward their final grades. A maximum of two credits (2%) per course, including this course, may be applied to an individual's final grade. Information about current experiments is on the Experimetrix website at <http://experimetrix.com/uc>. The read.me link at that site provides a guide to using the system and assigning your credits. The last day to participate in research and **ALLOCATE YOUR CREDITS TO YOUR COURSES** is **April 12, 2006**.

Student Organizations

Psychology students may wish to join the Psychology Undergraduate Students' Association (PSYCHS). They are located in the Administration building, room 170 or may be contacted at 220-5567.

Student Union VP Academic: Phone: 220-3911 suypaca@ucalgary.ca
Student Union Faculty Rep.: Phone: 220-3913 socialscirep@su.ucalgary.ca

Important Dates

The last day to drop this course and **still receive a fee refund** is **January 20, 2006**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **April 13, 2006**.