Abnormal Psychology, Spring 2014

Course 4303, Tuesdays/Thursdays
Room: VAC 1B20, Time: 2:00-3:15

Instructor: Vijay A. Mittal, Ph.D.  
Office: D321B Muenzinger  
Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:00-2:00  
E-mail: vijay.mittal@colorado.edu

TA: Emily Carol  
Office: D316D  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Email: Emily.carol@colorado.edu

What is the Study of Psychopathology?
This course involves the study of the nature, diagnosis, and the treatment of psychiatric illness such as anxiety disorders, personality disorders, affective disorders (depression and bipolar disorder), addiction, eating and sleep disorder, and psychosis (the prodrome and schizophrenia). Throughout the process of attending lectures, completing readings, and preparing for tests/assignments, you will be exposed to a wide variety of mental disorders, and also form an in-depth understanding of how we conceptualize and treat these constructs. By the end of the class you will have also developed knowledge which will serve as a foundation for more advanced and specialized skills in careers such as clinical psychology, psychiatry, social work, psychiatric nursing, medicine, and neuroscience. More specifically, you will be able to:

1. Define and describe each of the major types of psychiatric disorders and explain how they are different from each other.
2. Explain each disorder from an integrative perspective, including genetic, environmental, neurobiological, cognitive, emotional, social and behavioral, factors.
3. Provide an overview of treatments currently in use for each disorder, and demonstrate a basic understanding of the importance of empirically validated interventions.
4. Discuss social, cultural, and gender context of diagnosis and treatment of the various disorders.

The Instructor
Dr. Mittal is an Assistant Processor of Psychology and Neuroscience. He got his undergraduate degree from the University of California Santa Barbara, conducted doctoral work at Emory University in Atlanta, and completed clinical training and postdoctoral studies at the University of California Los Angeles. Dr. Mittal’s research focuses on early identification and intervention/prevention with adolescents at high risk for developing psychotic disorders; he is most interested in understanding how susceptibility and environmental stressors interact with neural development during adolescence, and how this might contribute to eventual conversion to psychosis. In addition to research, Dr. Mittal is actively involved in treating mentally ill patients (predominantly adolescents and their families), and further, he loves teaching! In fact, Dr. Mittal has received recognition from the National Science Foundation for utilizing active learning techniques in teaching, has received very high instructor ratings from psychology department courses, and looks forward to applying this background to our class!

The TA
After graduating from Mount Holyoke College with a double major in Psychology and Religion, Emily worked at Harvard University in the Social Neuroscience and Psychopathology Laboratory. At Harvard, Emily worked with children and young adults at
risk for developing psychosis and individuals with schizophrenia to investigate social cognition, emotion, and targeted cognitive training as an early intervention strategy. Emily is currently a graduate student at CU Boulder in the Mittal Lab and is interested in early identification and intervention for youths at risk for mental illness. She is very excited to be a TA this semester and is looking forward to working with the students in the class.

**Required Readings**

1. Barlow & Durand, *Abnormal Psychology, 7th edition* (make sure to get the 7th)

THE OTHER VERSIONS WILL NOT WORK BECAUSE WE HAVE A NEW DIAGNOSTIC MANUAL (JUST THIS PAST SPRING) AND THE CRITERIA FOR DISORDERS HAVE CHANGED.

2. You can access the Diagnostic and Statistical Manuel of Mental Disorders (DSM V) for free through the library website. This text can help with the extra credit assignment and is good to peruse if you are interested in mental illness.
   a. To access it on campus:
      i. Go to library website: ucblibraries.colorado.edu
      ii. Click Chinook and search for “DSM-V”
      iii. Under the first resource that appears, click “go to this resource”
   b. To access from off campus:
      i. Download VPN if you don’t already have it at www.colorado.edu/cns/vpn
      ii. Connect through vpn
      iii. Follow steps i-iii under (a) above

Please read the assigned chapter readings before attending lectures on the topic.

**Prerequisites**

This course is designed for a range of interests: those students who may be curious about abnormal human functioning to those interested in perusing careers in promoting the understanding of and/or treating mental illness. The prerequisite for this course is general psychology, or the consent of the instructor. This course is designed for psychology majors but really any major can benefit from this material. I think a range of student backgrounds and perspectives really adds to a good learning experience.

**Course Wiki**

The course website will contain digital copies of the syllabus, power-point slides for each lecture (after lectures are presented I will upload the slides for each week), selection of research articles designed to accompany the topics covered in class.

a. Go to: [http://psych.colorado.edu/wiki/](http://psych.colorado.edu/wiki/)
b. Login with codes: Username = 4303mittal; Password = abnormal
c. Select Psychopathology
d. You will be directed to a homepage where you will be able to download or print course materials.
Class Participation
You are encouraged to participate in all class discussions and to share thoughts and opinions about the course material. That being said, you should not feel pressured to discuss any topic that makes you feel uncomfortable and if any of the material hits “too close to home,” and you want to discuss it with a mental health professional, please contact the Counseling and Psychological Services (303-492-6766). This service will help you with your concerns and is strictly confidential.

While this class is in no way designed to give you the ability to diagnose mental illness, it is entirely normal for anyone taking this type of class to begin to question roommates, parents, sibling, and one’s own mental health. In fact, this happens to almost everyone when they learn about psychopathology the first time. Please keep in mind that while it is fun to practice and experiment with these new ideas, it is very rude to provide unsolicited diagnoses on roommates/friends/family. This can lead to severely hurtful situations. It will make people not like you. Further, in line with respecting everyone present, I will ask that discussion and questions/comments remain focused on class material, and be presented in a sensitive manner.

Office Hours
Contrary to popular belief, office hours are really fun for us, as it is a great opportunity to get to know each of you, and to discuss psychopathology- a topic we are obviously very interested in. This time can be used to discuss course materials and assignments, ask more detailed questions about the lectures, ask for career advice (choosing research and clinical careers can be confusing!), ask for reading suggestions, or prepare for exams. Also, if you are indeed serious about a career in psychology, please come and use this valuable opportunity to have direction from an Assistant Professor and TA who are in different stages and know a great amount about the process! Remember, we are here to help you, and want very much for each of you to succeed in the course and to find great value in the time and effort you will have committed to this subject. If you cannot make any of the noted office hour times, call or send and email and we can set up an appointment.

Grading Policies
Tests (300 points)
The 3 exams (100 points each) will test material covered up to those points in the lectures and the Barlow & Durand text (see course schedule). There will not be a cumulative exam covering the whole course. While I will make every effort to provide unambiguous test questions two facts remain: 1) I make mistakes, and 2) this material is often open to a variety of interpretations. Therefore, I will review patterns of test scores for the class and remove those items that a large percentage missed- obviously if most of the class missed something the question was worded poorly or I didn’t teach it too well. Further, if a question does not seem fair, or if you feel that the answer you provided does holds merit, I encourage you to address this with me. Specifically, disagreements about test questions must be submitted to me in writing within 1 week after the exams are returned to you. I will evaluate these written rebuttals for full or partial.
How to Calculate a Final Grade:

a. Three tests (300 possible points total)

b. Any Extra Credit Points (up to 15)

= c. Final Grade: Your Score out of the 300 possible points total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Points Earned</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>279-300</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>270-278</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>261-269</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>249-260</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240-248</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>231-247</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219-230</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210-218</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-209</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>189-200</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180-188</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are not doing as well as you feel that you should be, please come and speak with Emily or me and we can help you with study preparation. Do not wait until the end of the course to do this! We truly wish for each of you to get an A!

Make-up Exams:
Make-up exams are an option ONLY for an illness or a death in the family. You must provide a verifiable, written excuse (e.g., physicians note). You must let me know at least one working day in advance of the exam you plan to miss.

Incompletes:
Incompletes will only be granted if you have taken two of the course tests, and then, only if there is a verifiable reason for not completing the course (e.g., severe illness accompanied by a physicians note. You must request an incomplete before the day of the final exam– they are not given automatically. In general, incompletes are discouraged and only given in outstanding circumstances.

Optional Extra Credit:
You have the option of picking one book (that you have not read before) or movie that portrays a mentally ill person.

Then type a one page report for the book or four pages for movies and address the following: 1. How is the depiction accurate and inaccurate given what you have learned in this class?; 2. What is the correct DSM diagnosis? (include details such as course specifiers); 3. What are two conceptualizations of how this came about?(refer to lectures regarding medical/genetic & psychological models); 4. Pick two appropriate treatments that could be effective and describe which you would eventually choose and why (its okay to choose both if you can justify it); 4)
describe how the course has changed your perspective on this illness (talk about how you would have viewed this character in the book or movie before taking the class).

The book assignment has less writing because it will take longer to read than watch a movie. However, its very likely that I will know if you really read the book and if I feel like you have not, I will verbally quiz you and you will not receive extra credit if I am not satisfied with your answers. Obviously, I will also think less of you as well.

If you complete this assignment, and I encourage each of you to do so, you will be allowed up to 15 points of extra credit. This is due by the day of the final (April 30th) in electronic format: email it to me and your TA. No late assignments!

Be creative in this assignment and also critical of how these characters are often miss-portrayed. Also, I suggest that come and talk to me before you do the project: I have some suggestions for wonderful books and movies that would fit well for this assignment.

I will probably also come up with other assignments based on current events during our semester.

**General Course Policies**

*Attendance*
The course is designed to integrate readings from the text and material presented in class. It is important to read before each lecture and that you attend all class sessions. If you are unable to attend class, it is your responsibility to get class notes from a peer.

*Students with Disabilities*
If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please see me right away so that we may form a plan to best address your needs. The University of Colorado policy requires that you provide documentation from Disability Services [303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.Colorado.edu/disabilityservices]. Needless to say, the sooner you come and see me, the sooner we can put the accommodations in place! Please remember that any information you provide me will be kept entirely confidential.

*Religious Observance*
The right to observe religious holidays is something I feel strongly about and I will make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with schedule exams, assignments, or required attendance. Thus, a class missed on a religious holiday will not be viewed as an absence and exam dates can be altered if they conflict with a religious holiday. My only request is that you inform me ahead of time (minimum 2 weeks) if you plan to miss an exam because of a religious holiday.

*Classroom Behavior*
Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment and many of the topics we will cover can be controversial. The material can provoke strong emotions, particularly for individuals with a personal experience related to one of the mental disorders. Therefore, please be considerate of the feelings of others in the class. If you anticipate an upcoming topic may be particularly difficult, please come and speak with me in office hours and I will address your concerns to the best of my abilities.
Honor Code
It is expected that students will adhere to the Honor Code on this assignment as well as the tests. Adherence to the Honor Code on the extra credit paper includes using your own words, and referencing, with appropriate citations, quotes that have come from another source. For more information on the Honor Code, go to www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html or to www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode.

Discrimination and Sexual Harassment
The classroom environment should be characterized by mutual respect and courtesy between students and teacher. Please let me know if there are any issues/preferences that would help me treat you in a respectful manner. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes that s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at (303)492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at (303)492-5550.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (January 14th & 16th)
Topic: Review Syllabus, Discuss History
Readings: Barlow, Chapter 1 (for the 16th)

Week 2 (January 21st and 23rd)
Topic: Assessment, Diagnosis, and Research Informing Our Understanding of Mental Illness
Readings: Barlow, Chapter 3 & 4

Week 3 (January 28th & January 30th)
Topic: An Integrative Approach to Psychopathology (Models of Psychopathology)
Readings: Barlow, Chapter 2; (this is the most essential chapter in the book- because everything we will talk about draws from these models and perspectives, I suggest that you read it several times and ask lots and lots of questions and come to office hours if you would like to discuss it).

Week 4 (February 4th & 6th)
Topic: Anxiety Disorders
Readings: Barlow, Chapter 5
(do not read the “Trauma and Stressor-Related Disorders” section ((i.e., PTSD, Adjustment and Attachment 155-163)) and Body Dysmorphic Disorder ((168-171)) section- we will cover later in the semester)

Week 5 (February 11th & 13th)
Topic: Catch-up + Depression and Additional Mood Disorders
Readings: Barlow, Chapter 7

Week 6 (February 18th & 20th)
Topic: Finish Depression and Review

Week 7 (February 25th & 27th)
Topic: February 25th - You get the day off!
Test 1 (February 27th)

Week 8 (March 4th & 6th)
Topic: Eating & Sleep Disorders
Readings: Barlow, Chapter 8

**Week 9 (March 11th & 13th)**
Topic: Somatoform/Dissociative Disorders, Body Dysmorphic Disorder, PTSD
Readings: Barlow, Chapter 6 & PTSD and BDD sections of Anxiety chapter

**Week 10 (March 18th & 20th)**
Topic: Personality Disorders
Readings: Barlow, Chapter 12

**Week 11 (March 25th & 27th)**
Spring Break!

**Week 12 (April 1st & 3rd)**
Topic: Review
Test 2 (April 3rd)

**Week 13 (April 8th & 10th)**
Topic: ADHD, and Autism
Readings: Barlow, Chapter 14th

**Week 14 (April 15th & 17th)**
Topic: Substance Abuse/Addiction Disorders
Readings: Barlow Chapter 11 (don’t read the gambling, impulse control, explosive disorders section at the end of the chapter- these will not be covered on our exam)

**Week 15 (April 22nd & 24th)**
Topic: The Prodrome and Psychosis
Readings: Barlow, Chapter 13

**Week 16 (April 29th & May 1st)**
Extra credit due to TA (via email- please put us both on the email) by April 30
Topic: Finish Psychosis lecture; May 1st
Career Paths for Clinical Psychology (won’t be on test) and Review
Readings: Study for Test 3

**Test 3** will be administered during the Final exam period: Saturday May 3rd 1:30

~Finish~