WHAT IS THE STUDY OF ADULT PSYCHOPATHOLOGY?

This course involves the study of the nature and diagnosis of psychiatric illness. We will also cover the basic treatments in a cursory fashion (this will be addressed in more detail in your Intervention series). Throughout the process of attending lectures, completing readings, and preparing for assignments, you will be exposed to a wide variety of mental disorders.

This course has 6 primary aims:

1. Provide you with a broad, though frequently in-depth, overview of issues and controversies central to the study of adult psychopathology (e.g., phenomenology of syndromes, influence of theoretical traditions).
2. To familiarize you with the prevailing diagnostic classification system (both old and new editions)
3. To introduce you to the current research literature related to the various major adult disorders, including an understanding (and critique) of the primary research methods employed in our filed today.
4. To introduce you to major psychosocial and pharmacological treatment approaches to the major mental disorders.
5. To teach you how to approach research articles in a critical fashion.
6. To teach you about the publication process in our field.

I enjoy teaching this course a great deal, as you will hopefully come to see! The topical areas we will cover are incredibly fascinating, and I hope that you will get as much intellectual enjoyment from them as I do.

Although this is primarily an adult psychopathology course, many, if not all, of the disorders can be viewed best through a developmental lens, and as such, we will also encroach into adolescence and childhood as needed. To the extent that it informs our understanding of pathophysiology, psychosocial/biomedical treatment will also be covered.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Overall- my philosophy for teaching graduate students is quite different from how I approach didactics with the undergraduates. It is expected that you are intrinsically motivated at this point, and as such, I hope to treat you more like collaborators and peers, than as students.

I will aim not to waste your time with unnecessary readings or assignments. Tests, which tend to focus primarily on memorization and recitation (and do not necessarily promote a more in-depth processing of material), are avoided entirely. You will learn that being efficient is essential in this field. Based on this idea, each of the assignments is specifically designed to foster requisite skills for being successful in academia. In addition to mastering the topics in
this syllabus, you will learn to process and critique research, lead discussions, give succinct presentations, and hopefully… publish a short letter. Most importantly, you will begin to learn how to teach yourself, and discover what does and doesn’t work for your own personal work/learning style—in my opinion, 90% of what you learn while getting your Ph.D. centers around this final set of skills.

**OFFICE HOURS**

I enjoy office hours, as it is a great opportunity to get to know each of you, and to discuss psychopathology—a topic I am obviously very interested in! This time can be used to discuss course materials and assignments, ask more detailed questions about the lectures, discuss career choices, ask for reading suggestions, or prepare for assignments. Remember, I am 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. I expect to meet with you each at least twice (to discuss the assignments and projects or cover career questions)—I leave it up to you to schedule these meetings with me, so please don’t be shy.

**COURSE FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS**

The course will be conducted in a seminar format and will include a combination of lecture and discussion. For the first 2/3rds of each class, I will present relevant material (via PowerPoint lectures and question/answer format). The final portion of each class will be dedicated to discussion of the readings and student presentations. It is hoped that the combination of these methods will allow you to develop a sophisticated understanding of both the science and practice of adult psychopathology.

As a student in the class, you will be expected to come to class prepared to participate, having completed the readings and assignments on time. It is my goal to create an atmosphere that is conducive to lively and free exchange of ideas. This depends, in part, on your being well prepared and engaging fully in class discussions, and I will expect everyone to contribute to discussions. The value of the course to you will depend, to a significant extent, on how much you engage the learning opportunities provided.

**EVALUATION**

I have designed the assignments to be relatively short: the purpose is to maximize your learning experience (and the classes experience as a whole), but not weigh on your busy schedules. Course evaluation of learning will be carried out through four major activities: (1) class participation; (2) completion of weekly written summaries, (3) class presentations, and (4) a short written paper.

Points for these activities will be distributed as follows:

*Class participation (15%).* You will be evaluated on the degree of your active involvement in the class; specifically, this includes coming to class with questions, ideas, and information to share and generally making apparent the degree to which you are engaging with and understanding key course concepts, principles, and knowledge. I make the slides from my presentations available on the wiki. I encourage you to print them out and bring them to class (you won’t have to take too many notes then, and can focus on the material content instead).
The goal of evaluating class participation is to foster a context in which we are all actively engaged in the process of learning. The value of the class will be determined in part by the quality of class discussions. Your grade will be adversely influenced only if you fail to participate in class and engage with the material.

Note: Some class periods will include more time to discuss than others (depending on if there are organized assignments during a given day). This will also depend on the flow of the lecture portion, which can take longer depending on ongoing questions and the depth of material in a given week. I favor a more organic approach to each week’s material so it is likely that the format will vary depending on what is happening. This also relates to important new articles or issues in our field which arise during the course of our fall semester.

**Weekly written summaries (35%).** Each week, you are required to share by 8 pm on Wednesday evening a written summary (one paragraph max) of your response to the weekly assignments. Please post these responses in the discussion section on the course wiki. Remember, reactions can be as brief as a 3–4 sentences. Clarity of expression is important but length is not. It is not an accident that this is worth more than any of your other assignments— you are expected to read each of the articles, and to process the information thoroughly.

The goal of these weekly summaries is to facilitate your preparation for class by providing a framework for you to reflect upon what you have read and practiced before coming to class. Your grade will be adversely influenced only if you fail to complete weekly summaries or if your summaries reflect that you either did not complete the reading or that you did so in a very cursory manner. If you miss a class, you are still expected to do the reading and turn in a weekly summary for that class.

Your summaries should generally provide integrative comments or questions on the readings. You may address: What problems did you perceive wrong with the argument being espoused? How does the reading relate to other issues that have been previously discussed or discussed elsewhere? These will be the basis for our discussion each class period.

**Article Dissection (25%).** Each week a team of 3–4 students will discuss the positive points of a target article, and then a team of 3–4 students will discuss the negative points. There will be a few stages of back and forth. The catch is that the teams will not know what position they will be asked to take until the day of the class (via coin flip). Teams are responsible for bringing treats for the class for the day they present.

The team who is assigned positive will briefly present the article, teaching the class about why the study was conducted (what hole in the literature the author’s hoped to advance), discuss the predictions/hypotheses, cover the methods (highlighting any new or exciting approaches if applicable), what the main findings are, and most importantly, what the incremental or larger advances to our knowledge in this area are.

The team who is assigned the negative will discuss if the authors were accurate or realistic about the hole in the literature, point out any problems with the hypotheses, bring up issues with methodology (if applicable), indicate any problems with the interpretation, and most importantly, discuss how a future study might better address the limitations. Please note, it is important to be realistic about the problems you brought up. For example, you have to assume
that the budgets that the studies were operated under provide practical limitations (its not enough to just say the authors should collect data on 1 million more people).

Feel free to research the background of you assigned articles- I picked some incredibly controversial articles. The Articles content do not match the weekly topics.

Also, everyone should read the target article for a given week! But do not comment on it on the weekly comments Wiki.

Note: You should be putting this type of presentation in your CV- I will show you how.

**Letter to the Editor (25%).** During your career in academia, it will be necessary for you to critically evaluate research, and having a few extra publications of your own will not hurt too! You will be expected to write a letter to the editor, commenting on a research article, presenting a new idea, or highlighting problems in a given area. The word limit (from 500 to ~1000) and the reference limit will vary, based on the journal where you choose to comment). Unless you have explicit permission from your mentor to withhold this, I expect you to submit the letter (I can help you with revisions). We will cover examples of several types of letters in class. This last few times I taught this course, many class members published their articles in top journals including Biological Psychiatry, Addiction, and Schizophrenia Research! A draft will be due first (and you will be required to meet with me to discuss revisions for your draft). The final will be due a month later.

If for whatever reasons you do not want to do the publication project please let me know. It’s a lot of work for me (mostly during the revision stages after the semester is over) and I would prefer not to put the time in if you are not 100% behind this. I do have an alternate assignment that involves completing peer review of submitted research articles that we can meet and discuss.

Deadlines. Please note: If you anticipate any problems with the course schedule, please speak to me as early as possible

**REQUIRED READINGS**

1. The course readings are based on classic and new articles that are essential to your understanding of the disorders covered in this course. You should retrieve these from the wiki, print then, and mark them up heavily. These articles can serve you again and again in your career (In fact I still have the ones from my Psychopathology class saved in my file system). My philosophy is that I assign you only critical readings, respectively few pages a week for the most part (so you are not overloaded, and so you can spend time and care with the materials), but it is absolutely essential that you do the readings. Some weeks there is more than others- it balances out over the course of the class.

2. You should buy the DSM Five; its expensive but you will use it a lot over the coming years.

**COURSE WIKI**
The course website will contain digital copies of the syllabus, power-point slides for each lecture and research articles.

a. Go to: http://psych.colorado.edu/wiki/
b. Login with codes: Username = mittal5433; Password = psychopath
c. Select Psychopathology 5433- Mittal – Fall 2014
d. You will be directed to a homepage where you will be able to download or print course materials as well as discuss the readings with the class.

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

Attendance
The course is designed to integrate readings and material presented in class. It is important to read before each lecture and that you attend all class sessions.

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]. 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 assignment 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 a class 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.

**SCHEDULE:**

**Week 1 (August 29):** Introduction to Adult Psychopathology: Cover the Syllabus; Discuss a Brief History and Classification.

*Readings:* Prior to the 1st class, you will have read:

**Week 2 (September 5th):** The Psychosis Prodrome and Schizophrenia

*Readings (don’t forget to send your comments by Wednesday evening):*

**Week 3 (September 12th):** Psychotic Disorders continued

*Readings:*
2. Cather et al., 2008. Smoking and schizophrenia: Prevalence, Mechanisms, and Implications for Treatment. *Comprehensive Reviews*, 70-78


Week 4 (September 19th): (No Class)

Week 5 (September 26th) Depressive Disorder I (Unipolar, Bipolar I&II, Dysthymia, Cyclothymia)

Readings:


Week 6 (October 3rd): Depressive Disorder II (Causes/Treatments/Suicide) Ends early so you can attend Sayrs event

Readings:
2. Davidson et al., (02), Depression: Perspectives from affective neuroscience. Annual review of Psychology, 53, 545-574.
5. Fried, E. I., Nesse, R. M., Zivin, K., Guille, C., & Sen, S. (2013). Depression is more than the sum score of its parts: individual DSM symptoms have different risk factors. Psychological medicine, 1-10.

**Week 7 (October 10th): Anxiety Disorders I (GAD/Panic/Specific Phobias), Discuss Letter Assignment**

**Readings:**

**Week 8 (October 17th): Anxiety Disorders II (Social Phobia/OCD/PTSD).**

**Readings:**


**Week 9 (October 24th): Substance Abuse I (Types of use/abuse/dependence)**

**Readings:**

**Week 10 (October 31st):** Substance Abuse II (Causes/treatments)

**Draft/Outline of Letter due:**

**Readings:**

**Week 11 (November 7th):** Personality Disorders I (Clusters A & B)

**Readings:**


**Week 12 (November 14th):** Personality Disorders II (Cluster B continued…, C)

**Readings:**


**Week 13 (November 21st):**
Eating Disorders (Anorexia, Bulimia, Binge Eating, Obesity)

Readings:

Week 14 (November 28th): (No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday)

Week 15 (December 5th): Eating Disorders II (Causes, treatments)

Final Letter due:

Readings:


Week 16 (December 12th): ADHD and Asperger's in Adults

Readings:

~Finish~
Team 1:
a. Gustavson
b. Woodward
c. Krepps
d. Border

Team 2:
a. Bernard
b. Schneider-Carol
c. Lemon
d. Hagerty

Team 3:
a. Carol-Rebecca Schneider
b. du Pont
c. Yorkwilliams

Team 4:
a. Metcalf
b. Vanderkruik
c. Hansen