Course description and goals:

Psychology 5453 is an intensive, upper-level graduate course that provides an overview of the development of psychopathology. The course will provide students with a foundation for both future clinical work and future empirical studies focused on the development of psychopathology across the lifespan. The first half of the course focuses on models of psychopathology and the research methods that can be used to test these models. The second half of the course provides a systematic review of research regarding the development of specific psychological disorders.

To accomplish these objectives, you will be exposed to information through class lectures, assigned readings, and class discussion. These sources of information are designed to complement one another. The readings will broadly cover topics related to developmental psychopathology. The content of the lectures will overlap with the readings to a certain extent, but will also provide specific context and applied examples which will facilitate the learning process.

Readings:

The full reading list is provided at the end of the syllabus, and electronic versions of each paper are available at http://psych.colorado.edu/~willcutt/devpsych.htm. For most class sessions there are 3 - 5 required readings. In addition, the list also includes a number of additional readings for each major content area. These additional readings are not required for this course, and are intended to provide a more detailed list of resources for any of you who develop an interest in a specific area in the future. I am always trying to add new useful papers to this list, so please pass along the citations for any that you find.

Requirements:

Class attendance and participation (20% of final grade): I have structured the course as a seminar that emphasizes discussion as much as possible. Students are expected to read the assigned materials prior to class and to be prepared to discuss those materials during class.

Special topic discussion leader (20% of final grade): Once during the semester each student will co-lead a discussion of a special topic relevant to the content covered that day. I have included several examples of potential special topics in the course schedule, and am open to other topics of interest to the class.

Written assignments (10% of final grade for each assignment): You will complete five fairly brief (2 - 3 pages) written assignments over the course of the semester. The five assignments are described in detail on pages 2 and 3 of the syllabus.

Final presentation summarizing potential future directions for research relevant to development, psychopathology, or both in your own area of the field (10% of final grade): As described on page 3, the final written assignment for the course requires you to describe potential future directions in your specific area of research based on what you have learned in this course. During the final session of the class on December 11th, each of you will provide a brief 5 - 10 minute summary of these potential future directions.
Written Assignment #1
**Due Friday Sept 21, 2012 by 5:00 PM to Erik by email**

**Question to be answered in 2 - 3 pages:** Should children under the age of two be diagnosed with a mental disorder if they meet diagnostic criteria? A few notes that may be helpful:
1. I don’t think there is any one right answer for this. I just want you to wrestle with the question and provide support for your arguments.
2. It’s fine if you don’t have a definite "yes" or "no" answer - just be sure to describe your reasoning.
3. One thing that makes this tough is that we often have minimal data to guide our thinking. For this exercise it may help to think about what information would be most helpful, and it’s fine to discuss how your view would be informed by hypothetical data (i.e., "If we did the appropriate studies and discovered X, then it would argue for / against...").

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Written Assignment #2
**Due Friday Oct. 19, 2012 by 5:00 PM to Erik by email**

Part 1: Several famous (and infamous) researchers have made variations of the following argument (e.g., The Bell Curve):
Intelligence is moderately to highly heritable ($h^2 = .5 - .7$)
African Americans consistently score about 1 standard deviation lower than Caucasians on IQ tests. Therefore, the difference between these groups is clearly due to genetic differences in intelligence.

In 1 - 2 pages:
1. Explain why this argument is flawed. (besides possible test bias, which may certainly be one part of the explanation)
2. Can we prove that the argument is incorrect? Why or why not?
3. What if the heritability of IQ was 1.0? Would the argument still be flawed? Why or why not?

Part 2: In 1980, unbeknownst to the press or his scientific colleagues, an adjunct professor and athletic trainer at a small college in North Carolina developed a procedure to clone a human. One weekend he happened to see a high school basketball game starring a young man named Michael Jordan. The researcher was so impressed by his basketball skill that he surreptitiously borrowed a few cells during Jordan’s regular physical examination. He used these cells to test his procedure, and was able to develop five perfect genetic replicas of Jordan. All five were adopted and raised by nurturing local families, with the agreement that the children would attend the researcher’s university when they were old enough.
Over the next twenty years Jordan achieved greater and greater success, eventually leaving little doubt that he was the greatest player to ever play the game. The delighted professor watched from afar, and assumed that as soon as the clones were old enough to attend college he would cement his legacy as the person who brought a national championship to his University.
The boys did indeed all play basketball for the university. However, much to the professor’s dismay, none were as tall, quick, or agile as the original. Moreover, they seemed to lack the drive and competitiveness necessary to succeed at the major college level. The team was eliminated in the first round of the national tournament each of the first three years that the boys attended the school, and did not qualify for the tournament during their senior year.

Answer the following questions in 1 - 2 pages:
1. What are some plausible reasons why the team of clones did not work out as well as the professor had hoped?
2. Why is it not surprising that none of the clones turned out to be as good at basketball as the original? Is it likely that they were better than the original at some other things?
You have just been appointed all-powerful Emperor of Psychopathology. Your first task is to decide how to resolve several controversies. Choose one of the following questions:

1. How should mood and anxiety disorders be clustered, combined, or split in DSM-V? In 2-3 pages, describe the optimal classification system for these disorders.
2. How should externalizing disorders (ADHD, ODD, CD, and antisocial personality disorder) be clustered, combined, or split in DSM-V? Should psychopathy be part of the diagnostic criteria? What about relational aggression?
3. Where does bipolar disorder fit in the overall structure of disorders in DSM-V. Does it exist in children at all? How does it relate to adult bipolar disorder? How do we understand the strong relations between childhood-onset mania and ADHD, anxiety, and depression?
4. How would you cluster or separate the DSM-IV pervasive developmental disorders in DSM-V?
5. I am also very open to other topics for this assignment, so please come talk to me if you are interested in writing about another area of controversy.

A few things that it may be useful to consider:

1) Covariance and comorbidity among the disorders
2) Factor analyses of the disorders across development
3) Developmental course
4) Genetic and environmental influences
5) Neurotransmitter correlates
6) Neuropsychology / neuroimaging
7) Treatment Response

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Written Assignment #4:

**Due by Tuesday, December 11, but try to do it sooner**

As you read articles in the popular press, watch for articles that make an "error in thinking" about psychopathology. Newspapers, magazines, and the internet are all fine - just make a copy of the article or send along the link so I know what you read. In 2 - 3 pages, describe the error that you spotted, and explain why it is an error. Then, in your role as empathic skeptic, discuss why you think the error was made. Things to think about could include:

1. Why does the error matter in the big picture?
2. Why was the author susceptible to the error?
3. Did the original source of the information play a role in the error? (i.e., did the author of the article just misinterpret the source, miss a subtle point, or frame the information from the source in a way that contradicts its content, or was the original source material misleading?)
4. Why might members of the public be susceptible to the error?
5. How would you change the story? Is the information in the article simply wrong, or is it a more subtle mistake that could be presented more appropriately by providing adequate context, discussion of caveats, etc.?

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Written Assignment #5

**Due Tuesday, December 11**

For the final 2 - 3 page written assignment I want you to think about your own specific research area. Based on what we’ve learned in this course, what are some important directions for future research relevant to developmental issues, psychopathology, or (ideally) both? During the final session of the class on December 11th, each of you will provide a brief 5 - 10 minute summary of these potential future directions.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
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<td>9/11</td>
<td>THEORETICAL MODELS AND SYNDROME VALIDITY</td>
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<td>9/18</td>
<td>COMPLICATING FACTORS: CULTURE / GENDER / COMORBIDITY</td>
<td>Possible special topic: How do we understand the role of culture and gender in the development of psychopathology? <strong>Written Assignment #1 Due Friday 9/21</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/25</td>
<td>ETIOLOGY I: EVOLUTION AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY. GUEST PRESENTATION BY MATTHEW KELLER, PH.D.</td>
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<td>10/2</td>
<td>ETIOLOGY PART II: BEHAVIORAL AND MOLECULAR GENETICS</td>
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<td>10/9</td>
<td>NEUROBIOLOGY AND NEUROPSYCHOLOGY</td>
<td>Possible Special topic: Will genetic or biological markers / endophenotypes be useful for clinical purposes? <strong>Written Assignment #2 Due Friday 10/19</strong></td>
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<td>10/16</td>
<td>ADHD AND LEARNING DISABILITIES</td>
<td>Possible Special Topic Discussion: Pros and Cons of Exclusion Criteria: the case of ADHD and Autism</td>
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<td>10/23</td>
<td>CONDUCT DISORDER AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR</td>
<td>Possible Special Topic Discussion: Why are there sex differences in the prevalence of conduct disorder?</td>
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<td>10/30</td>
<td>PERVERSIVE DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS / MENTAL RETARDATION: GUEST PRESENTATION BY NOMITA CHHABILDAS, PH.D.</td>
<td>Possible Special Topic Discussion: Why is the prevalence of autism increasing?</td>
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<td>11/6</td>
<td>DEVELOPMENT OF MOOD DISORDERS</td>
<td>Possible Special Topic: Where does bipolar disorder fit in our taxonomy of developmental psychopathology?</td>
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<td>11/13</td>
<td>DEVELOPMENT OF ANXIETY DISORDERS</td>
<td>Possible Special Topic: Causes of comorbidity between anxiety and depression</td>
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<td>11/20</td>
<td>THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/27</td>
<td>DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS: GUEST PRESENTATION BY VIJAY MITTAL, PH.D.</td>
<td><strong>Written Assignment #3 Due Friday 11/30</strong></td>
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<td>12/4</td>
<td>FLEXIBLE DATE:</td>
<td>I have intentionally built some flexibility into the final weeks of the schedule so that we will be sure to have time to tie loose ends. We will also can tailor the course to match the specific interests of the students. We will briefly cover eating disorders, PTSD, and OCD / Tic Disorders, along with other specific areas of interest that we identify together. Readings will be distributed or posted on the website after we decide on the exact topics to be covered. Possible Special Topic: Does Sexual Abuse Lead to Negative Outcomes?</td>
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<td>12/11</td>
<td>WRAP-UP AND STUDENT PRESENTATIONS: FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN YOUR SPECIFIC AREA</td>
<td><strong>Written Assignments #4 and #5 Due in class on 12/11</strong></td>
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NOTE ABOUT THE READINGS:

As noted earlier, this section lists several required readings for each class session, along with a much more extensive list of supplemental readings. You are only responsible for the readings marked "required". The supplemental readings will be covered as part of the lecture on that topic, but you are not required to read those papers. They are listed here as a resource for additional details about the content covered in class.

8/27: INTRODUCTION

Required Readings:


9/11: THEORETICAL MODELS AND SYNDROME VALIDITY

Required readings:


Supplemental readings: Categorical vs. dimensional models of psychopathology


Supplemental readings: Developmental models and continuity between children and adults


Supplemental readings: Development of DSM-5


Supplemental readings: Testing structural models of developmental psychopathology


Required Readings:

Supplemental readings: Cultural factors

Supplemental readings: Sex differences

Supplemental readings: Measurement issues

Supplemental readings: Comorbidity
Required Readings:

Supplemental readings: Evolution and psychopathology
10/2: ETIOLOGY PART II: GENETIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISK FACTORS

Required Readings:


Supplemental Readings: Epigenetic effects

Supplemental Readings: Environmental risk factors


Supplemental Readings: Behavior Genetic Methods


Supplemental Readings: Family risk factors


Supplemental readings: Gene X environment interactions


10/9: NEUROBIOLOGY AND NEUROPSYCHOLOGY

Required Readings:


**SPECIAL TOPIC: ARE GENETIC OR BIOLOGICAL MARKERS / ENDOPHENOTYPES USEFUL FOR CLINICAL PURPOSES? IF NOT NOW, WILL THEY EVER BE USEFUL?**


Supplemental Readings: Neuroimaging and developmental psychopathology


Required Readings:


**Special Topic Discussion: Pros and Cons of Exclusion Criteria in DSM-V - the Case of ADHD and Autism**


Supplemental Readings: Cultural factors


Supplemental Readings: ADHD subtyping strategies


Supplemental Readings: Neuropsychology


Supplemental Readings: Treatment


Required Readings:


**Special Topic: Why are there sex differences in the prevalence of conduct disorder?**


Supplemental Readings: Nosology and DSM-5


Supplemental Readings: Developmental models


10/23: CONDUCT DISORDER AND ANTSOCIAL BEHAVIOR CONTINUED

Supplemental Readings: Neuroimaging and neuropsychology

Supplemental Readings: Psychopathy and conduct disorder

Supplemental readings: Comorbidity

Supplemental readings: Cultural factors and conduct disorder
Required Readings:


Supplemental Readings: Family factors

Supplemental Readings: Autism spectrum disorders in DSM-5


11/6: MOOD DISORDERS

Required Readings:

**SPECIAL TOPIC: WHERE DOES BIPOLAR DISORDER FIT IN OUR TAXONOMY OF DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOPATHOLOGY?**
DSM-5 proposed criteria for Disruptive Mood Disorder.
   [Note that this has been renamed as Disruptive Mood disorder] DSM-5 Adolescent Disorders Work Group. Justification for Temper Disregulation Disorder with Dysphoria.

Supplemental Readings: Social Factors

Supplemental Readings: Neurobiology

Supplemental Readings: Comorbidity

Supplemental Readings: Intervention

Supplemental Readings: Longitudinal and developmental models
Supplemental Readings: Family Risk Factors


Required Readings:


**SPECIAL TOPIC: CAUSES OF COMORBIDITY BETWEEN ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION**


Supplemental Readings: Developmental Models


Supplemental Readings: Family Risk Factors


Supplemental Readings: Comorbidity

Supplemental Readings: Cognition

Supplemental Readings: Treatment
11/27: PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS

GUEST LECTURE: VIJAY MITTAL

REQUIRED READINGS:

Supplemental Readings: Childhood-onset Psychotic disorders in DSM-5

Supplemental Readings: Developmental models

Supplemental Readings: Neuropsychology
**Supplemental Readings: Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**


**Special Topic: Does Sexual Abuse Lead to Negative Outcomes?**


**Supplemental Readings: Eating Disorders**


**Supplemental Readings: Precursors of Personality Disorders**


**Supplemental Readings: Substance-Use Disorders**


**Supplemental Readings: Resilience**
