

Abnormal Psychology • Fall 2009
PSY 352 • Unique #44165 • MWF 10-11AM • NOA 1.126

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Required Text: Sue, D., Sue, D. W., & Sue, S. (2007). Understanding abnormal behavior (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Course Description

In this survey course on the science and practice of Abnormal Psychology, we will review major models and definitions of abnormality, methods of assessment and treatment, many DSM disorders, and ethics. **Prerequisites:** Upper-division standing, PSY 301 and PSY 418 (or equivalent) with grades of C or better.

Exams

Three multiple-choice exams worth 100 points each will be administered during regular class times throughout the semester (see course calendar). The course is CUMULATIVE. Although each exam focuses on a particular section of the course, I expect you to retain knowledge as you go along. A comprehensive final exam (multiple-choice), worth 100 points, will be administered during the prescheduled official final examination time for this course, which is set by the Registrar. Questions on the final exam will be drawn from across the semester, and will require students to integrate and apply information from the entire course.

Four essay assignments will be administered during regular class times throughout the semester (see course calendar). These writing tasks will be focused on “big questions” I want to be sure you understand, and are designed to help ensure that you are learning as you go along rather than studying in bursts for the exams. Essay assignments should be thought of as essay tests (no reference materials may be used, you need to prepare for them, etc.). However, these essays are each worth ¼ an exam grade (25 points); the four essays you complete in class are like a 5th exam in terms of their contribution to your course grade (100 points all together). Please note that essays take much longer to grade than multiple-choice tests; students will need to be patient with this process.

You may review (look at) your exams and essays in your TA’s office hours. No work will be returned to you. *Please do not attempt to engage us in interactions in which you question our grading or lobby for scoring adjustments; this is a waste of your precious time on this planet.*

Missed Work/Make-up Policy

Exams and in-class essays must be completed with the class at the time scheduled. There are very few exceptions: 1. Students for whom prior arrangements for disability accommodations have been made; 2. Students for whom the University has sanctioned absences on a particular exam day (e.g., athletes); 3. Students for whom a scheduled exam would interfere with religious practices or observance of holy days, or would preclude participation in a *major* family event. If your situation falls under one of these 3 categories, please provide the TA with your documentation and schedule your exam(s) on an individual basis with her as needed. If you miss an exam or an in-class essay unexpectedly, you may schedule a make-up exam or essay administration ONLY as follows: Present your TA with *documentation* of an unavoidable reason for having missed the exam or essay. Words to the wise: If you have a health condition that can cause significant interference from symptoms or treatment (e.g., cause you to miss class) but does not require you to see a doctor every time you’re affected, obtain a letter from your health care provider attesting to this fact—or see the Dean of Students Office for help with documentation.

Extra Credit

The ONLY extra credit available in this course REQUIRES that you be in class when I award the extra credit. I will award between 10 and 15 points of extra credit (2 to 3%!!) over the course of the semester. **SHOW UP.** I do not announce extra-credit points ahead of time, and extra-credit points cannot be “made up” or excused *for any reason*. They are EXTRA (see grade calculations below.)

Course Grades

Your course grade is based on tallying the points you earn on all the exams and essays, adding your extra credit, and dividing by 5 to yield a percentage score. We add together all the points you earned on the exams (4 exams at 100 points each, for up to 400 points) and the in-class essays (4 essays at 25 points each, for up to 100 points), for a total of 500 points. Then we add your extra credit points (bringing the maximum total to between 510 and 515 points). Then we divide by 5 to yield a percentage score. This percentage score is represented as a letter grade for the course using the following grade distribution:

A = 92 and up	C+ = 78-79
A- = 90-91	C = 72-77
B+ = 88-89	C- = 70-71
B = 82-87	D = 60-69
B- = 80-81	F = 59 and down

Percentage course grades are calculated to two decimal places and rounded to the nearest whole number, such that the lowest A- is 89.50 (which rounds to 90) and the lowest B- is 79.50 (which rounds to 80), etc.

Borderline Grades Stay Borderline: Every semester, some students score just below the borderline of the next highest grade. I have great sympathy for people who find themselves in that position, but I have also found that raising those grades simply uncovers a new group of people whose grades are near the new borderline. This situation makes everybody edgy. Therefore, my policy must be that borderline grades stay borderline. Thus, for example, an 89.49 is a B+.

Student Responsibilities

As a student in this course, you have several responsibilities: 1) attend class, 2) keep up with the reading, 3) engage yourself actively in your learning (put in the time and effort needed to learn), 4) complete exams as scheduled, 5) uphold the academic honor code, 6) take advantage of helping resources available to you if and when you need them, and 7) behave politely and respectfully toward your classmates, your TA, and your Instructor.

When in class, please silence your cell phone and keep it put away. You are welcome to use a laptop to take notes in class ONLY IF you can resist the enormous temptation to engage in off-task behavior that having a laptop in class entails. Please note that during lectures I *can* see you; it distracts me when students engage in off-task behavior involving electronic devices, and I consider it to be socially inappropriate and disrespectful. Talking in class is welcome, but only one voice is allowed in my classroom at a time – if I’m talking (or if one of your classmates is talking, or if your TA is talking) and you have something to say, please do raise your hand and wait to be acknowledged. DO NOT make side comments to your neighbors that you are unwilling to share with the rest of us.

Your TA and I hope to make attending class a pleasant and interesting experience for you, and we provide in-class extra-credit opportunities to help motivate you on days when your intrinsic motivation wanes. Class attendance is very important for doing well in this course!! However, you are adults and how you manage your time is your business – we do not routinely take attendance, and you are **not required** to tell us you’ve missed class UNLESS you are an athlete following special rules OR you miss an EXAM or IN CLASS ESSAY.

Your TA and I are here to help you. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help you to thrive in this class and truly enjoy it. Never hesitate to ask us questions. If you get a sense that you are struggling in the course, please talk to us so we can help. Even if you aren’t struggling, it’s a good idea to come to our office hours every now and then! **You don’t need a special reason to come to office hours; whenever you show up to our office hours, we will be happy to see you.**

IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS *****

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY.
