

***This is your syllabus. Please refer to it often!***

***Welcome!***

**Abnormal Psychology**

**Fall 2017**

PSY 352 • Unique #43175 • T/Th 11:00A-12:15P • Online!

**Instructor:** Jacqueline J. Evans, Ph.D. [j.evans@utexas.edu](mailto:j.evans@utexas.edu)

**Lead Teaching Assistant:** Kim Gushanas [onlinepsy352TA@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:onlinepsy352TA@austin.utexas.edu)

**Teaching Assistants:**

Rafaella Sale [onlinepsy352TA@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:onlinepsy352TA@austin.utexas.edu)

Sarah Arango [onlinepsy352TA@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:onlinepsy352TA@austin.utexas.edu)

**Course Description**

Psychology is a field that examines how and why we think, feel, and behave in the ways we do. Abnormal Psychology is concerned with those aspects of the human experience that are unusual, maladaptive, distressing, damaging, or pathological. 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. We will cover topics related to mental illness including social stigma, how to be a conscious consumer of mental health services, differential diagnosis, risk and resiliency factors, prevention, developmental psychopathology, and mechanisms by which mental health can deteriorate or improve across time. A complex, multi-variate, multi-level conceptualization of health will be emphasized, in which biological, psychological, social, and socio-cultural variables act together in complex ways to produce mental illness as well as mental wellness. Throughout the course, we will apply psychological theories and principles to everyday human experience. We hope to make the science of Abnormal Psychology accessible and understandable, and we particularly want you to see how the theories and concepts we discuss relate to your own life.

This Synchronous Massive Online Course, or SMOC, will be broadcast at specific times so that students watch it synchronously, encouraging full participation. You will log in to the class at class time to watch the lecture, ask questions, interact with your instructors and fellow students, and take tests. This class is team taught and makes extensive use of interactive instructional technology. The TAs (Valeria, Sarah, and Lead TA Kim) will be available online, live, during every class, to receive your real-time questions, host discussions, and make announcements. Dr. Jacqueline Evans is your Instructor; she leads the instructional team and administers the course. The fifth member of the instructional team is Dr. Kirsten Bradbury, who created the course content and delivered the lectures you will be watching and discussing during the class broadcast.

Instead of a traditional textbook, you will read and view assigned materials online for each class, including articles, TED talks, and a variety of multimedia materials. Instead of four regular exams, there will be a short test (i.e., a **benchmark**) at the beginning of every class. There are no set-aside exam days or final exam. There are no in-person requirements for the course even though you do attend class (you don't have to show up in person, but you do have to show-up online!).

To get a thorough understanding of abnormal psychology, we urge you to attend all the lectures as well as read (or watch) all of the online material. The best way to prepare for the daily benchmarks is to read all of the material and attend lectures. Afterward, talk with others in the class about the topics we have covered. Actively talking with others about the theories and ideas of the course helps to organize them in your mind. Be sure to take advantage of the online learning resources.

**Required Internet-enabled device.** All students must be connected to the class via Canvas every day during class using an Internet-connected computer or laptop. An internet-based cellphone/smartphone is not recommended. Please check all the technical requirements here: <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/tower/tech.html> (Links to an external site.).

- Be sure your browser is updated to the versions specified in that link. Google Chrome is the recommended browser. If you need technical assistance, email our tech support people here: [gatewaytechsupport@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:gatewaytechsupport@austin.utexas.edu).

**Online readings.** Every class has required online readings, which you will find in the Course Materials. There is no traditional textbook for this class. You can read ahead of the lecture if

you wish, but we recommend listening to the lecture first. In fact, recent research finds that students learn far more efficiently if they read the reading material after the lecture than if they do so before the lecture.

**Your Pod community.** All students will be assigned to an online Pod (i.e., a small group of students in this class). After the first class period, you will be in the same Pod over the entire semester. You and your podmates can ask questions or discuss specific points. Please be respectful of others and remember that everyone in your pod comes from a different background and has a unique set of interests.

### **IN CLASS DISCUSSION-**

**In-class research and participation.** Everything about this class is being studied. We are attempting to discover how to maximize learning and performance for all students in large classes. Consequently, all of your assignments, questionnaires, comments, online discussions, and online behavior will be saved. At the end of the course, all identifying information will be removed and the data will be used by researchers here and at other research institutions to better understand learning. Sometimes you will be given the opportunity to participate in surveys or other questionnaires about you and your views; these are optional, you are not required to answer them, and they have no bearing on your grade.

- This course may be used to fulfill the Social and Behavioral Sciences component of the university core curriculum (Core Component 080) and addresses the following four core objectives established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: communication skills, critical thinking skills, empirical and quantitative skills, and social responsibility.

**Prerequisites:** **For psychology majors** - upper-division standing and PSY301 and 418 with a grade of at least C in each; **For Nonmajors** - upper-division standing, PSY301 with a grade of at least C, and one of the following with a grade of at least C: Biology 318M, Civil Engineering 311S, Economics 329, Educational Psychology 371, Government 350K, Kinesiology 373, Mathematics 316, Psychology 317, Sociology 317L, Social Work 318, Statistics 309.

### **Assessment: How you earn your grade.**

We expect you to immerse yourself into the readings and lectures. This is an idea class as opposed to a simple fact class. We are more concerned with the ideas and implications of what Freud or Skinner thought than with their birthdays or favorite colors. All of the assessments will stress psychological concepts and their relationships to other concepts and to practical examples.

**Benchmarks.** Your entire grade in this course will be based on the daily benchmarks, participation credit quizzes (see below), and writing assignments. Usually (but not always), the benchmarks will be given during the first 15 minutes of class. The benchmarks are usually 8 multiple choice questions that are worth 1 point each (in other words, each benchmark is worth a total of 8 points). You will have 10 minutes to complete the benchmark. Seven of the questions will focus on the readings and lectures (including interviews, demonstrations, surveys, video clips, etc.) from the previous class. One of the questions will be one that you have previously answered incorrectly. (Hint: If you get a question wrong, that question--or one very much like it--could well be asked again, so make sure you understand why you got that one wrong.) If you're in the enviable position of not having gotten any previous questions wrong, then a random question will be picked from the set of previous questions. All benchmarks are cumulative and require you to apply the basic theories and information you have learned.

There will be a total of 28 lectures. You will take the first benchmark quiz during the second lecture but it won't count toward your final grade. The purpose of the first benchmark is to give everyone the opportunity to learn how the system works. However, if you get any of these questions wrong, you might see them again (or ones very much like them) and if they appear on a subsequent benchmark then they will count toward your grade. The remaining 26 classes will all have benchmarks that will count toward your final grade. You will be able to drop your four lowest benchmarks.

There are no make-up exams for illness, approved school projects, religious holidays, family emergencies, or anything else. If you are sick and can't take a benchmark, or miss one for any reason, it will count as one of the four you drop. **No exceptions.**

When you are taking your benchmark, do NOT have the benchmark open in more than one window or more than one tab in your browser. You can have other things (e.g.,

the readings, the lecture, google) open in other windows or tabs but the benchmark itself should be open in only one window or tab.

- **Fact-checking versus cheating during benchmarks.** The benchmarks are not open-book exams but you are allowed to take advantage of our fact-check policy. This means you can check your notes or other sources to check on information for an answer. However, **you are not allowed to consult other people during a benchmark quiz.** Caution: The production team has devised sophisticated computer methods to catch cheaters; you will receive an F for the entire course if we catch you cheating. If you have any questions about what counts as cheating, we encourage you to check out the student judicial services website.
- **Participation Credit Quiz (PCQ).** At the end of each class, there will be an opportunity for you to log your attendance in class. You will answer a straightforward multiple-choice question about the class content and events of the day (for example, drawing on what was discussed during a chat session).

There will be one PCQ for classes 2-28, but the first PCQ (class 2) will not count. Each PCQ will be worth 1 point. The maximum number of points that can accrue from the PCQs is 22. That means that if you have to miss 4 classes (due to illness, etc.), you will not be penalized because you can still get the maximum number of PCQ points.
- **Reviewing Benchmarks and PCQs.** Benchmark and PCQ grades are typically posted after the class period. You will be able to review your answers once grades have been released. To review your completed Benchmarks or PCQs, go to the Assignments tab on the left side of Canvas and open your benchmark from there. You will see which questions you answered correctly and incorrectly.
- **Question Queries.** If at some point in the semester you have a query about a Benchmark question (e.g., the wording appears ambiguous to you or you don't understand why a certain answer option isn't also marked as correct), you will have **ONE WEEK** from the time the Benchmark was taken to ask us about that question. For example, if you have a query about a question on Benchmark 3, taken on Tuesday, September 5th; you will have until midnight on Tuesday, September 12th to submit your query. There will be no exceptions to this rule (i.e., queries about a benchmark will not be considered more than a week after they were originally given).

If you have a query about a benchmark question, please complete the and a TA will respond to you as soon as possible.

- **Writing Assignments.** One goal of this course is to provide you with information and techniques that help you think about psychological issues. The writing requirement for this course will involve your writing 4 short thought pieces. Specific topic assignments will be announced in class. All of these assignments must be written on Canvas. The writing samples that you turn in will not be graded in a classic sense. Rather, merely turning in all the samples will assure you full credit for the writing requirement; that is, if you do the assignment, you will get a 100% for that assignment. Note that we expect you to take the assignments seriously, and we randomly check a substantial portion of the assignments for seriousness. Each assignment will be worth 8 points. Your writing assignment average accounts for 13.9% of your final grade.

You will find the Writing Assignments on Canvas after we announce they are ready.

Once there, go to the Writing Assignment that you need to complete, and then follow the instructions. When finished, press the SUBMIT button, and your life will be beautiful. You can use your own computer or any university computer in the various UT libraries or computer labs. All writing assignments must be completed by 11:59PM on the official due date. Do not procrastinate doing the writing assignments. There are no make-ups, so if you miss an assignment you will receive a zero for it.

### Course Grades

The final grade is based on your benchmark scores and the completion of the writing requirement. You can drop your four lowest benchmarks, and you can drop your four lowest PCQ's.

**Computing your final grade.** Your Final Grade will be computed in the following way:

- Each benchmark is worth a maximum of 8 points. 22 benchmarks will count toward your grade, and the maximum number of points you can earn from all 22 benchmarks is 176. The average of these benchmarks will be worth 76.5% of your final grade.

- Each writing assignment is worth 8 points. You will have 4 writing assignments total. The maximum number of points you can earn in this category is 32. The writing assignments are worth 13.9% of your final grade.
- Each PCQ is worth 1 point each. Of the 22 PCQ's that will count toward your grade, the maximum number of points you can earn is 22. The average of these PCQ's will be worth 9.6% of your final grade.

Thus the total number of points to earn is:

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 \text{Benchmarks: } & 22 \times 8 = & 176 \\
 \text{PCQ:} & 22 \times 1 = & 22 \\
 \text{Writ. assign:} & 4 \times 8 = & 32 \\
 \text{TOTAL} & = & \mathbf{230 \text{ points}}
 \end{array}$$

At the end of the semester, final grades will be assigned in the following way:

<b>A = 216-230 points</b>	<b>C+ = 176-182</b>
<b>A- = 206-215</b>	<b>C = 170-175</b>
<b>B+ = 199-205</b>	<b>C- = 160-169</b>
<b>B = 193-198</b>	<b>D = 148-159</b>
<b>B- = 183-192</b>	<b>F = 147 points and below</b>

If you are taking the course Credit-No Credit or Pass/Fail, you must make the equivalent of a D or better to receive credit or pass the course. There are no exceptions to this grading scheme.

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

**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 raising those grades would simply uncover a new group of people whose grades are near the new borderline. This makes everybody edgy. Therefore, my policy must be that borderline grades stay as they are. Thus, for example, an 89.49 is a B+. *Attempting to get me to make an exception to this policy is a waste of your precious time on this planet.*

**Extra credit, make-up exams, second chances.** There is no extra credit. There are no make-up exams. There are no second chances to improve your grades. No need to ask us after the fact. IF, however, you are STRUGGLING DURING THE SEMESTER, we want to hear from you SOONER rather than LATER. If you don't do well on your first few benchmarks, reach out to your podmates and your TA!! We are here to help.

### Community Support.

Use the resources below to help yourself be successful in class.

This semester, we will be using **Piazza** as a class-wide discussion forum. If you have questions or topics that you'd like to discuss with the entire class beyond your pod, this is the place to do it. The system is highly catered to getting you help fast and efficiently from classmates, TAs, and instructors. Rather than emailing questions to the teaching staff, we encourage you to post your questions on Piazza.

We also have a skilled team of Teaching Assistants. The TAs will have at least three contact hours each week outside of class during which they can meet in person or virtually. Contact information and office hour times and locations are TBA.

**Other support** - UT runs the Sanger Learning Skills Center in Jester Hall that offers invaluable advice on studying and note-taking techniques in general. 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.

It is common for students to feel a great deal of stress during college, and it is common for students studying about mental disorders to develop concerns about their own mental health. If you need to talk to someone, contact the Counseling and Mental Health Center at 512-471-

3515, consult the online help resources linked to our course page, or reach out to any health professional for a referral.

### **Study Tips.**

- To review your completed benchmarks, go to the Assignments tab on the left side of Canvas and open your benchmark from there. You will see which questions you answered correctly and incorrectly.

We hope you enjoy the course. Your TA's 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. Talk to us!

### **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.

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### **Schedule of Topics (subject to change)**

Th Aug 31 (1) INTRO  
T Sep 5 (2) Defining Abnormality  
TH Sep 7 (3) Theories of Abnormality  
T Sep 12 (4) Theories continued  
Th Sep 14 (5) Careers  
T Sep 19 (6) Ethics  
Th Sep 21 (7) Assessment and Diagnosis: DSM-5  
T Sep 26 (8) Anxiety  
Th Sep 28\*\* (9) PTSD and trauma  
T Oct 3 (10) Dissociative Disorders  
Th Oct 5 (11)\*\*\* Stress  
T Oct 10 (12) More stress! Psych factors in medical conditions  
Th Oct 12 (13) Mood disorders I  
T Oct 17 (14) Mood disorders II (and suicide)  
Th Oct 19 \*\*(15) Psychosis  
T Oct 24 (16) Schizophrenia  
Th Oct 26\*\*\* (17) Personality Disorders: BPD  
T Oct 31 (18) Personality disorders: ASPD / aggression & violence  
Th Nov 2 (19) Abnormal psychology in forensic settings  
T Nov 7 (20) Sleep and dreaming  
Th Nov 9\*\* (21) Sleep disorders  
T Nov 14 (22) Gender Identity  
Th Nov 16\*\*\* (23) Sexual behavior, sexual disorders  
T Nov 21 (24) Substances  
Th Nov 23 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)  
Th Nov 28 (25) Eating Disorders  
T Nov 30\*\* (26) Motivation (ADHD, learning disorders)  
T Dec 5 (27) Childhood disorders in Medical Settings  
Th Dec 7\*\*\* (28) Final Class Q & A

\*\* Denotes date writing assignment will be made available online

\*\*\* Denotes date writing assignment is due by 7pm