

Abnormal Psychology

PSY 356 (section 01), Spring 2024

TuTh 10:30 – 11:45 am; BR 120

Instructor: Dr. Amy Bacon (*she/her*) **Office:** Bradley Hall 073

Email: akbacon@bradley.edu

Student hours: By appointment. Use QR code or my calendar link to schedule



About Abnormal* Psychology

Many thoughts, feelings, and behaviors shape our everyday lives: daydreaming, feelings of sadness or anxiety, motor coordination, perception, etc.

Psychological disorders describe when these everyday characteristics are in excess, in deficit, or are demonstrated at inappropriate times, in ways that cause us problems. We will thoughtfully engage with our own experience and develop some knowledge and humility about how another person might experience thoughts, feelings, and behaviors differently than ourselves.

This semester, we will work together to develop a sophisticated and evidence-based understanding of psychological disorders and their causes. Given time limitations and the purposes of the course, not all disorders in the DSM-5 will be covered.

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* “Abnormal” is rapidly becoming an out-of-date term. [This editorial](#) describes why the “Journal of Abnormal Psychology” changed its name in 2022.

Textbook: Required readings will be posted to our Canvas page. There is no textbook to purchase for this course.

Prerequisites: This course requires successful completion of PSY 101, PSY 205, and PSY 206 or the equivalents, as determined by the department chair.

Course and Departmental Learning Objectives

The Bradley University Department of Psychology maintains five learning objectives (VOICE) across all its course offerings. These departmental objectives and how they align with the objectives of this course are:

| Departmental Objectives | Course objectives <i>By the end of this course, you will be able to:</i> |
|--|---|
| Values: Identify and adopt the values of our discipline (ethical, scientific, diversity). | Express ways in which race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sex, gender, and other forms of identity influence risks for and manifestations of common psychological disorders. |
| Operationalize: Ability to engage in scientific measurement of psychological phenomena. | Define and describe diagnostic criteria for common psychological disorders. |
| Interpret: Analyze data and identify plausible expectations based on hypotheses. | |
| Communicate: Ability to communicate knowledge within our discipline to the broader community. | |
| Evaluate: Rely on scientific reasoning and evidence to arrive at nuanced conclusions | Analyze the theoretical and empirical evidence supporting the causes and maintaining factors for common psychological disorders. |
| | Analyze and evaluate a specific issue or aspect of a psychological disorder, using sources relevant to mental health professionals. |

Class Format and Attendance

Format: This class will be delivered in-person. You can expect class periods will mostly consist of lecture, with occasional class-wide discussion. Dates slated for graded small-group discussions and exams are noted in the course schedule.

Attendance: We will miss your presence if you cannot make it to class. For days with graded activities, you can either use a Life Token (pg 5) or take advantage of our “best of” grading policy for some assignments (pg 3), depending on the activity.

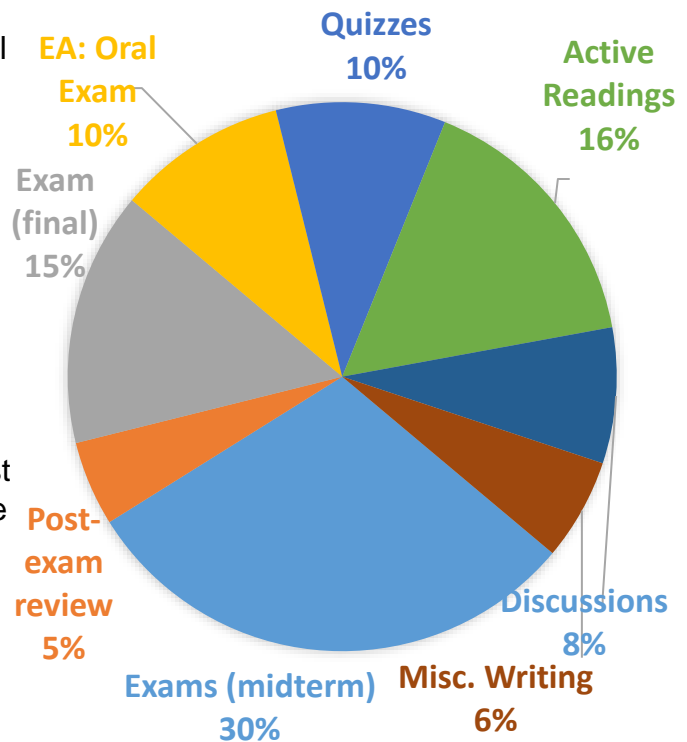
- When I am unable to attend class, I will either (a) cancel our class meeting, or (b) post a video lecture. I will notify you in advance via email & Canvas.

Assignments & Grading

Grades will be based on a combination of quizzes, exams, discussions, and readings, for a total of **1000** points.

| Activity | # during the semester | Points per activity | Total points | % of overall course grade |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Exams (midterm) | 3 | 100 | 300 | 30% |
| Post-exam review | Best 2 of 3 | 25 | 50 | 5% |
| Exam (final) | 1 | 150 | 150 | 15% |
| Empirical Article: Oral exam | 1 | 100 | 100 | 10% |
| Quizzes | Best 10 of 11 | 10 | 100 | 10% |
| Active Readings | 4 | 10 – 50 | 160 | 16% |
| Discussions | Best 2 of 3 | 40 | 80 | 8% |
| Misc. Writing | 2 | 10 – 50 | 60 | 6% |

1. **Exams (midterm):** Three (3) exams will be administered this semester. Exams will occur in-class and will consist of multiple choice and essay questions.
2. **Post-exam reviews:** In the class meeting after each midterm exam, you will “retake” the multiple-choice questions from the exam, this time with your classmates and notes available.
3. **Exam (final):** The final exam will consist of one essay (50 points) and 50 multiple choice questions (two points each) covering content across the entire semester. Our University-assigned final exam time is **Tues, May 7 at 12:00 pm.**



Assignments & Grading (*continued*)

4. **Empirical Article: Oral Exam:** You will meet with me and other classmates to discuss your reading of an assigned empirical article. You will be provided the article and relevant questions in advance of our meeting.
5. **Quizzes:** Eleven (11) quizzes will be administered; the best ten (10) quiz scores will be used to calculate your final grade. Quizzes will be online and available on Thursday after class and are due at 10:30 am the following Tuesday. Quizzes consist of 10 multiple-choice questions and are untimed.
6. **Active Readings:** There will be four (4) active reading assignments during the semester. We will be using the webapp Perusall (see pg 6) to collectively comment on readings.
 - a. **Syllabus annotation** (due Jan 25): Our syllabus describes our goals, assessments, and policies for the course. This also serves as an introduction to the Perusall app. *10 points.*
 - b. **Empirical article Practice** (due Feb 1): The class will collectively read an empirical article and take a quiz over its content. We will use this knowledge to help interrogate the article in an upcoming Discussion assignment. *60 points.*
 - c. **Review Article** (due Mar 7): You will read and annotate a theoretical review paper on the topic you've selected. *60 points.*
 - d. **DSM Criteria** (due Apr 11): You will read the full DSM entry for the disorder you've selected, and link information to previous assignments. *60 points.*
7. **Discussions:** There will be three (3) small-group discussions held during class time. Your best two (2) scores will be used to determine your final grade.
 - a. **Disorder group meeting** (Feb 1): This will be your first meeting with your disorder-group that you will have throughout the semester. During this meeting you will decide on a specific topic of interest within the disorder you've been assigned.
 - b. **Empirical article discussion** (Feb 6): We will use the article you read for the "Empirical Article Practice" Active Reading assignment and work together to interrogate its content. You will be expected to answer similar kinds of questions in your "Empirical Article: Oral Exam" assignment.
 - c. **Personal Experience discussion** (Apr 9): You will meet with other classmates reviewing the same disorder to share information about your media source from your *Personal Experience* essay and synthesize across sources
8. **Misc. Writing:**
 - a. **Disorder topic selection + brainstorm** (Jan 25): Throughout the semester, you and a small group of classmates will do a deep dive into topic related to a specific psychological disorder. For this assignment, you will rank order the disorders you're interested in investigating this semester, and brainstorm possible topics. *10 points.*
 - b. **Personal experience essay** (Apr 4): You will locate and summarize a media source where a person describes their personal experience with a psychological disorder. *50 points.*

Academic Course Policies

| | |
|--|--|
| Academic Integrity | <p>I believe that everyone in this course is fundamentally honest. Part of my work this semester is to help you learn conventions of scholarly ethics. This includes making sure our sources of information are appropriately cited and making it clear to our audience and instructor which ideas come from us, and which come from other sources.</p> <p>If you would like to read more about what Bradley University considers to be a breach of academic integrity, you can find that information here in the Undergraduate Catalog. Some examples include plagiarism, use of generative artificial intelligence (i.e., Chat GPT), deliberate deception, or sharing class materials (including quiz/exam questions) to classmates and/or an outside website or repository.</p> |
| Extended absence from class | <p>If there are events that will keep you away from class for an extended period (e.g., illness, physical injury, death in the family, etc.), please <u>reach out to me ASAP</u>. I will do my best to work with you and your situation to allow you to successfully complete the class.</p> <p>The Center for Student Support Services (309-677-3910) or Bradley Health Services (309-677-2700), can also provide for additional assistance and support for this and other courses.</p> |
| Late Work, Life Tokens, & Doing your Best | <p><i>Life happens.</i> There may be times this semester when unexpected situations get in the way of your best intentions to study, complete an assignment on time, or even attend class. I am implementing “Life Tokens” to account for these situations and give you needed flexibility.</p> <p>Every student will start the semester with four (4) Life Tokens. One token can purchase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A 24-hour extension on a quiz, exam*, or assignment deadline (not eligible for Discussions)• A re-take of any exam scoring < 90%• A re-submission of any assignment scoring < 70% <p>* = see Canvas page for limitations</p> <p>I ask that you complete a form on Canvas to let me know when you want to use one of your life tokens. Additional life tokens can be earned during the semester. You can also reach out if you use all your life tokens, but still need additional flexibility.</p> |

Technology: Canvas and Perusall

Canvas (<https://learn.bradley.edu/>). All course materials and assignments will be shared through this platform. You will submit assignments through this tool. This is also where you'll see your grades in this course.

Perusall is a collaborative annotation app embedded in Canvas where we can collectively comment on readings. This app has not been vetted by Bradley University. However, their [privacy policy](#) indicates that they do not distribute your data and that it is [compliant with FERPA privacy](#) guidelines. If you do not agree to use this site, let me know so we can identify another way to complete these assignments.

Resources

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Lecture Slides | I will post a draft of my lecture slides in advance of class, to facilitate note-taking. These are available on Canvas. |
| Lecture Recordings | I will record all lectures, in the event of an absence or to help review material in advance of exams. |
| Study Guides | A study guide will be released in advance of each exam to help direct you to content you should focus on in your studying. |

Contact Information and Student Hours

| What | More info. | Link/Address |
|---------------|---|--|
| Email | Great for letting me know about personal information | akbacon@bradley.edu --or-- Use the "Inbox" feature on Canvas |
| Student hours | Opportunities to discuss class material, individual issues related to class performance, or whatever is on your mind! Available online or in-person. | By appointment. Use this calendar link to schedule. Link to appointment calendar also available on Canvas. |

A note about email: I answer emails during work hours (8 am – 4 pm) on weekdays. You can expect an answer within 24 hours to emails sent on weekdays. Emails sent during evenings or weekends may get a somewhat later response.

Accessibility & Accommodations

When life gets hard: I want every student to be able to succeed in this class. Examples of things that might affect your performance in class include (but are not limited to): physical and mental health issues, learning disabilities, grief, family obligations, work obligations, and trouble securing basic resources (food, shelter, transportation, technology, healthcare). If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know *as soon as possible*. I want to work with you to develop a strategy that allows you to meet both your needs and the requirements of this course.

Accommodations: Those seeking accommodations based on documented disabilities should register with Student Access Services. The Office is located at 100 Heitz Hall and the phone number is (309) 677-3654. The Student Access Services website is <https://www.bradley.edu/offices/student/sas/>.

If you feel you have learning challenges that are *not* officially documented, please let me know, and I will be happy to work with you towards a solution.

Academic coaching: I invite you to come and meet with me if you find any aspect of this course challenging. For broader assistance, you can schedule one-on-one meetings with Academic Coaches in Bradley's Academic Success Center (<https://www.bradley.edu/offices/student/asc/>) for assistance with note-taking, time-management, writing, test-taking, and more.

Mental Health & Well-Being

We will be discussing difficult topics in class, including suicide, discrimination, sexual abuse and assault, physical abuse and neglect, and other challenging events. These are unavoidable topics given the focus of our course. If these topics cause you significant distress, please let me know, so we can make plans to prioritize your mental health.

While I am a clinical psychologist, I cannot be both your instructor *and* your therapist. I want to encourage you to talk to me about things that are interfering with your ability to survive and thrive here at Bradley. There may be a point, however, where we need to work together to find another person who can be more dedicated to providing outside-the-classroom help.

The Bradley University Counseling Center is in the Markin Center room 52 (bring your student ID to get in!). Appointments are available by calling 309-677-2700 or by emailing bradleyhealthservices@fsmail.bradley.edu. After-hours emergency help is available at 309-677-3200 (FYI: this will go to a messaging service who will contact an on-call physician, who will return your call).

Additional crisis, self-care, and academic wellness resources are available in our [Module 0](#) on Canvas under "Mental Health Resources"

Discussion Principles

1. **Disagreement vs disrespect:** Disagreement and a challenging of ideas in a supportive and sensitive manner is welcomed. Hostility and disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.
2. **Disclosure:** Its possible you have some personal experiences that fit topics this semester that you would like to share. I want to encourage everyone to be respectful and not share information about your classmates to others. At the same time, I want to caution those that share information that I cannot guarantee those stories stay within our class.
3. **Managing conflict:** If you are made to feel uncomfortable by something that is said or done by myself or a classmate, *please let me know*. Talking about this to your instructor might be difficult. If this is the case, I encourage you to get this information to me through a trusted faculty member or a peer. I want all students to feel valued and heard.

An Inclusive Classroom

Psychology, in general: Psychology is based on the principles of objectivity and the scientific process. However, the field of psychology is not free of prejudice and bias. Much of the evidence we currently have on human behavior has largely been acquired from WEIRD (White or Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010) and other privileged population samples and has mainly been conducted by similarly privileged scientists. By using such a limited lens to examine the spectrum of human behavior, we run the risk of overgeneralizing findings and misinterpreting evidence.

The Bradley University Department of Psychology acknowledges the continued need to improve diversity, inclusion, and equity in our classrooms, laboratories, practica, and campus communities. We believe our community is enhanced by the rich experiences and diverse perspectives of its members. We also believe that we are all responsible for actively creating this community by encouraging the expression of diverse perspectives, challenging instances of discrimination, and promoting inclusion and equity amongst students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

For this class, specifically: I acknowledge that the modern study of psychopathology still largely operates under an ethnocentric (European American) lens. However, the cultural and individual identity groups to which we belong may expose us to unique stressors, support features, or may influence how we express mental distress. I have attempted to select materials that represent a variety of racial, ethnic, gender, gender identity, age, religion, and ability perspectives. Please contact me with suggestions about improving our course material.

Tentative Semester Schedule

All dates are tentative. See Canvas for official schedule of topics and due dates

| Week | Date | Topic | Assignment |
|------|---------------|--|--|
| 1 | Thu., Jan. 18 | Welcome to Class! | |
| 2 | Tue., Jan. 23 | History of Psychopathology | |
| | Thu., Jan. 25 | Definitions of Abnormal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active reading: Syllabus annotation • Disorder Topic Selection + Brainstorm |
| 3 | Tue., Jan. 30 | Theories: Biological | Quiz #1 |
| | Thu., Feb. 1 | Disorder group meeting* Theories: Psychological | Active reading: Empirical article practice |
| 4 | Tue., Feb. 6 | Empirical article discussion* Theories: Psychological | Quiz #2 |
| | Thu., Feb. 8 | Theories: Sociocultural | |
| 5 | Tue., Feb. 13 | Theories (Catch-up) | Quiz #3 |
| | Thu., Feb. 15 | Clinical Science | |
| 6 | Tue., Feb. 20 | Exam #1 | |
| | Thu., Feb. 22 | Post-exam review #1* Stress, Trauma, & PTSD | |
| 7 | Tue., Feb. 27 | Empirical article: Oral Exam* | Quiz #4 |
| | Thu., Feb. 29 | Stress, Trauma, & PTSD | |
| 8 | Tue., Mar. 5 | Anxiety Disorders | Quiz #5 |
| | Thu., Mar. 7 | Anxiety Disorders | Active Reading: Review Article |
| 9 | Tue., Mar. 12 | <i>Spring Break</i> | |
| | Thu., Mar. 14 | | |

*Topics followed by a * reflect graded in-class activities and assignments

Tentative Semester Schedule (*continued*)

Weeks 1 – 9 on previous page

| Week | Date | Topic | Assignment |
|------|----------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 10 | Tue., Mar. 19 | Anxiety Disorders | Quiz #6 |
| | Thu., Mar. 21 | Depressive & Bipolar Disorders | |
| 11 | Tue., Mar. 26 | Depressive & Bipolar Disorders | Quiz #7 |
| | Thu., Mar. 28 | Exam #2 | |
| 12 | Tue., Apr. 2 | Post-exam review #2* Schizophrenia | Quiz #8 |
| | Thu., Apr. 4 | Schizophrenia | Personal experience essay |
| 13 | Tue., Apr. 9 | Personal Experience discussion* Schizophrenia | Quiz #9 |
| | Thu., Apr. 11 | Topic TBD | Active Reading: DSM criteria |
| 14 | Tue., Apr. 16 | Personality Disorders | Quiz #10 |
| | Thu., Apr. 18 | Personality Disorders | |
| 15 | Tue., Apr. 23 | Psychopathology & Law | Quiz #11 |
| | Thu., Apr. 25 | Exam #3 | |
| 16 | Tue., Apr. 30 | Post-exam review #3; Final exam preparation | |
| | Tue., May 7 12 pm | Final Exam | |

*Topics followed by a * reflect graded in-class activities and assignments