

## **ABNORMAL AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

### **Contact Details:**

	<b>Dave Smalley</b>	<b>Suzanne Dash</b>
Office:	PEV1 2C3	PEV1 2D6
Phone:	ext 2547	ext 7551
Email:	davidsm@sussex.ac.uk	s.dash@sussex.ac.uk

---

### **Course Outline:**

The course will introduce the student to the most common psychological disorders, but is selective rather than exhaustive in its choice of topics. In the introductory session we will consider the classification system used for mental illness, and the different approaches that people have used to study it. Subsequent seminars will include lectures and activities on the critical areas of psychological disorders: substance abuse, depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, personality disorders and identity disorders. The aim will be to provide a description of the syndrome and the diagnostic criteria, an introduction to key theories of causation and some experimental evaluation of those theories. As a general framework, we will compare and contrast key theories of causation, namely, social, biomedical and cognitive models, and how these have influenced approaches to treatment. For each disorder, the seminars will be based on research issues - encouraging critical evaluation of research strategy and outcome, in relation to major theories of causation.

This course will consist of 8 seminars, 3 hours each in length.

### **Course Assessment:**

Essay plan (500 words, due 2 <sup>nd</sup> seminar week 2):	10%
Essay (2500 words, due Thursday week 4):	60%
Oral presentation (15 minutes, during class time):	20%
Course report on class participation:	10%

### **Learning Objectives:**

The aim of this course is to provide an introduction to the main diagnostic categories of psychological disorders, the major theories of causation and approaches to treatment, and to encourage you to appreciate the links between theory and treatment of those disorders (from cognitive, behavioural and biological perspectives), and the ethical issues held within. Theory and treatment of substance abuse, phobias, panic, generalised anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, OCD, depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, borderline and antisocial personality disorders, dissociative disorder and dementia are discussed within a psychological framework. Lectures and readings provide both an overview of current issues, and more a detailed background for the specific questions considered in seminar activities. The seminars aim to stimulate and develop students' skills in:

- (1) independent bibliographic research,
- (2) critical analysis of literature and ideas,
- (3) presenting seminar papers and
- (4) providing constructive criticism of other students' work.

Written skills are developed through essay assignments. It is essential that students recognise that full attendance is vital if you are to succeed in the course.

### **Core reading texts:**

Davey, G.C.L. (2008). *Psychopathology*. Chichester: BPS Wiley-Blackwell.

**Library Ref: RC 454 Dav**

Davison, G.C., & Neale, J.M.(2009).*Abnormal Psychology (8<sup>th</sup> Ed.)*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

**Library Ref: Short and long-term RC 454 Dav**

---

## **General overview of seminar topics:**

### **Seminar 1:** *Introduction to Abnormal Psychology and the Diagnostic Statistic Manual (DSM).*

This introductory session entails a general introduction to the study of psychology, bringing those without a psychology background up to speed. Additionally, we will examine methods of assessing abnormal psychology (*e.g.*, case studies, laboratory studies, and questionnaires), and validity and reliability issues. We will continue by discussing how and why we classify mental disorders.

### **Seminar 2:** *Substance Abuse and Dependency*

The prevalence and comorbidity of substance misuse will be reviewed before examining the characteristics of specific substance abuse disorders (alcohol, nicotine, stimulants, sedatives and hallucinogenics). The second half of this session focuses on the aetiology and treatment of substance misuse and dependency.

### **Seminar 3:** *Depression & Bipolar Disorder*

This session will, surprisingly enough, overview depression and bipolar disorder. We will also review seasonal affective disorder (SAD), considering its justification as a psychological disorder. Specific focus will be given to discussing the different approaches to treating the disorder.

### **Seminar 4:** *Anxiety Disorders I*

This session focuses on anxiety disorders, namely phobias, panic disorder (and social phobia), obsessive compulsive disorder, generalised anxiety disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. We will consider how the disorders are explained by the biological, behavioural and cognitive perspectives, reviewing how each faction goes about treating them.

### **Seminar 5:** *Anxiety Disorders II*

The first half of the seminar will continue where the previous session left off. In the second half, we will be going through your essay plans individually to give you guidance for the extended essay due in at the close of the course.

### **Seminar 6:** *Personality Disorders*

This session will explore abnormal personality development. We will consider how personality disorders are classified within the DSM IV, and at various methods of treatment. We will look specifically at the more reliably diagnosable disorders that result in unpredictable, violent or emotional behaviour (*e.g.*, antisocial, borderline personalities).

### **Seminar 7:** *Schizophrenia*

This session will review the diagnostic issues of schizophrenia. We will explore social, biological, and cognitive factors relating to the disorder. We will also consider whether there is good evidence that schizophrenia can be treated without recourse to drugs, or whether this is incompatible with the aetiology of the disorder.

### **Seminar 8:** *Identity Disorders: Dissociative Disorder & Dementia*

This session will consider disorders that relate to identity, namely multiple personality disorder (dissociative disorder), and dementia. Discussions will consider the difficulties in diagnosis and debate how diagnosis could influence real life settings (such as responsibility for a crime committed whilst in an alternate personality). We will close with an overview of the material covered throughout the course and a feedback session.