Catalog Description, Prerequisites, Textbooks

Catalog Description: Theories and representative research about the causes and treatment of the major forms of abnormal behavior. Prerequisites: PSYC 2003


How to Contact Me

Instructor: Dana C. Leighton, Ph.D.
Office: Memorial Hall 202H
Office Phone: 479-575-4256
Office Hours: Mon, Wed, Fri 11:00am–12:00pm, Tue, Thu 1:30–3:00pm; by appointment
Email: dleighto@uark.edu • Skype: danaleighton

I am glad to be available to help you succeed in my class. I’m in my office every day, and sometimes on weekends. Stop by if you need help with your studies, or to chat about problems that are standing between you your success in this class. I’m a real friendly guy, and I’m usually in a good mood, and happy to see my students (but I can be cranky if my favorite baseball team, the Boston Red Sox, is losing, which is an all-too-frequent occurrence).

The best time to see me is during office hours. I am always available in my office at that time, so just stop by. If office hours aren’t convenient, then make an appointment with me. You might try coming by my office outside office hours, but if I am in the middle of a task that requires my focused concentration, I might not be able to be disturbed.

A few words about email. I do not check my email constantly during the day. I have found that restricting the number of times I scan for messages helps me improve my productivity. If I am busy with work for class or a research project, I may have to ignore email for a whole day (sometimes more). Please be patient if I do not respond immediately. Also please craft your email messages carefully and write with more attention to wording and details than you normally would. Email is notorious for miscommunicating motivations, intentions, and emotions.

Also, the only way I have of communicating with my classes as a group is through your university email account. Please check it regularly (or forward your email to another account). If you do not, you will miss changes in the class schedule, announcements about class, or other news. Failure to check this email account may negatively affect your grade in the class.

Please don’t phone me at home (despite appearances, I actually do have a life!). A voice mail at my office or a brief email will suffice for any immediate communication needs. I am often working on class work on weekends, and I usually check my email once or twice.

Course Overview

In General Psychology, you examined the basic ways psychologists have studied behavior, how we can explain and predict behavior, and the breadth of the field of psychology. In Abnormal Psychology, you have enrolled for a more detailed study of one aspect of human behavior — how people manifest mental illness and other abnormal behaviors, how we study their symptoms, propose causal explanations, and research
As you learned in General Psychology, we know relatively little about the causes of human behaviors. That theme will emerge again in this course, as you learn that we probably know very little about what causes abnormal behavior, although we do have some good knowledge of the symptoms and classification of psychological disorders, and the relative worth of treatments and therapies that can help people who engage in unwanted or disturbing behaviors.

In a nutshell, you will learn the history of mental disorders and treatment, the current research knowledge we have about them, and the ways we treat them. One important theme in my Abnormal Psychology course is that we are studying people, and not just behaviors. It’s important for us to understand the experience of people who suffer from mental illnesses and unwanted behaviors. To that end, we will be seeing first person accounts of what it is like to have a psychological disorder, and discussing those experiences in light of theories and practice.

This course is not easy. Trying to cover the basis for abnormal psychology in 16 weeks is not an easy task for either instructors or students. You’ll have to keep up on the reading, take good notes, participate in classroom activities, and use critical thinking skills. BUT, I'll make a deal with you. My attention is directed toward helping you (and your classmates) learn psychology and complete this course successfully (and get a good grade as a result). If you begin to feel lost or that you don’t have the academic skills you need, I will be here for you to try to focus your attention or help you acquire new skills. Your responsibility in this deal is to contact me if you feel insecure about your class situation. If I don’t notice you struggling, and you don’t tell me, it’ll only get worse for you. If you do let me know, we can work on it together.

Reading Assignments. You cannot succeed in this class if you only come to lecture. You will need to read the textbook. For each class session, your course calendar (distributed separately) will list the pages in your textbook which need to be read in order to be prepared for the class. You will need to read all assigned pages very carefully. Careful reading involves more than just reading and highlighting. It involves taking notes while you’re reading, and sometimes re-reading. It also involves testing yourself on your knowledge. This takes TIME! The usual formula is 2–3 times the number of lecture hours for reading and studying. If you cannot devote six to nine hours per week to reading and studying for this class, in addition to your other obligations, it may be a difficult class.

Course Goals

My goals for you (and me) during this course are to:

✦ Learn the ways psychologists have studied abnormal behavior in the past, and how we will continue its study in the future.
✦ Gain a more thorough understanding of how we describe, diagnose, and treat mental illness and abnormal behavior, including the use of the recently published 5th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of mental disorders (DSM-5).
✦ Review the research on the causes and correlates related to abnormal behaviors.
✦ To more completely appreciate the complexity of experiences had by people with psychological disorders
✦ Learn about local resources available to those living with or affected by mental illness, and to be able to act as a resource for others who need help or information about a mental health issue.
✦ Last but not least, to have some fun while you learn abnormal psychology at the same time.

How we’ll accomplish these goals:

All the readings, class exercises, projects, and assignments you’ll engage in are intended to move you closer toward accomplishing these goals. I have put together a full term’s worth of learning, and I hope you’ll take advantage of that planning, and participate whole-heartedly, regardless of your individual motivation for being here.
I expect you to engage in a careful and thorough reading of the textbook. As I said before, some will find it easy, and others will be challenged. All I ask is that you actively read the assigned pages, and try to connect it in some way to your own life.

During certain topics, I may include some activities we will engage in, to wake up your brains and learn more actively. Some of these activities will be group tasks, but many will be individual assignments.

**Grades and Evaluation**

One of my duties to you, the university, and to the academic enterprise is to evaluate your performance in the course and to assign a letter grade. This helps you achieve your goals, and it assures the university and other academic institutions that you have demonstrated sufficient progress toward learning psychology. So that I can fulfill that duty toward you and the school, I will be evaluating your performance using LearnSmart assignments, three exams and several reading quizzes.

**LearnSmart Assignments.** Psychology researchers have made a consistent finding in the scholarship of teaching and learning: testing improves learning. This is referred to as the “testing effect.” Therefore, I will be giving you numerous opportunities to use testing to improve your learning.

For each chapter, you will complete a LearnSmart assignment, which is a guided activity to test your knowledge and direct your studying. This is a technology that has been developed by the textbook publisher and has shown good results in improving learning and grades in courses like this. It probes your knowledge of the chapter material, and can direct you to areas of the text where you are having trouble. It will also help me know if there are particular concepts the class is having trouble with so I can better direct my teaching. You will receive further instruction for registering for Connect and LearnSmart and completing the assignments.

**Exams.** There will be five exams in this course. They may be composed of a combination of multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short essay questions, and may cover material from textbook readings, any other assigned readings, videos, and class lecture. All exams will be non-cumulative. I will give you more information about the exams as they get closer.

My general course policy is that I will not give make-up exams. The only acceptable reasons for requesting a make-up exam are (1) a family emergency, (2) a severe illness making it impossible to take the exam, or (3) a conflict with a high priority academic activity that cannot be rescheduled, all of which must be documented. Please contact me as soon as you are aware of the schedule conflict and before the day of the exam. The sooner you let me know, the more options we will have for accommodating your absence. I must receive all documentation at least a week before the exam date. If you notify me after you miss the exam, it will be too late.

**Extra Credit.** There may or may not be opportunities during the semester for you to earn some extra credit. If there are, I will announce them in class. Please do not ask me at the end of the term if there are more chances. Extra credit points will simply be added to your point total at the end of the course.
Grades. As previously stated, your grade in this course will be determined by your performance on exams and reading quizzes. Here is the breakdown of the grade distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams (5 x 60 pts)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LearnSmart assignments (14 x 4 pts)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>356</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I will assign letter grades using the following scale (percentages rounded to zero decimal places): < 60% F; 60–69% D; 70–79% C; 80–89% B; ≥ 90% A

Attendance

This is a large class, and I have not yet found a good, foolproof way of taking attendance quickly and easily in large classes. So, I will punt and not take attendance every class. But, I may take attendance periodically using a variety of methods.

I encourage class attendance because you may miss an important exercise, activity, or topic discussion that may be crucial for understanding a concept or topic. In short, come to class every day you possibly can! Also, when the end of the semester comes and you are on the edge of a letter grade, my evidence that you attended regularly can help me justify bumping it up.

If you must miss class, please talk to me about it, and I may be able to help you with any missed assignments. Also, you should make it a point to get lecture notes from one of your classmates. You might use this as a convenient excuse to talk to that attractive classmate you noticed in the first week of class! Here’s a starter: “Pardon me, [sir or madam], but I regretfully cannot attend our class next Thursday. I have noticed your thorough and careful note taking all term. Would you be ever so kind as to make a copy of your notes for me? Here’s my telephone number.” From there on, it’s up to you to get the first date notes. Good Luck!

Being late to class is strongly discouraged, but something we all might suffer once or twice in a semester. If you’re unavoidably late, please be very quiet when you enter the room so you disrupt the class as little as possible. Check with your classmates after class to see whether you missed any important announcements or information. Similarly, leaving class early is also discouraged. PLEASE inform me at the beginning of the class session if you’re planning to leave early.

Cell phones and technology in class. I make extensive use of technology in my teaching, and I am not a Luddite regarding the use of technology. However, to create an effective learning environment for your fellow classmates, I ask that you silence cell phones during class periods and turn them off completely during exams (even vibrating phones can be very distracting). I also ask you to limit use of laptop computers or mobile devices (e.g. iPad, iPhone, Kindle, etc.) to note taking or other class-related activities. If you notify me before the class that you have an urgent need to receive a call or text (e.g. sick parent, etc.) during class time, I will make an exception. Do NOT do the following things during class lecture, exams, discussion, or lab sessions:

- Text message
- Take calls or make calls
- Use your laptop or mobile device for messaging, email, web surfing, etc.

Academic Integrity

As academics, our whole enterprise is built on trust: psychologists engage in research, publish their results, and we trust that that work is genuine and truthful. When it is discovered that a scientist has falsified, tampered with, or fabricated their data, there are severe penalties. Any publications resulting from that data are retracted, causing the authors (including any innocent co-authors) to lose a publication credit. Recently,
there have been a few cases of psychologists that have lost their jobs as a result of academic dishonesty—simply put, it is not tolerated.

I strongly urge you to read and understand the college’s statement on academic integrity found on the college’s catalog and the website below. The university policy is that any instances of cheating, plagiarism, or other violations of standards of academic integrity must be reported. Here is the university’s statement on the matter:

As a core part of its mission, the University of Arkansas provides students with the opportunity to further their educational goals through programs of study and research in an environment that promotes freedom of inquiry and academic responsibility. Accomplishing this mission is only possible when intellectual honesty and individual integrity prevail.

Each University of Arkansas student is required to be familiar with and abide by the University’s ‘Academic Integrity Policy’ at honesty.uark.edu/policy. Students with questions about how these policies apply to a particular course or assignment should immediately contact their instructor.

My experience has been that academic dishonesty is very rare in my classes. When it has occurred, it is often unintentional (paraphrasing too closely to the original source, etc.). Occasionally, it is intentional where the student thought it would go undetected. Those students who have engaged in it would not have been helped greatly, and when it was discovered have incurred severe consequences.

I have a zero-tolerance policy for academic dishonesty. The trust that we have as students and faculty is essential to learning, and when that trust is undermined even by one or two individuals, it creates an unproductive work environment. In general, if it is discovered that a student has cheated on an exam or engaged in plagiarism, the penalty will be to receive no credit for the test or assignment. If I reasonably suspect cheating, but do not have definitive evidence, I reserve the right to re-administer the exam or assignment for that individual.

Accommodations for Disabilities
If anyone feels that they may require additional assistance in order to meet the goals and requirements of this course, please see me privately. University of Arkansas Academic Policy Series 1520.10 requires that students with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact me privately at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through the Center for Educational Access (contact 479–575–3104 or visit http://cea.uark.edu for more information on registration procedures).

Inclement Weather or other Natural Disaster
Here is the general policy regarding bad weather for this class:

The University’s inclement weather policy states that classes will be held unless the University officially closes. It is my intention to conduct class whenever the University is open. However, the university may decide to hold classes when it’s not possible for me to come to campus. Therefore, here are the procedures to determine whether we will have class:

1. If the campus is scheduled to be closed at the start time of class, we will not have class.
2. If the campus is open, but I cannot safely make it to campus, I will try to post a notice on Blackboard and email the class to cancel class, and a notice will be posted at the classroom. If I do not have internet connectivity, I may not be able to email you.
3. If the campus is open, I can make it to campus, and it is an exam day, but the Fayetteville public schools are closed due to weather, the exam will be postponed until the next class session. Even though there is no exam, we will still meet for class, and I will begin covering the topics we would have covered in the next class session.