Advanced Psychopathology ~ Online
Stephen F. Austin State University
Dr. Middlebrook

Instructor: Sylvia Middlebrook, Ph.D., BCBA-D
Associate Professor
Licensed Psychologist, Licensed Behavior Analyst
Office: McKibben 215E
Office Hours: MT 3:00–5:00pm; R 12:00-1:00pm; other hours by appt. or Zoom
Phone: (936) 468-4402
Email: middlebrs@d2l.sfasu.edu (preferred)
middlebrs@sfasu.edu

Required Text:

Current and original research articles and relevant case studies will also constitute a significant component of this course. Students should allow several hours of reading time per week in order to cover the DSM-5 diagnostic category being discussed, as well as to read the research articles and/or case studies.

Recommended:


Optional References
**Course Description:** This course is designed to provide students with an in-depth examination of the major forms of psychopathology, and includes exploration of different approaches to understanding and conceptualizing psychopathology. Relevant psychological theories and research, along with cultural perspectives, regarding the phenomenology and causes of psychological disorders are included. The most prevalent psychological disorders, as outlined in the DSM-5, are examined, and treatment options are reviewed. Clinical assessment and differential diagnoses of clinical case studies, including those with comorbidities and ambiguities, are high-lighted.

**Program Learning Outcomes:**

Students will be able to understand and apply psychological principles to a comprehensive understanding of diagnostic categories of psychopathology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLO</th>
<th>Proficiency Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in the study of psychopathology.</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student will understand basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation.</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student will respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to differential diagnosis of psychological disorders.</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student will understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues.</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of psychology as a science.</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Learning Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to describe and compare the principal theoretical perspectives involved in the contemporary understanding of psychopathology.
2. Students will be able to understand and explain the nosology (classification of disorders) delineated in the DSM-5, recognizing and articulating both the advantages and limitations of classification systems.
3. Students will be able to identify, define, and describe the basic forms of psychopathology as they are currently understood, addressing etiology, biology, phenomenology, behavior, cognition, affect, intrapsychic organization, and diagnostic criteria, as is pertinent to a given disorder, particularly, but not limited to, diagnostic categories of mood disorders, psychoses, personality disorders, neurocognitive disorders, and neurodevelopmental disorders.
4. Students will understand fundamental psychological approaches to the assessment of psychopathological conditions, with biosocial qualifications as needed.
5. Students will have an understanding of the role of psychopathology in the family, community, and society at large.
6. Students will develop and improve their critical thinking skills regarding the area of psychopathology, and will learn to effectively communicate their knowledge and opinions during in-depth classroom discussions.
Course Expectations and Grading

**Note:** This course is ‘located’ in Brightspace at d2l.sfasu.edu

**All course-related e-mails must be directed to:** middlebrs@d2L.sfasu.edu

Students are responsible for all announcements, news items, and all materials presented on this learning platform, so you are strongly encouraged to check it **daily**.

**Requirements:** To attain maximum benefit from this course, you will need to conscientiously read the DSM-5 assignment for the week as well as all other reading assignments, participate in online discussions, complete assignments, and take the mid-term and final exams. Optional Zoom sessions may be offered on Wednesdays (late afternoon) or on other designated days/times for discussion of the week’s topic/diagnostic category. When Zoom meetings are offered, Dr. Middlebrook will post a Zoom link in a News item the day of the meeting.

Because this is an online course, students will be responsible for doing most of the required work independently. Successfully completing this course will require diligence and self-discipline which I am confident you have developed through your life and educational experiences. Although your work must be completed on your own, collaboration with fellow students in forming study and/or discussion groups is encouraged, unless restricted (such as in the case with exams which cover case studies, and must be done individually). Your classmates as well as your Professor are valuable resources, so be ready to ask questions and collaborate with others in discussions. Awareness of the hectic pace of graduate coursework is acknowledged and appreciated, though ultimately, your success in this course is largely a function of your commitment to it.

Refer to the DSM-5 regularly so you familiarize yourself with the terminology used by clinicians, and read all supplemental readings which include, but are not limited to, journal articles, case studies, and online modules containing links and videos. Become an observer/learner in your typical environments as there are ample opportunities for casually observing the behaviors of others. Thoughtfully consider behaviors you observe in a non-judgmental way. Seek to look beyond the overt behavior and contemplate potential explanations, both external and/or internal.

One goal for the course is for you to become thoroughly knowledgeable about the psychological disorders in the DSM-5, to be capable of recognizing signs and symptoms of various mental illnesses, and to begin to understand and develop the objective, analytic, focused, ethical, culturally humble, and empathic mind-set of a clinician.

*This is an advanced graduate online seminar course that requires collaboration as well as active discussion and contributions from each member of the class. Each student is expected to make a substantial contribution to all discussions. All contributions will provide an opportunity for exchange of ideas and information.

**Weekly Discussion Points:**

**Class Discussion Leader:** Most weeks of the semester, one or more students (depending on class size) will be responsible for leading class discussion about a particular diagnosis. This will require
a recorded presentation and/or powerpoint with voiceover presentation. Presentations can be recorded via Zoom or Youtube, or through other websites.

A list of disorders will be posted in a Discussion Topic the first week. From this list, you will select two disorders about which you are particularly interested in researching or studying. These will be taken into account in assigning topics. Dr. Middlebrook will develop and post a list of dates and discussion leaders.

**Class Discussion Leader responsibilities:**

Develop a video presentation or powerpoint with voiceover about the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for the disorder, current prevalence and other relevant information about the disorder, current therapeutic treatment strategies for the disorder, recent research, etc. This will be posted for classmates to view (approximately 15 – 30 minutes).

Submit to Dr. Middlebrook two reading assignments: one will be a current journal article (preferably 2013 or more recent) regarding some aspect of the disorder (prevalence, diagnosis, treatment, etc.), and the second will be a case study.

Submit to Dr. Middlebrook two questions about the journal article and two questions about the case study for Discussion Post prompts for classmates.

Review Dr. Middlebrook’s feedback about the journal article, case study, and questions.

After receiving approval or making modifications, use the D2L Discussions format to: post the journal article and case study links, and to post the discussion questions. A brief introductory synopsis can be included in your discussion post introducing the disorder and the research.

Read and review all classmates’ posts, and respond to comments and questions.

More information will be forthcoming regarding this process and timelines. The chat feature on D2L may also be utilized.

The Class Leader’s discussion questions in the D2L Discussion post can refer to the DSM-5 diagnosis discussed in the journal article, or points connecting the journal article and case study to each other. Example: For a journal article on therapies for patients with Major Depressive Disorder or Persistent Depressive Disorder (for instance, a study about the link between adolescent depression and frequency of social media use), you could probe strengths, limitations, and future directions of the research. You could post a case study related to therapeutic treatment of an adolescent or adolescents suffering from depression related at least in part to social pressures prevalent on social media. The discussion points should be thoughtful and reflect that you have thoroughly read and carefully considered the readings and the implications of the findings.

As Class Discussion Leader, students will be graded on their presentation, the journal article and case study selection, as well as the quality of the discussion questions, their responses to classmates, and the synopsis of the diagnosis.

**Student Participation:**

For the majority of weeks during the semester, you will not be Class Discussion Leader; thus, your focus will be on reading the DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria section for the selected disorders, reading the online module and any associated links or videos associated with the disorder, and reading the journal article and case study posted by the Leader, as well as responding to the question prompts.
in the D2L discussion board, reading and responding to classmates’ discussion posts with thoughtful, in-depth comments, and viewing the Class Discussion Leader’s presentation.

Seeking out and reading additional research that you can contribute to the discussion is optional, though this can certainly enhance your knowledge base about the disorder.

**Note:** The Discussion process outlined above will become a weekly routine after the initial process has begun. Remember, in graduate coursework, often the most effective way to thoroughly learn about a topic is the opportunity to teach others about what you have learned. This format also allows you to explore current research in the field of Psychopathology, and to understand the use of the Case Study method in Psychopathology research.

**Assignments:** Several assignments will be posted in dropbox. A News Item will be posted announcing the assignment and its due date. Ample time will be allowed for completion. More information will be forthcoming.

**Mid-term and Final Exams:** Both the mid-term and final exams consist of case studies about which a number of questions will be asked. Students will read the case study, address appropriate diagnostic criteria and other relevant factors, and formulate a “diagnostic impression” as well as a relevant treatment plan. Ample time will be allotted for completion.

**Grading:**
- Discussion Leader/Presentation: 30 pts.
- Discussion posts: 100 pts.
- Assignments: 40 pts.
- Mid-term exam: 100 pts.
- Final exam: 100 pts.

Total: 370 pts.

Minor adjustments/modifications in discussions, assignments, exams, and/or grading criteria may be made as the pace of the course progresses. Additionally, the Professor reserves the right to make appropriate changes in the syllabus or requirements depending on relevant or unforeseen factors.

**Additional Course Information:**

SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**
- SFASU Counseling Services
  - [www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices](http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices)
  - 3rd Floor Rusk Building
  - 936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
Crisis Resources:
Burke 24-hour crisis line 1(800) 392-8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

Classroom Behavior: Online class behavior, including responses to classmates’ discussion posts, must be courteous and must not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (refer to Student Conduct code, policy D-34.1). Respectfulness of others is an expectation. Though students participate in class discussions, it is usually not appropriate to disclose detailed personal matters. If in doubt, ask the Professor.

Additional information:
Academic Integrity (A-9.1): "Academic integrity is a responsibility of all University faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instructions on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by University policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism." -- Stephen F. Austin State University Policies. The policy can be accessed for your review at: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Definition of Academic Dishonesty: "Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to: (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are: (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words of ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit." -- Stephen F. Austin State University Policies

Withheld Grades -- Semester Grades Policy (A-54): "Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average." -- Stephen F. Austin State University Policies.

Students with Disabilities: To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability (ODS), Human Services Bldg., in Room 325, (Phone #: 468-3004/468-1004 [TDD]) as early as possible during the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation(s) and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, refer to: http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Course Hour Justification: PSYC 5320 “Advanced Psychopathology” (3 credits) is designed to cover basic and advanced topics in psychopathology, such as diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders from the current DSM organization perspective, substance abuse, and psychotropic medications. The course typically meets 150 minutes once a week for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination period. Students typically have significant weekly reading assignments, writing assignments, are expected to take regular tests, and a final examination. These activities average at a minimum 6 hours of work each week to prepare outside of classroom hours. Online course sections contain extensive written content that includes the same information students in a face-to-face lecture sections receive, requiring students to engage the online modules for at least three hours per week. For every hour a student spends engaging with the online content, he/she spends at least two hours completing associated activities and assessments.
**PSY 5320: Advanced Psychopathology ~ Online**  
**Fall 2021 Course Schedule**  
Sylvia Middlebrook, Ph.D., BCBA-D

*Note: The instructor reserves the right to change the course calendar based on students' levels of comprehension, mastery of material and/or other circumstances.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tentative Schedule:</th>
<th>Online Office Hours:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: Organization/Overview of DSM-5; Conceptions of Psychopathology; Past &amp; Present; Clinical Assessment</td>
<td>08/25/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurodevelopmental Disorders, including Autism Spectrum Disorder &amp; AD/HD; Elimination Disorders</td>
<td>09/01/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schizophrenia Spectrum &amp; Other Psychotic Disorders</td>
<td>09/08/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bipolar Disorders &amp; Depressive Disorders</td>
<td>09/15/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety Disorders, and OCD &amp; Related Disorders</td>
<td>09/22/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma and Stressor Related Disorders</td>
<td>09/29/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissociative Disorders</td>
<td>10/06/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mid-term Exam</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somatic Symptom Disorders</td>
<td>10/13/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeding and Eating Disorders</td>
<td>10/20/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Dysphoria &amp; Paraphilic Disorders</td>
<td>10/27/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruptive, Impulse Control, &amp; Conduct Disorders</td>
<td>11/03/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance-Related &amp; Addictive Disorders</td>
<td>11/10/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Disorders</td>
<td>11/17/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanksgiving Break!</td>
<td>11/24/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurocognitive Disorders</td>
<td>12/01/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final Exam Week</strong></td>
<td>12/06/2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Zoom Dates:** This is an Online Course; therefore, the dates above reflect Wednesdays (or possibly other days) at designated times (tentatively 5:00 – 6:00 pm or 6:00 – 7:00 pm; pending students’ feedback) during which Dr. Middlebrook will be available for Zoom meetings with students from this course for questions, more in-depth discussion, comments, etc. A Zoom link will be posted each week for students who can attend. Think of this time period each week as an opportunity for a late afternoon discussion, ‘chat’ or group ‘office hour’ about psychopathology, in general, and the topic/diagnostic category being discussed that week, in particular.

*This syllabus is tentative and is subject to change.*