PSY 4378.001: Movies and Mental Illness  
Stephen F. Austin State University  
Department of Psychology  
Spring 2024

**Instructor:** Dr. Lora Jacobi

**Course Format:** Online hybrid format; the course is predominantly delivered in an online format (through modules in D2L). More than 90% of the course is delivered asynchronously with occasional Zoom sessions throughout the semester.  
**Live Zoom Meetings:** Monday 4-6:15pm is reserved for occasional Zoom sessions.  
**Office/Office hours:** M,W 4 – 6 pm; Th 4-5pm; Online and virtual meetings through multimedia by appointment (e.g., live chats, Zoom, or phone).  
**Phone:** (936) 468-1407 (office number)  
**Email for Dr. Jacobi:** jacobil@d2l.sfasu.edu (preferred) or jacobil@sfasu.edu

**Required Text:**  

**Course Description:**  
This course will evaluate the various portrayals of different forms of mental illness in films. Major mental disorders will be examined, including but not limited to anxiety disorders, dissociative disorders, mood disorders, personality disorders, substance abuse disorders, schizophrenia and delusional disorders, and neuropsychological disorders. The representation of the portrayal of psychological states in films will be assessed, as will the accuracy of the portrayal, and the social stigma and discrimination faced by individuals’ afflicted.

**Course Credit:** “Movies and Mental Illness” (3 credits) is a special topics course that addresses the cinematic portrayal of persons with mental illness. A full semester, 16-week course typically meets 150 minutes (2.5 hours) a week with 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 additional out-of-class activities average at a minimum 6 hours of work outside of class each week in a 16-week course. Online course sections contain extensive written content that includes the same information students in a face-to-face courses, which requires students to engage the online modules rather than attend F2F courses. Based on university course credits, students in this course are expected to spend approximately 3 hours per week reading and understanding the course content modules and an additional 6 hours per week reading, studying, writing assignments, etc. Thus, as a 3-credit, 16-week course, students are expected to spend an average of approximately 9 hours per week on this course.

It is strongly suggested that you **print the course schedule** and have it readily available (provided on the last pages of the syllabus). Each week, use the course schedule to guide your reading, what materials to study, written assignments, and exams. **It is imperative for your success that you follow the course schedule and that you fully read the modules in D2L and complete all corresponding assignments (i.e., discussion posts, written assignments, exams).**

**Program Learning Outcomes:**  
Students will be able to understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLO</th>
<th>Proficiency Level</th>
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<tr>
<td>The student will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
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The student will understand and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation.  

Advanced

The student will respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes.  

Advanced

The student will understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues.  

Advanced

The student will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of psychology as a science.  

Advanced

**Student Learning Objectives:**

1. To understand and discuss the social influence and role of films portraying mental illness on society and the public’s understanding of mental illness and mental illness literacy.
2. Articulate the influence that modern films have had on the development of social stigmas regarding mental illness and the public’s general awareness of mental illness.
3. Identify and explain the major cognitive and behavioral symptoms of major mental disorders.
4. Identify and explain different treatment modalities for various forms of mental illness.
5. Identify prejudice, discrimination, stigmas, and various false beliefs that have been established about different forms of mental illness through films and other influences.
6. Identify the accuracy with which mental illness is portrayed in movies, television, and cinema.
7. Critically analyze the portrayal of different forms of mental illness in films using DSM-5 criteria for mental illness.
8. Effectively express one’s thoughts and assertions about the course topics in written format.

**Course Requirements:**

1. **Online Class Participation:** Reading, viewing, and participating in all course postings is vital to your understanding of the elements of the course. Each week a series of course activities and readings will be posted; you will be expected to complete all posted readings, watch all posted videos and movies, read all course announcements, respond to questions, and make constructive comments. Weekly participation in all posted components of the course is expected. Note that I will be accessing information about how long you spent reading the pages in the modules, whether videos and movies were viewed in their entirety. All students are expected to read all course modules in their entirety and view all videos and movies therein. Attendance during Zoom sessions will also be monitored. If you do not watch a video that a discussion of paper is based on, you will not earn the points.

2. **Discussion Posts in Modules:** Throughout the course, we will be discussing different types of mental illness and portrayals in movies and films. Each week, you will read about different forms of mental illness, including the criteria for the mental illness; you will view posted videos illustrating “real life” examples of the mental illnesses covered and watch movies depicting selected disorders. Readings and online content will cover the psychological disorders and the difference in diagnostic criteria used for each type of mental illness (e.g., different types of anxiety disorders, mood disorders, etc.). This will be an interactive class that will include required a number of weekly discussion topics and posts. Your participation in the discussion posts will account for 20% of your grade.

3. **Movies:** Each week, the class will view a movie (or movies) that will feature the mental illness(es) discussed. All movies are available in the D2L modules. If you view a movie using a streaming service, you must indicate which streaming service was used and the dates and times viewed. **I monitor viewing activity, so you must watch all posted movies at normal speed for the assignments.** All movies are uploaded into the course itself; no outside streaming service is required. Even if you saw a movie previously, you must watch all posted movies (you will be viewing the movie with a different psychological lens).
4. **Reading:** All students are expected to read ALL assigned readings. Readings on time and in conjunction with posted assignments; this maximizes students’ learning and allows students to contribute meaningfully to classroom discussions. Completing the assigned readings are essential, so that you are prepared to discuss the information in the chapter and apply the information to the films viewed.

5. **Critical Thinking Papers:** Additionally, students will be expected to write critical thinking papers on the film viewed each week. There will be three thought papers assigned (10 points each). **Students will be expected to follow the directions given on each assignment.** Each assignment will be required to be a minimum of approximately 700-800 words in length (**exact word length may vary by assignment**). It is important that you adequately address the question prompts. **Please note that 900 words is not a long paper.** I will provide specific prompts/questions that will allow you to apply your knowledge of psychopathology (i.e., abnormal psychology) to a variety of cinematic portrayals. **At the end of your writing (not including your name or title), put the actual word count (e.g.," word count = 840").** Additionally, below the word count, make an honor pledge that you viewed the movie in its entirety (e.g., “I pledge that I viewed the movie in its entirety for this assignment and have not engaged in any form of academic dishonesty.”). If you used a streaming service outside of the course, you must indicate what streaming service was used and the date and time viewed. These statements are not part of the word count. Critical thinking papers are scored based on its content and the extent to which you sufficiently answered the questions posed. Additionally, these assignments will allow you to apply information about psychological concepts, knowledge of mental illness based on the DSM-5 classification system, and other aspects of abnormal psychology (e.g., best forms of treatment for specific forms of mental illness) to the movie(s) of focus. As an upper-level course, grammar, spelling, and writing quality will also be assessed. Please be sure to **double space all critical thinking papers. No cover page is needed.** Additionally, do NOT use sources outside of the text, modules, and movie to answer the question prompts. You will be provided sufficient information to answer all questions fully. Any papers using AI generated software will receive a zero. Additionally, plagiarism will be carefully monitored. Students are permitted to use Grammarly.com and to use the Writing Center on campus. Be sure to paraphrase and use citations when necessary. **Do not use google and other search engines looking for answers; students doing this are always caught.** I am obligated to report all plagiarism in any form (e.g., colluding, cheating, plagiarizing, etc.) to the Dean of Students and a zero will be assigned on the paper. Multiple offenses involving academic integrity across different courses can result in expulsion from the university. Discovering a student has cheated or plagiarized is really disheartening and disappointing to me. Academic dishonesty is not something that I enjoy dealing with, as it is time-consuming and distressing. However, I am mandated to report all infractions in order to uphold the high academic standards of the university. **If you are at all tempted to cheat – DON’T DO IT – I PROMISE THAT YOU WILL BE CAUGHT!** You will destroy your grade and face sanctions in the course and potential university-wide sanctions. Also, do not collude with other students about papers, assignments, and exams. Collusion is a form of cheating and will be reported. Both parties receive zeros on the assignments.

**IMPORTANT:** Grammar, spelling, and fluency will account for 20% of your graded assignments (2 points of the 10 total points on papers). If you have difficulty writing, I strongly urge you to use the resources provided by the Writing Center within the AARC*. You can also download and use Grammarly.com for free. This is a 400-level course and you are expected to write using correct grammar, punctuations, and proper English. Most word processing programs even highlight most spelling and grammatical errors. However, these programs are not 100% effective. Please read your assignments aloud and HEAR how it sounds (or you can have the computer read it aloud to you in Word) – if it sounds odd/hard to understand, then chances are it needs to be reworded. Each writing assignment will be worth 10 points each, for a total of 30 points of your final grade.

*The Writing Center in the AARC is a free service to students and allows you to submit papers for review and correction of spelling and grammar. Please contact the AARC for more information about this service.
A variety of movies will be assigned for your viewing throughout the course. **You must be watch each movie assigned (that is posted in D2L).** You cannot claim that you “already saw the movie – even if it is a movie that you have already seen in the past, you are required to watch all movies assigned. You will be viewing each movie through an alternate lens than in the past. You will view the film as someone who is very familiar with various forms of mental illness, including the symptoms and the DSM-5 criteria for the disorders viewed. Those who are missing an assignment must participate. You will not pass the class if you do not complete all required assignments.** All critical thinking papers must be submitted on time (substantial late fees will apply).

9. **Exams:** There are two non-cumulative exams in this course (each exam will be worth 25% of your final grade; 50 points). You are expected to be prepared for these exams (do your readings in advance, read and study all online module information posted, and watch all posted videos, utilize any/all resources provided by the instructor, and STUDY). You CANNOT “cram” for the exam and expect to do well. Spaced learning is far more effective than massed learning – space studying out in the days prior to the exam. Do not fall behind on readings and expect to catch up right before the exam. Find the method of studying your text that works best for you (whether it be highlighting and taking notes from the text). Also, pay attention in class and take notes. I will emphasize the material from which you will be tested. More information about the exam will be provided prior to its administration (be sure to read all course announcements).

**Policy on Make-up Exams:** Exams will be open for a specified period of time. Make-up exams will only be given in extremely RARE CIRCUMSTANCES and arrangements will have to be made in advance of the closing of the exam. Appropriate documentation must be presented in order to take a make-up exam, such as a written excuse from the Dean. Contact me (via email) with any concerns about the exam prior to its administration.

**Evaluation/Grading:**
1. Discussion posts: 20 points
2. Three Critical thinking papers that will be worth 10 points each = 30 points
3. Two exams that will each be worth 25 points each = 50 points

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam One</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Exam Two</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly discussion posts</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical thinking assignment #1</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical thinking assignment #2</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical thinking assignment #3</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 points</strong></td>
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**Grading:**
A = 89.5% and above, B = 79.5-89.4%, C = 69.5-79.4%, D= 59.5-69.4%, F= less than 59.5%
These cutoffs are FIRM. I will not raise your grade if you are “close,” so please do not ask should this circumstance arise. I strongly encourage all students to put forth full effort throughout the course so that you can earn the highest grade possible.

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1)**
Cheating and copying will not be tolerated in any form. If I believe that you have copied from another student or another source, you will receive a grade of ‘0’ on that assignment or exam. If a second offense is committed, your behavior will be reported to the academic dean and you will fail the course. Please see the information below and our catalogue for additional information.
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**University Policies:**

**Academic Integrity (4.1)**

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (5.5)**

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 coursework 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 to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to [https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf](https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf).

**Students with Disabilities**

To obtain disability-related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004

(TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).
**Student Wellness and Well-Being**
SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, 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:**
The Dean of Students Office (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)
[www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents](http://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents)
936.468.7249
[dos@sfasu.edu](mailto:dos@sfasu.edu)

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic Human Services, Room 202
[www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp)
936.468.1041

The Health and Wellness Hub “The Hub”
Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.
To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:

- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Student Outreach and Support
- Food Pantry
- Wellness Coaching
- Alcohol and Other Drug Education

[www.sfasu.edu/thehub](http://www.sfasu.edu/thehub)
936.468.4008
[thehub@sfasu.edu](mailto:thehub@sfasu.edu)

**Crisis Resources:**
- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
- johCrisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

**Acceptable Student Conduct**
Online course behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the course or with the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the **Student Conduct Code**). Discourteous, hostile, or disparaging online remarks or behavior will not be tolerated. It is essential to listen to and consider others’ opinions and viewpoints in an unbiased manner even if you do not agree, and if you respond, to do so politely, explaining the rationale for your opinion. The expectation is that students will conduct themselves in a mature, civil manner, and will display respectfulness at all times toward classmates and the Professor.

Unacceptable or disruptive student behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other
penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate and/or inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly (or are not virtual present and engaging in the online course) or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

- When taking exams, you are prohibited from referring to course notes or any course material. Steps will be taken to ensure students do not cheat on exams. Students engaging to any form of cheating during an exam will receive a zero on the exam, will be reported to the dean, and potentially fail the course.
- The course schedule that follows is subject to change based on students’ level of comprehension, mastery of material presented, and/or extraneous circumstances.
- Should you require any additional information, reference books, or simply in doubt, feel free to contact me by email. If your question concerns the material we are covering, please feel free to ask topic-related questions during Zoom sessions.
- NOTE: I recognize that sometimes there are exceptional circumstances that warrant consideration. If there are some extenuating circumstances that affect your ability to pay attention or if some form of temporary modification is needed, please notify me before a deadline (or as soon as possible).

### COURSE OUTLINE

**Movies and Mental Illness - PSY 4378**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring 2024 by Week</th>
<th>Topics and Assignments (Color coded):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week One Thurs. 1/18</td>
<td>Class Discussion Assignments in Yellow</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical Thinking Papers in Green</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Zoom sessions in Blue</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Exams in Pink</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Two Jan. 22</td>
<td>Read Module: Syllabus and Course Schedule</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Read Module 1: Films and Psychopathology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussion Post on Mental Illness Portrayal and Common Stereotypes (initial post by 1/22; 1 response by 1/24)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Three Jan. 29</td>
<td>Read Module 2: Sleeping, Eating, and Somatic Symptom Disorders</td>
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<td>Movie #1 for Discussion Post due 1/28</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Read Module 3: Anxiety, OCD, and Obsessive-Compulsive Related Disorders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Two movies for Critical thinking paper #1 due Sunday, Feb 4th (submit to drop box)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Syllabus &amp; Schedule Chapters 1 Module 1</td>
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<td>Chapter 8 Module 2</td>
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<td>Chapter 5 Module 3</td>
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Readings Assignments from Text (4th edition) and D2L Modules
| Week Four  
Feb. 5 | **Read Module 4: Dissociative Disorders**  
**Discussion on Dissociate Disorders – Post due 2/11** | Chapter 7  
Module 4 |
|---|---|---|
| **Week Five**  
Feb. 12 | Read Module 5: **Trauma and Stress-related Disorders**  
Read Module 6: **Schizophrenia & Delusional Disorders**  
**Movie for Discussion Post Due 2/18**  
**Movie for Critical thinking paper #2 due 2/25**  
Schizophrenia and delusional disorder continued… | Chapter 6, 3  
Module 5, 6 |
| **Week Six**  
Feb. 19 | **Zoom meeting Monday 2/26 at 4:00pm**  
Exam One on Friday, March 1 | Chapter 1, 8, 5, 7, 6, 3  
Modules 1-6 |
| **Week Seven**  
Feb. 26 | Read module 7: **Treatment**  
**Watch Movie for Discussion Post due 3/9** | Chapter 16  
Module 7 |
| **Week Eight**  
March 4 | **SPRING BREAK!!! NO CLASSES** | | 
| **Week Nine**  
March 11 | **Read Module: Substance Related & Addictive Disorders**  
**Movie with Discussion Post by March 24** | Chapter 11  
Module 8 |
| **Week 10**  
March 18 | **Zoom Meeting Monday, March 25th 4:00pm**  
Read Module: **Depression and Bipolar Disorders**  
**Discussion on Assisted Outpatient Treatment:**  
*Posts due 4/2*  
**Easter Holiday 3/28 – 3/31**  
**Two Movies for Critical Thinking Paper #3 due April 7** | Chapter 4  
Module 9 |
| **Week 11**  
March 25 | **Read Module: Personality Disorders**  
**Discussion on Movie– Post due 4/15**  
**Discussion on Documentary -Post due 4/21**  
Read Chapter & Module: **Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders**  
Read Chapter & Module: **Violence, Physical, and Sexual Abuse** | Chapter 10, 15  
Modules 11, 12 |
| Week 15 | April 22 | Zoom meeting Monday, April 22\(^{nd}\) at 4:00pm  
Read Module: **Neurocognitive Disorders**  
**Discussion on Neurocognitive disorders – Post by 4/28**  
Zoom meeting April 29 at 4pm  
Movie discussion due on May 4 |
|---------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 16 | April 29 | Exam 2 – Monday, May 6th  
Chapters 4, 12, 11, 13, 16, 10, 15 |

*This schedule is tentative. You are responsible for knowing any changes announced in D2L (check course announcements and your emails in D2L Brightspace).*