PSYC 3NN3 - Abnormal Psychology II

Instructors: Lynne Honey    Alex Ophir
Email: honeypl@mcmaster.ca    ophirag@mcmaster.ca
Phone: 905-525-9140 ext. 26034    905-525-9140 ext. 26042
Office hours: By appointment    By appointment

Required Texts:
Taking Sides by Richard P. Halgin (on reserve in Thode Library)

General Course Content:

In this course we will go beyond the basic descriptions of disorders, treatments and symptoms to deal with issues surrounding mental health diagnosis, treatment, and research. We will examine controversies, arguments in the literature, and societal attitudes and behaviours towards those with disorders.

Course Objectives:

Successful students will be able to critically evaluate research on mental disorders, and identify bias inherent in research and description of various symptoms and disorders. It is also expected that students will be able to identify controversial statements and debate them, using the knowledge of mental disorders and diagnosis from the introductory course. Students will develop an appreciation for the limitations of research due to ethical and other constraints, and will develop an understanding of mental health based on available information. We will also approach mental health as it is portrayed in the media and examine the fallacies and truth-stretching associated with the popularization of mental disorders.
Assessments:

**Midterm (30% of final grade):**
The midterm test will take place on July 15th. Details will be given in class.

**Presentation (20% of final grade):**
Students will work in groups to present and discuss one of the controversies described in the book “Taking Sides”. An outline is attached. More details of the presentation format and scheduling will be discussed in class.

**Written Report (10% of final grade)**
Each student will prepare a 2-page summary of his/her portion of the group presentation, to be turned in on the day of the scheduled presentation. More details about this report will be provided in class.

**Final exam (35% of final grade):**
The final exam will be administered on August 7th. It will be based on readings and in-class lectures and discussions. Students will have 3 hours to complete the exam. The exam will be of similar format to the midterm, but of greater length. The exam will be cumulative, with approximately 25% of the exam covering material directly from the pre-midterm portion of the course and 75% of the exam covering post-midterm material, and/or overlapping or integrative material.

**Participation (5% of final grade):**
This course will be heavily discussion based. As such, participation points will be awarded for contribution to class discussion, small group work, and other constructive methods of interaction.

**Statement on Academic Dishonesty**
Students are reminded of the University’s Statement on Academic Ethics and the Senate Resolutions on Academic Dishonesty, which are found in the Senate Policy Statements distributed at registration. These documents are also available in the Senate Office. Students infringing on these resolutions will be treated in accordance with published policy. So don’t cheat, OK?
Psychology 3NN3 Group Presentation and Individual Reports

Presentation Requirements

Each group will work together to create a 30-minute presentation for the class. *This presentation is worth 20% of your final grade.* The format of the presentation is up to the group. Creativity is welcomed, but please keep in mind that you are graded on your understanding of the material and your ability to explain it to your colleagues, not on your use of unnecessary technology, costumes or interpretive dance.

As a group, you are to evaluate and present an issue from the book “Taking Sides”. (Chapters will be assigned in class.) Read both arguments associated with that issue in the book, and critically evaluate each argument. Find at least three additional sources (recent books or journal articles) in support of EACH argument (for a total of at least six additional sources). As a group, you will present each side of the argument and present conclusions about the issue based on your consideration of the evidence on both sides. You may decide, as a group, to support one side over the other. You may also decide that you cannot reach a firm conclusion about the topic. In either case, you should point out the strong and weak points of each argument. You should also describe potential research that could answer questions that are remaining. Keep in mind that the research necessary to truly answer some questions may be impossible, due to ethical or population constraints.

When you are evaluating the arguments and the additional sources, look for bias, shoddy research, circular arguments and unsupported statements. Be very aware of those same flaws when you edit your own presentations and reports, as well!

Report Requirements

Each student will submit an individual report that summarizes his/her work and opinion about the topic presented by his/her group. *This report is worth 10% of your final grade.*

The report is to be 1 ½ to 2 pages long (not including references), and marks will be deducted for papers that are either too short or too long. Margins are to be 1 inch on all sides, and the font is to be equivalent in size to Times New Roman or Arial 12 point font. Please use APA formatting for all references, and citations within the text. For this assignment, websites are not acceptable references. E-journals, however, are acceptable. Please use books and journals that are available in McMaster Libraries, or else you must attach photocopies of your sources if they are not available at McMaster.

This report is to be a summary of your own contribution to the group presentation. You should use approximately ½ page (one paragraph) to describe the work that you did on the presentation (research, participating in group meetings, writing, creating A/V materials, etc.). The rest of the report should be a brief summary of your position on the topic presented by your group. You do not need to agree with the other members of your group! This is an individual report of your work and your newly informed opinion.