

ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

INSTRUCTOR: Susan J. Cummings, Ph.D. (crowsgirl28@gmail.com)

QUARTER: Spring 2026

6

QUARTER HOURS: 4

TIME: Tuesdays 6 PM – 8 PM (via Zoom)

LOCATION: The Evergreen State College

COURSE INTENTION

This course is designed to help students examine abnormal and normal behavior and experience along several dimensions. These dimensions include the historical and cultural influences in Western Psychology, current views on abnormality and psychological health, cultural differences in the approach and treatment of psychopathology, and the role of healthy habitat in healthy mind. Traditional classification of psychopathology will be studied, including theories around etiology and treatment strategies. Non-traditional approaches will be examined as well and the role of Ecopsychology in Abnormal Psychology will be studied.

SPECIFIC GOALS:

1. To allow students to gain an understanding of historical and cultural influences on the development of Psychology, including an increased awareness of the biases and strengths of traditional EuroAmerican approaches to Psychology and the Mental Health System in the United States.
2. To acquaint the student with the current classification system of the various psychopathologies.
3. To introduce the students to the various theories and approaches to etiology, pathology and treatment.
4. To introduce the student to the current Mental Health system in the United States.
5. To examine the role and relevance of Ecopsychology in psychological health.

DEMONSTRATION AND ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

***This course will be in a hybrid mode for this quarter. Classes will be via Zoom. Various supplemental videos will be assigned for you to review and reflect on. Some assignments may be modified to accommodate the Zoom modality.**

Progress toward the learning goals will be demonstrated through thoughtful participation in class discussions, experiential activities and through the following assignments:

1. Each session there will be a brief (one-two page) reflection paper. The student will be prepared to share the content of this paper at each session in a small group.
2. The student will present a final piece that expresses the student's view and experience of abnormality and normality. This project may be a piece of music, poetry, a painting a collage, etc.
4. A 10-20 page paper with references written in teams of approximately 5 member. This paper will cover any topic of interest to the students that relates to Abnormal Psychology. This paper will be presented in class. *
**Please be advised that plagiarism in any form will be grounds for no credit. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and is a violation of the Social Contract. Academic dishonesty may result in penalties as severe as expulsion from your academic program or even from the college.*
5. Select a character from Literature and examine from an Abnormal Psychology perspective. Give a diagnostic impression and a treatment approach.

REQUIRED READING*

Burke, Brian; Wrona, Megan; Trost, Sara; et al (2023) Abnormal Psychology: A Modern Approach, Third Edition. Academic Media Solutions

COURSE OUTLINE

Session I General Topics: Introductions

- A course overview
- A historical overview of Western Psychology

Session II General Topics:

- A Historical Overview continued
- Abnormal vs. Normal behavior : an examination from various perspectives
- DSM V classification

Reading prior to week 2: Textbook, Chapters 1, & 2

Session III General Topics:

- DSM V classification

- Pathology, etiology and theoretical approaches
- Assessment

Reading prior to week 3: Textbook, Chapters 3 & 4

Session IV General Topics:

- Pathology, etiology and theoretical approaches continued
- Somatoform and Dissociative Disorders
- Personality Disorders
- Psychological disorders across cultures

Reading prior to week 4: Textbook, Chapters 8 & 10

Session V General Topics:

- Treatment approaches and theoretical orientations
- Mood Disorders
- Panic and Anxiety
- Clinical Psychology and Minority issues
- The culturally skilled therapist

Reading prior to week 5: Textbook, Chapters 6 & 7

Session VI General Topics:

- Stress
- Psychoneuroimmunology
- Psychological and physical health
- Techniques

Reading prior to week 6: Textbook, Chapters 5

Session VII General Topics:

- Eating Disorders
- Substance related disorders
- Sexual variants, abuse and dysfunction
- Introduction to Ecopsychology: Its relevance and vital importance

Reading prior to week 7: Textbook, Chapters 9, 11 & 12

Session VIII General Topics:

- Psychotic Disorders
- Cognitive Disorders
- Psychotherapy and Spirituality
- Spiritual Emergency

Reading prior to week 8: Textbook, Chapters 13 & 14

Session IX General Topics:

- Disorders of childhood and adolescence
- Non-Western Psychology: A search for complimentary approaches and alternatives

Reading prior to week 9: Chapter 15 & 16

Session X General Topics:

- Presentations
- Final Projects
- Wrap Up

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ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

Reflection Papers. Sessions II through IX
 Expressive Project “Gallery”. Session X
 Paper and Presentations. To be announced
 Dx of Character from the Lit. VI, VII, VIII

GROUND RULES

Attendance- All sessions will be attended. Only emergencies or illnesses will excuse absences. If you are going to be absent, please call TESC and leave a message for me or email cummngs@evergreen.edu . If you are absent without notifying me or without a valid reason this could jeopardize your credit.

Punctuality- To maximize exposure to the class sessions and minimize disruption to the class, it is expected that you will be on time, i.e., 6 p.m.

Confidentiality- Sharing personal material is of course at each student's discretion. Given the nature of the class, it is most probable that some sharing of a personal nature will occur. Therefore, in order to ensure the privacy of others as well as your own, and in order for there to be a climate of psychological safety within the classroom, confidentiality is mandatory. Breaking of confidentiality could be grounds for dismissal from the course.

Respect For Other Views- In the interest of honest exploration and inquiry and mutual learning, and in order to maintain an air of openness, respect for views other than one's own is essential. Dialogue, rather than argument, will be the form of exchange.

Participation- Each student will be responsible for their level of participation. It is recognized that different people participate in different ways; some will be more verbal than others. Of main concern is that the student be engaged in the material of this course- both didactic and experiential.