Abnormal Psychology Course Syllabus

Psyc 300A Section 001  Fall Term MWF 3-4pm  Irving K. Barber: Room 182

Instructor: Dr Eva Zysk  evazysk@psych.ubc.ca  
@DrEvaZysk  
300A Drop-in office hours:  See Canvas for weekly availability  
(or email for appointment)  
Office: ORCH 3015  

In brief: International background; Researcher in OCD & Social Anxiety; Loves travel, volleyball, being challenged, funny student quotes, teaching and engaging students.

Teaching Assistant:  
Name: ___________________________  
Email: ___________________________  
Office & Hours: ___________________________  
In brief: ____________________________________  

Learning Room: Canvas Psych 300A. Check daily for announcements, etc. (or set up your alerts: Accounts → Notifications → Announcements → “Notify me right away”). Did you know you can also download the Canvas App?

Versions: Looseleaf (cheaper, can scribble in it) ISBN: 9780176832087, OR Hardcover (nicer) ISBN: 9780176657185. In addition, there will be other assigned readings, videos, blogs, etc. throughout the term posted on Canvas. Academic papers can be found through the UBC Library.

Course Description:  

It has been estimated that mental illness accounts for a third of all illnesses, and a quarter of the population will be affected at some point in their lifespan. The aim of this course is to provide an overview of the current state of knowledge in various areas of abnormal psychology. The course will cover the definition, history, and scope of deviant behaviour; examine the psychological factors that control its origins and maintenance; and critically evaluate issues in mental health (MH), often at the forefront of the discipline.

The course comprises lectures and workshops. Lectures will cover epidemiology, etiology, phenomenology, assessment and diagnosis of a wide range of MH disorders. Workshops will put the taught lecture content into clinical context and cover topics with diverse viewpoints and those given less attention in the public eye and academic discipline. The workshops will be highly interactive and varied; they may involve case presentations, videos, readings, debates, and small and large group work. I hope you find the course to be sufficiently challenging, exceptionally stimulating, and wonderfully exciting!

“Past Students Said...”

“The course is extremely fun, engaging, and interesting. I haven’t missed a single session because I know I would lose out on learning really valuable things.”

“The diverse and multidimensional approach to teaching is helpful and engaging. Workshops, guest speakers, groupwork, videos etc. provide alternate perspectives, and the use of documentaries and case studies put info into context advancing my knowledge substantially. You learn in so many ways!”

“I feel like we actively contribute to the course, and the students are engaged and involved in the learning”

“I like how the lecture notes are “fill-in-the-blank”. It helps keep me focused and I understand the main content more”

“The workshops give opportunities to engage with a particular subject on a deeper level which helps consolidate my learning”

“Eva helped us evolve into more confident and open-minded students through highly interactive lectures”

“Workshops bring the topics to life - we’re in our final year and it’s good to know what’s happening in the real world and be able to apply our knowledge”
This course will run for 13 weeks, with ~3 hours of contact time per week in the form of lectures (L) and workshops (WS). There will be 36 classes in total. Please do your best to attend each and every one of these!😊

The breakdown of the weeks is as follows (but please note the plan is subject to possible changes):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week, Class #, Type</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Some assigned readings following each class*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1:</strong> Class 1 - L</td>
<td>Intro to course, expectations &amp; assessments, course coverage Abnormality &amp; WS instructions</td>
<td>Syllabus (inside out, backwards &amp; upside down)**&amp; Ch1 p3–8</td>
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<td>Class 2 - L</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2:</strong> Class 3 - L Class 4 - L+WS</td>
<td>History, Etiological Models Assessment, DSM-5 WS Part 1</td>
<td>Ch1 p8–27, Ch2 p33–65 (light touch on bio)** &amp; Ch3 p69–83 (light touch p71–83)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 5 - WS</td>
<td>DSM-5 WS Part 2</td>
<td>Ch3 p83–90, 93–94</td>
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<td><strong>Week 3:</strong> Class 6 - L Class 7 - L Class 8 - WS</td>
<td>Phobias &amp; Social Anxiety GAD &amp; Panic. Assessment 1 details Anxiety Workshop</td>
<td>Ch5 p119–150 (skip all tx)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4:</strong> Class 9 - L Class 10 - WS Class 11 - WS</td>
<td>OCD &amp; Related Disorders Trivialisation of OCD Current issues in treatment of OCD OR: Do Something Campaign (individual choice)</td>
<td>Ch5 p160–173 (skip tx)** &amp; TBA</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5:</strong> Class 12 - L Class 13 - WS Class 14 - WS</td>
<td>Stress &amp; Trauma Childhood Trauma Positive Psychology</td>
<td>Ch5 p152–158</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6:</strong> Class 15 - L Class 16 - WS</td>
<td>Somatic &amp; Dissociative Disorders Dissociative Disorders</td>
<td>Ch6 p179–200 (skip all tx)**</td>
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<td><strong>Week 7:</strong> Class 17 - EXAM Class 18 - L Class 19 - L</td>
<td>MIDTERM EXAM (15th Oct) Psychosis Part 1 Psychosis Part 2</td>
<td>(Deep breaths; you’ve got this!)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 8:</strong> Class 20 - L Class 21 - L Class 22 - WS</td>
<td>Depression Bipolar Disorders Mindfulness</td>
<td>(Breather...)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 9:</strong> Class 23 - L Class 24 - L Class 25 - WS</td>
<td>Substance Abuse Eating Disorders Eating Disorders WS</td>
<td>(Breather...kind of… paper due)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 10:</strong> Class 26 - L Class 27 - L Class 28 - WS</td>
<td>Paraphilic Disorders Gender &amp; Gender Dysphoria Conceptualizing Gender Dysphoria</td>
<td>Ch10 p350–357, 364</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 12:</strong> Class 31 - L Class 32 - WS Class 33 - WS</td>
<td>Personality Disorders Reflective WS Do Something Campaign Outcome</td>
<td>Ch12 p411–442 (not in depth; &amp; skip Ae + Tx) <strong>(Catch up on your readings)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 13:</strong> Class 34 - WS Class 35 - WS</td>
<td>Knowledge consolidation Exam prep</td>
<td>(Catch up on your readings)**</td>
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- **NB:** These readings are assigned for after the associated class. There will also be other readings and homework in addition to these listed. Bolded readings mean they constitute class prep so must be completed for the deadlines specified in class.
- There are 290 pages to read from the textbook, which is in line with the 300 recommended textbook pages for all Psyc300A courses.
- **Tx** = Treatment (skip all tx sections unless otherwise specified)
- **Ae** = Etiology (or “aetiology” in the UK!)
- You choose the etiologies you wish to specialize in. You will not need to know all for all disorders (except those explicitly covered).
- Statistics do not need to be memorized; just get an idea about prevalence etc.
- Due to the nature of the topics, there may be trigger warnings. Please consult the plan before each session. You may leave any session without explanation. I encourage you to seek appropriate support. If you face any barriers to do so, please come talk to me.

**Please contact your TA if you miss the first WS instructions**
**Attendance:** Attendance is urged as exam questions will be based in large part on class content. A register is taken each session. The expectation is that you will catch up with a classmate on all material covered (including student-led elements), activities run, and announcements made for every session (or part, thereof) missed.

**Participation:** Many activities or even whole sessions will involve interactive learning, so come prepared to get involved... and to have fun (gasp!) in doing so! Pedagogical research shows active participation predicts better course grades. Your participation and engagement throughout the term is highly encouraged. I would also like to tell you that I value when students are “wrong”, so never ever be afraid to speak up. It gives opportunities in my teaching to discuss the topic in more depth, or often consider various viewpoints... so err away in the name of learning!

**Class Materials & Preparation:** For most classes, there will be no pre-reading, i.e. you will not need to read the associated chapter before the class, and can come with no knowledge of the concept/disorder we will be covering. To bring to each class: a curious mind, paper, a pen, and a smartphone/laptop (see electronics section below).

Lectures: I will make lecture slides available for Canvas for downloading or printing. These are fill-in-the-blank style notes designed to keep you engaged. (Keep in mind that downloading the slides is not a substitute for your attendance as there will be concepts introduced and explained above and beyond the notes. Thus, the notes are designed as a stemming point for you to take your own notes on additional concepts in class; such concepts will be examinable).

Workshops: Most often the slides will be available after the session. You will need to add your own notes as these may not be in full. Workshop material and all topics of discussion—whether led by me or the class—are examinable.

**N.B.: Instructor materials are not permitted to be shared outside our course, electronically or otherwise, without my consent.**

**Electronics:** **Laptops and tablets** can be very useful for note-taking and following suggested links, and you are welcome to bring these along. There will be a couple classes I will ask you to bring in your laptop/tablet (please borrow one for those sessions if you do not have one). However, please be mindful that they can also be distracting to students around you. Please keep your screen on topic.

A smartphone will often be used for interactive parts of many classes, so bring it (or a laptop) along to each class. However, please otherwise refrain from using the device. Why? See the large evidence base for poorer attention, engagement, learning and academic outcomes of both users and those around them here, here, here, here, here, here, etc. If you need to send a text/make a phonecall/check something on Facebook, you are welcome to step out of class (and come back when done, of course!).

**N.B.: Recordings** (photo, video and/or audio) are not permitted without the instructor’s permission. Please just ask!

**Questions:** Questions (with the exception of the all-too-common and instructor-dreaded “will this be on the exam?”) are encouraged in class, so please do not be shy to raise your hand at any time. It is highly likely you are not the only one with that question (I promise!). Questions let me know students may not understand something or are interested to hear more so I know to focus more on the topic. Further content– or assessment-related questions should otherwise be posted on the Canvas Discussion Board where the class can benefit from seeing our answers; or, if your question is more individual or personal in nature, drop by our office hours. The TAs and I are also happy to answer brief emails, but we do urge you to come see us even if your question is short! We also welcome you to swing by just to say a friendly hello to us during our drop-in times. We want to get to know you!

A gL. it/C H in the matrix: A word of warning that any Canvas-sent emails of ours you try to reply will enter the great ether void. We are not ignoring you! We do not know why this happens, but it’s frustrating! Please ensure you email us on our email addresses above in place of replying to any Canvas emails.
Learning Outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding.
After this course you should be able to:
1. Evidence a critical understanding of conceptual and historical contexts through which our understanding and treatment of MH disorders has evolved;
2. Demonstrate understanding of the nature of various MH difficulties and their epidemiology, etiology, and assessment;
3. Evaluate different approaches to the conceptualisation, measurement, assessment and diagnosis of MH difficulties;
4. Recognize various developmental, social and cultural contexts of clinical psychology and their implications;
5. Discuss key and current issues in clinical psychology and/or apply theoretical positions with real world applications in a range of settings.

Skills, qualities and attributes.
After this course you should be able to:
1. Integrate ideas and findings in clinical psychology, appreciating distinctive psychological approaches;
2. Apply multiple perspectives to psychological issues and current problems, including those from researchers, patients, therapists, and health commissioners;
3. Synthesize and critically appraise a diverse range of psychological literature;
4. Use a range of resources to gather evidence and critically evaluate salient issues, support or challenge an argument, and make informed judgments;
5. Demonstrate a range of transferable skills including research and synthesis of information, independent thinking, discussion, cooperative work, time management, and effective oral and written communication.

Assessments:

Midterm (30%): 15th October (45 minutes)
Specialist Critical Analysis Paper (20%): 2nd November (750/1000 words)
Final Exam (50%): December examination period 4th–19th Dec (2.5 hours)
(Do not make travel plans before the exam schedule release; there will be no alternative date offered)

The Midterm and Final Exams will be composed of multiple choice items and written response that will cover information from lectures, workshops, textbook and other readings, films, discussions, demonstrations, etc. The final exam will be cumulative but with a greater focus on topics not covered on the midterm. Expect integrative questions on the final exam where you can demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge through formulating informed critical arguments. The course is designed to prepare you for this so please ensure you attend and fully engage in all activities.

For the Specialist Critical Analysis Paper, you will have the opportunity to choose an area you wish to specialize in that will go above and beyond taught material, within one of the selected general themes of: (1) Historical…, (2) (Cross-) Cultural…, (3) (Trans-) Generational…, OR (4) Current (within last 2 years)… Issues in Mental Health. You will provide a critical argument in a highly focused and concise piece of 750 words (if you chose to complete it individually) or 1000 words (if you choose to work with a partner). Further assessment specifications and grading criteria will be provided in class.

Psychology Department’s Policy on Grade Distributions & Scaling: In order to reduce grade inflation and maintain equity across multiple course sections, Psychology courses are required to comply with departmental norms regarding grade distributions. The mean grade in a 300-level class is 70 for a good, 68 for an average, and 66 for a weak class (SD = 13). Scaling will be used in order to comply with these norms; grades may be scaled up or down as necessary. Irrespective of scaling, resulting marks always depend on students’ mastery of course material relative to their peers.

For information on make-up assessments and re-marking, please see final page.
**Extra Credits:** Students have the opportunity to earn up to 4 extra percent* on their overall grade (post scaling).

HSP Participation: Up to 2 extra credits (i.e. 2%) can be gained by participating in research conducted in the Psychology Department through the Human Subject Pool (HSP). Participating in research allows you to directly observe the research process and contribute to ongoing research at UBC. You may obtain these points by either: (1) participating in 1+ research studies that provide extra credit through HSP, or (2) completing a library writing assignment (choosing a clinical psychology empirical paper - one that was not mentioned in the course nor related to your paper topic, published within the last 2 years). More information about both these options is provided on the [HSP website](http://example.com) (please follow their instructions carefully). If you want to take advantage of these opportunities for extra credit, you must set up an online account at the [Psychology Research Participation System](http://example.com) before October to sign up for studies (or submit your research summary) and manage your extra credit points.

**“Do Something” Campaign:** You can voluntarily get involved in our class initiative aimed to somehow make a difference in society in the MH field. Students can work in groups of any size, but any large groups should divide forces within any single initiative. Previous examples will be given in class, but creativity is highly encouraged! Students who get involved and present their worthy initiatives in Week 12 may be eligible to earn up to 2 extra credits (2%).

- **Star:** Brilliant Engagement Gold Star: If you have not attained your 4 extra credits but have demonstrated a consistent high level of engagement in class and behind the scenes, come speak to me anytime between Week 8 and the final exam; I will use my discretion and may award you 1 extra credit point.

- **Star:** Stellar Attendance Gold Star: If you have not attained your 4 extra credits but have perfect attendance (minus a ≤ 3 session leeway) you can come speak to me between Week 13 and the final exam; I will use my discretion and may award you 1 extra credit point. This can be collected in conjunction with the Engagement Gold Star.

**Health Concerns:** If you are experiencing psychological or physical ill-health, please access [Student Health Services](http://example.com). Please come see me if there is a way I can help accommodate any of your needs in this course, or if you need advice.

**Further Course Details (the fine print):**

**Make-Up Assessments:** Students unable to make a deadline or write an exam due to a serious medical problem, court appearance, or death in immediate family will be given the opportunity to make up the assessment provided they provide the TA with a signed letter from the appropriate professional, before or no later than 2 working days after the deadline or exam date, on letterhead with the name, address, and phone number of the letter writer, that states: “Due to [legitimate reason], [your name] could not write the exam scheduled for [time & date].” In the case of a medical reason, the statement: “In my opinion, the medical problem was so severe that [your name] would have been incapable of writing the exam” should be added. The UBC Health Services will not provide letters so the student should use their private physician. Any student working in a pair for the paper will still be expected to submit work (1000 words) by the deadline even if their partner is unable to complete their contribution.

**Marking:** If you have what you perceive to be an error in marking on your test or paper, you may apply in email to the Instructor within two days the work was handed back for a re-marking of your entire test. Your request must detail why you believe the test should be re-marked. If your request is approved, your work will be independently re-marked and the latter grade (whether lower or higher than the original) will be retained.

**Academic Integrity:** Cheating, plagiarism, collusion and other forms of academic misconduct are serious concerns and will not be tolerated in any way by the University. This includes but is not limited to: dishonest conduct or attempt at tests (e.g., unauthorized use of books, notes, or other aids, communicating with others for purposes of obtaining information, copying from the work of others, and purposefully exposing or conveying information to other test-takers), changing answers following marking, and handing in papers with sections prepared by others. Please review the [university policy](http://example.com) on forms of academic dishonesty. The Department uses software that can reliably detect cheating on multiple-choice exams. In addition, instructors use Turnitin, a service designed to detect written plagiarism. Evidence of cheating or plagiarism may result in a zero credit for the work in question, a failing grade for the course, suspension from the University, cancellation of scholarships, and/or a notation added to a student’s transcript. All graded work in this course, unless otherwise specified, is to be original and own work done and must be referenced fully and appropriately. Please consult the [APA guide](http://example.com) for information about how to cite all sources. Harvard style is also accepted. If you have any questions as to whether or not what you are doing is could be considered even a borderline case of academic misconduct, please consult your TA. University policies and procedures are detailed [here](http://example.com). If you’ve made it to this point in the syllabus, well done. Once you have read this document in full, please email your TA with your favourite student-themed meme/joke so we can tick you off.

**Territory Acknowledgement:** UBC’s Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.