PSY 596: PSYCHOPATHOLOGY II: Externalizing and Psychotic Disorders

The goal of this class is to familiarize you with current concepts and research on child, adolescent, and adult psychopathology. The class meets on Mondays from 9:35-11:30 in Psych B 316.

This is the second semester of a two-semester sequence. During the previous semester, we covered conceptual models and internalizing disorders (e.g., mood and anxiety disorders). This semester, we will deal primarily with externalizing disorders (e.g., child disruptive disorders, personality disorders, substance use disorders) and non-mood psychotic disorders.

Class meetings will consist of lectures designed to provide a broad overview of the topic for that class and discussion. Typically, we will cover diagnosis and classification, epidemiology, course, and the genetic, neurobiological, and psychosocial factors implicated in the etiology, pathogenesis, and maintenance of the disorder. We will not discuss treatment, as that is the focus of other courses.

The required readings, listed below, will generally consist of four papers or chapters per week. Please make the time to read each of the assigned articles. Some of the readings will be difficult, so don't be discouraged if you have to struggle with them. Focus on the main questions, findings, and implications of the papers, and don't worry if you cannot grasp the more technical details. If you are having difficulty with the readings, you might consider reading them after the lecture for which they are assigned so that you have some familiarity with the area before you start.

Class requirements will include two non-cumulative exams intended primarily to help you keep up with, and absorb, the material. The exams will consist of short-answer/brief-essay questions covering both the lectures and readings.

Copies of all readings can be downloaded from the Melville or Health Sciences Center Libraries’ electronic journal collection. You may find it helpful to read the relevant sections from the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition (DSM-IV), although I am not assigning it. If you would like to purchase the DSM-IV, I can give you the necessary information. It is also usually available at the bookstore in the Health Sciences Center.

Please feel free to stop by or give me a call to discuss any issues regarding the format, content, or process of the course.
January 28: Eating Disorders: Anorexia and Bulimia Nervosa
(a) Phenomenology, classification, and comorbidity
(b) Epidemiology and sociocultural factors
(c) Course and prognosis
(d) Research on hypothesized etiological factors (e.g., dieting, internalization of the thin ideal, body dissatisfaction, personality)
(e) Family systems perspectives and early adversity
(f) Genetics and neurobiology


February 4: Attention-Deficit Disorder
(a) Classification
(b) Epidemiology
(c) Development, course, and complications
(d) Genetics
(e) Neuropsychology, neuroimaging, and neurotransmitters
(f) Environmental risk factors

February 11: Conduct and Oppositional Defiant Disorder
(a) Classification, subtypes of CD, and comorbidity
(b) Epidemiology and sex differences
(c) Development and course (e.g., child versus adolescent onset subtypes; developmental trajectories from ODD to CD, and from CD to Antisocial Personality)
(d) Comorbidity
(e) Genetics
(f) Neurocognitive factors
(g) Social cognitive models
(e) Neurobiology
(f) Prenatal and family environment
(g) Peer and broader contextual influences


February 18: Class cancelled

February 25: Personality Disorders: Diagnosis and classification
(a) The specific PDs and the PD clusters
(b) The Axis I-Axis II distinction
(c) Comorbidity, convergent validity, stability, prognostic utility
(d) Validity of diagnosing personality disorders in children and adolescents
(e) The case for dimensional classification
(f) Alternative classification systems

Grilo, C.M., Shea, M.T., Sanislow, C.A., Skodal, A.E., Gunderson, J.G., Stout, R.L., Pagano,


March 3: Antisocial Personality Disorder and Psychopathy

(a) Classification and nosological controversies
(b) Epidemiology
(c) Antecedents, development and course
(d) Genetics
(e) Neuropsychological deficits (e.g, executive functioning)
(f) Affective processing deficits


March 10: Borderline Personality Disorder

(a) Phenomenology and classification
(b) Course and prognosis
(c) Nosological controversies
(d) Theoretical perspectives (e.g., Kernberg, Masterson, Adler & Buie, Linehan)
(e) Childhood abuse and adversity
(f) Neurobiology (biochemistry and structural and functional neuroanatomy)


Childhood maltreatment associated with adult personality disorders: Findings from the Collaborative Longitudinal Personality Disorders Study. *Journal of Personality Disorders, 18*, 193-211.


March 17: Spring Break

March 24: Mid-term exam

March 31: Alcohol and Drug Abuse/Dependence (Note – class will not meet today)

(a) Phenomenology, classification, subtypes, and comorbidity
(b) Epidemiological and cultural factors
(c) Developmental trajectories and course
(d) Genetics
(e) Neurobiology of addiction
(f) Research on hypothesized etiological factors in alcoholism emphasizing prospective designs and high risk samples: impulsivity/disinhibition, alcohol sensitivity, P300, alcohol expectancies, and stress dampening/self-medication


April 7: Alcohol and Drug Abuse/Dependence (continued) and Somatoform and Dissociative Disorders

(a) Drug use disorders: Developmental theories of initiation, escalation, and life consequences
(b) Drug use disorders: Family, peer, and broader contextual influences
(c) Learning models of substance abuse/dependence (e.g., Timothy Baker)
(d) Somatoform disorders: History, classification, and proposals for DSM-V
(e) Conversion and somatization disorder: Epidemiology, comorbidity, course, and genetics
(f) Hypochondriasis: Epidemiology, comorbidity, course, genetics, and theoretical models (e.g., Barsky)
(g) Dissociative identity disorder: diagnosis, epidemiology, controversial issues


April 14: Schizophrenia: Clinical, epidemiological, and developmental aspects
(a) Classification (Kraepelin, Bleuler, and Schneider; schizoaffective and schizophreniform; positive, negative, and disorganized symptoms; the schizophrenia spectrum)
(b) Course and prognosis
(c) Childhood schizophrenia and schizophrenia in the elderly
(d) Epidemiology (including selection vs drift; season of birth; and other epidemiological risk factors such as urban residence and paternal age)
(e) Neurodevelopmental perspective (behavioral precursors; pregnancy and birth complications; the neurodevelopment vs neurodegeneration debate)


April 21: No class - Passover
April 28: Schizophrenia: Neurobiology
(a) Population and molecular genetics
(b) Neurochemistry
(c) Structural neuroanatomy
(d) Functional neuroanatomy


May 5: Schizophrenia: Electrophysiology, neurocognition, and social environment
(a) Potential neurophysiological endophenotypes (e.g., sensory gating, eye tracking)
(b) Potential neurocognitive endophenotypes (e.g., attention, working memory)
(c) Prognostic significance of neurocognition
(d) Life stress
(e) Expressed emotion


May 12: Pervasive Developmental Disorders
