PSY 545: PSYCHOPATHOLOGY I: Conceptual Models and Internalizing 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 Thursdays from 1:00-2:50 in Psychology B 316.

This is the first semester of a two-semester sequence. During this semester, we will cover conceptual models, methodological issues, and internalizing disorders (e.g., mood and anxiety disorders). Next semester will focus on externalizing disorders (e.g., child disruptive behavior disorders, substance use disorders), personality disorders, and non-mood psychotic disorders.

Class meetings will be a combination of lectures designed to provide a broad overview of the topic for that class and discussion. The first few sessions will focus on broad conceptual and methodological issues. After that, we will discuss specific disorders, typically covering diagnosis and classification, epidemiology, course, and genetic, neurobiological, and psychosocial factors implicated in the etiology, pathogenesis, and maintenance of the disorder. We will generally not discuss assessment or treatment, as they are the focus of other courses.

The required readings, listed below, consist of 5-7 articles per week with a mix of reviews and empirical and theoretical papers. 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. Readings that address diversity issues are indicated by a + symbol. Almost all of the readings are available in the campus library electronic journal collections; I have placed a * in front of the exceptions, and will get those readings to you.

Requirements will include two non-cumulative in-class exams and three “thought papers”. The exams are primarily intended to help motivate you to keep up with, and absorb, the material. They will consist of short answer/very brief essay questions covering both the lectures and readings. Each exam will count for 25% of your grade.

The thought papers should be relatively brief (2-4 pages double-spaced). The purpose of these papers is to encourage you to think critically and actively about the assigned readings and to formulate reactions to them as you read them. The thought papers can take many forms, including critiquing or challenging the argument made by an author, discussing some of the assigned readings in relation to other readings assigned in a previous week, integrating ideas across readings, identifying and evaluating unexpressed assumptions in a reading, or exploring the research implications of particular ideas. The thought papers should NOT be summaries of the readings. Also, I am not looking for you to do a literature search and write a mini-term paper. Lastly, try to avoid an intervention focus. What I will be looking for is creativity and the ability to develop and support a line of argument. Please email me the thought papers by the time of the class for which they are due. Each thought paper will count for 16.7% of your grade.
You may find it helpful to read the relevant sections from the American Psychiatric Associations’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition* (DSM-5), although I am not assigning it.

Please feel free to email me to set up a time to discuss any issues regarding the format, content, or process of the course.

**Learning Objectives:**
1. Identify the conceptual foundation, development, and strengths and weaknesses of current and alternative classification systems for mental disorders.
2. Understand the basic concepts and conceptual frameworks for research on the development, etiology, psychopathology, and pathophysiology of the major psychiatric disorders.
3. Become familiar with the current literature on the diagnosis, epidemiology, course, and etiopathogenesis of bipolar and depressive disorders, the anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder.

These objectives will be assessed in the mid-term and final exams and the three thought papers described above.

**August 29: Conceptual models; classification of psychopathology**
(a) Defining mental disorder
(b) Conceptual models of psychopathology (diathesis-stress, vulnerability)
(c) Implications re: incomplete penetrance/resilience, final common pathways, etiological heterogeneity, multifinality and equipfinality
(d) Diagnosis and classification (role of taxonomy, discreteness of boundaries, comorbidity, categorical vs dimensional classification)

**Readings:**
Kendler, K. S. (2019). From many to one to many - the search for causes of psychiatric illness. *JAMA psychiatry*.

**September 5: The DSMs and empirical structural models of classification**
(a) Evolution and development of the DSMs
(b) Reliability and validity
Empirically-based structural taxonomies of child and adult psychopathology
Role of culture

Readings:

September 12: The NIMH Research Domains Criteria (RDoC) and Network Models
(a) RDoC
(b) Critical perspectives
(c) Applications of RDoC perspective
(d) Network models


September 19: No class

September 26: Genetics
(a) Family, twin, adoption studies
(b) Biometric modeling of twin data  
(c) Genetic markers and endophenotypes  
(d) Candidate gene and genome wide association studies  
(e) Rare structural variants  
(f) Gene-environment correlation and gene-environment interaction  
(g) Gene regulation and expression

First thought paper due at the beginning of class

Readings:
Kendler, K.S. (2013). What psychiatric genetics has taught us about the nature of psychiatric illness and what is left to learn. Molecular Psychiatry, 18, 1058-1066.

October 3: Psychiatric epidemiology; the developmental psychopathology perspective; research methods in psychopathology

(a) Psychiatric epidemiology  
(b) The developmental psychopathology perspective: Key concepts and issues (e.g., developmental continuities and discontinuities, developmental pathways, protective factors and resilience, contextual influences)  
(c) Inferring direction of causality: follow-up, follow-back, and high risk designs  
(d) Vulnerability markers  
(e) Ruling out third variables: issues regarding choice of control groups; problems with matching; problems with statistical controls; patient versus community samples; case control vs cohort designs

Readings:
Scott, K. M., Lim, C., Al-Hamzawi, A., Alonso, J., Bruffaerts, R., Caldas-de-Almeida, J. M., ...


October 10: Mood disorders: Classification, epidemiology, and course

(a) Phenomenology

(b) Classification and subtypes

(c) Boundaries with anxiety and psychotic disorders

(d) Epidemiology (including sex differences and cohort effects) and cross-cultural findings

(e) Course and prognosis of bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, and persistent depressive disorder

Readings:


**October 17: Mid-Term Examination**

**October 24 Mood Disorders: Development, genes and environment**
(a) Continuities and discontinuities of MDD across the life span
(b) Continuity/discontinuity of pre- vs post-pubertal bipolar disorder
(c) Population and molecular genetics of bipolar disorder and MDD
(d) Early adversity
(e) Conceptual and methodological issues in assessing life stress
(f) Life stress in bipolar disorder and MDD

**Readings:**


**October 31: Mood Disorders: Psychological aspects and suicide**
(a) Temperament and personality
(b) Cognitive theories of depression
(c) Attentional and cognitive biases in depression
(d) Emotional reactivity in depression
(e) Motivational models of bipolar disorder
(f) Suicidality

**Readings:**


**Second thought paper due at the beginning of class**

**November 7: Mood Disorders: Neurobiology**
- (a) Neurochemistry of mood disorders
- (b) Neuroendocrinology of MDD
- (c) Sleep architecture in MDD
- (d) Structural and functional neuroanatomy of mood disorders

**Readings:**


**November 14: Anxiety Disorders: General risk factors and Panic Disorder**
- (a) Issues in defining and classifying anxiety disorders
- (b) Behavioral theories of anxiety disorders
- (c) Shared cognitive, neural, and genetic risk factors,
(d) Panic disorder: Classification, epidemiology genetics, neurobiology, and cognitive and behavioral theories

Readings:

November 21: Anxiety Disorders: Specific Phobia and Social, Generalized, and Separation Anxiety Disorders
(a) Genetics of anxiety disorders and fear
(b) Specific Phobia, Social Anxiety Disorder, and Agoraphobia: Classification, epidemiology, development, neurobiology, and cognitive-behavioral theories
(d) Generalized anxiety disorder: Classification, epidemiology, development, neurobiology, and cognitive-behavioral theories
(e) Separation anxiety disorder: Classification, epidemiology, development, course, and etiological factors

Readings:

**November 28: Thanksgiving**

**December 5: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder**
(a) PTSD: Phenomenology, classification, and conceptual controversies
(b) PTSD: Epidemiology, development, and course
(c) PTSD: Genetics, neuroendocrinology, and structural and functional neuroanatomy
(d) PTSD: Cognitive theories
(e) OCD: Phenomenology, classification, and the OCD spectrum
(f) OCD: Epidemiology, development, and course
(g) OCD: Genetics, neurobiology, and cognitive theories

**Third thought paper due at the beginning of class**

**Readings:**

**Final exam during final exam period; exact date to be determined.**