PSY 255 - 970  
Spring, 2015  
COURSE SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR: Rosann M. Ross, M.A., L.P.C., N.C.C.  
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PHONE: 351-2485  
EMAIL: rosann.ross@unco.edu

OFFICE HOURS: I will answer emails within 24-48 hours after receiving them. Please put “PSY 255” in the subject line when emailing.

CLASS INFORMATION:  
Prerequisite: PSY 120  
Hours: January 12, 2015 – May 8, 2015  
Location: Cyberspace


COURSE OBJECTIVES:  
1. To become acquainted with the multiple perspectives related to abnormal psychology and to demonstrate the ability to use the terminology of the discipline through class discussions and exams.  
2. To be able to identify the currently defined mental disorders according to the DSM-5, and to describe the basic principles which define adaptive versus maladaptive behavior.  
3. To be able to distinguish various mental disorders through the assessment of symptoms, and to understand the effects of interaction between the person & the situation in influencing human behavior and subjective experience.  
4. To be able to give general examples of treatment effectiveness with regard to abnormal behavior through reading case studies.  
5. To examine multicultural perspectives on maladaptive behavior.  
6. To be able to identify ethical issues related to diagnosing maladaptive behaviors through reading case studies.

COURSE FORMAT:  
This course is offered online through Blackboard. A common misunderstanding about online learning is that it is “self-paced” and that there are no specific schedules or guidelines. However, as in your face-to-face classes, there are schedules and deadlines that must be met. An excellent time management tip is to set aside a specific time to attend this online course. It has been calculated that the number of hours in class and expected hours outside of class is based on a formula: A 3-credit class is three hours in class per week, and another 2-3 hours for each credit outside of class. In other words, for this 3-credit course, you should expect to spend a total of 9-12 hours per week completing the work assigned in the syllabus. The Course Schedule provides the sequence of events and timing. You can find the Course Schedule under the Syllabus tab in Blackboard.

EVALUATION:  
1. Four multiple choice exam (50 points each)  
2. Media Journal  
3. Two Reaction Papers (25 points each)  
TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE 275 points

This course is letter graded. The point cutoffs are as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92-100%</td>
<td>69-71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>89-91%</td>
<td>66-68%</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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Exams
The four exams will be available in “Course Materials” on UNC’s Blackboard. Each exam consists of multiple choice questions and is worth 50 points. Each exam will be available on the dates listed in the course outline. **YOU MUST COMPLETE EACH EXAM BY 12:00 NOON ON THE DUE DATE LISTED. NO LATE EXAMS WILL BE ACCEPTED. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP TRACK OF THE EXAM DUE DATES!**

EXAM SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>Tuesday, February 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>Tuesday, March 3</td>
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<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>Tuesday, April 7</td>
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<td>Exam 4</td>
<td>Tuesday, 28</td>
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<td>Friday, February 6 by 12:00 NOON</td>
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<td>Friday, March 6 by 12:00 NOON</td>
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<td>Friday, April 10 by 12:00 NOON</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Friday, May 1 by 12:00 NOON</td>
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Because the longer that you are on-line taking an exam, the greater is the chance for a technical problem, please be certain that you are fully prepared to take the exam. **The time limit for each exam is 90 minutes.** You cannot start an exam, stop, and then go back later to finish it. Again, do not open an exam until you have thoroughly studied the material and are ready to complete the exam in one 90-minute period.

Exams are open-book, but consulting with anyone during an exam is prohibited. That is, you may not work collaboratively with a classmate or anyone else when taking an exam. Also, although the exams are open-book, you will be responding to 50 items in 90 minutes. There will not be much opportunity to look up information in your text or notes.

ASSIGNMENTS
Please be sure that you are familiar with how to submit Assignments; I will be collecting all of the assignments through the course shell Assignment link. **The paper you submit MUST be a WORD document in order for me to open it, review it, and return the paper to you.** If your paper is not in this format and I cannot open it, you will NOT receive credit for the paper. After you open your course, from the Course Menu, choose the Assignment link. **Click on the help button at the top of the page for information on how to submit your paper.** **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED!!!!**

REACTION PAPERS
You may choose the topic for these papers; the only requirement is that the topics be related to the course material. These are NOT summary papers, in which you would summarize information from the textbook or lecture. Rather, the papers should be a reaction to topics that interest you or those with which you have had personal experience, topics about which you have further questions, or topics which you would like to further explore. You may also use this opportunity to disagree with something that was discussed in class; you will not be penalized for disagreeing with the instructor or the textbook. You will, however, be graded on grammar, sentence structure, and overall writing (10 points of the 25 points). Papers should be 3-4 pages in length (3 pages minimum, double spaced, 12-point font).

Due: First reaction paper – Friday, February 20 by NOON
     Second reaction paper – Friday, April 17 by NOON

**JOURNAL OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY IN THE MEDIA:** Five postings are due in the first 10 weeks of class – all must be completed by Friday, April 17 at NOON. There is a reminder in the course outline during various weeks that should act as reminder to get articles posted before they all are due; this does not mean that you need to post on those dates.

“The manner in which our society portrays mental disorders through the media has an impact on the attitudes of individuals. Television and the movies consistently use psychological labels to describe unfavorable and dangerous characters. The written media likewise often use lurid descriptions of crimes, including psychological diagnoses and terms.” (Prerost, 2000, p. 12). Often, these descriptions are biased and inaccurate, fueling the already negative stigma surrounding mental disorders. This assignment is designed to help you become aware of the sometimes subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, messages the public receives regarding abnormal psychology.

Gather evidence of the presentations of psychological disorders in the visual and print media. Do not only look to the newspaper or television news broadcasts. Publications as varied as Newsweek and the National Enquirer, as well as the movie industry, often report/portray psychological disorders. Oftentimes, there is much sensationalism which surrounds this type of reporting.

1. **Document FIVE** instances of abnormal psychology in the media with **appropriate citations**, using the “MEDIA JOURNAL” link in the course shell on Blackboard. You can type your entry directly into the journal.

2. **Briefly** describe the story/article, and then write a couple of sentences after each instance, addressing the following questions:
   - Are common psychological terms or labels used? Are the discussions of the particular mental disorder accurate? How is the individual suffering from the disorder portrayed?
   - Is there evidence of stereotyping the individual? Are any “experts” cited, quoted, or interviewed; if so, what are their qualifications?

3. **Each entry is worth five points.** Blackboard will notify me when you have made five entries; you will then be graded
Please organize your postings according to the following example:

Disorder/Abnormal concept identified: **Psychotic behavior**
Reference:   ABC News, 2/10/05, 10:00 newsbroadcast

While listening to the 10:00 news, I heard a story regarding the bizarre behavior of a young man outside a political rally. The man was shouting that, “The aliens are coming and we must all prepare for the massacre.” The news anchor stated that obviously the man was suffering from multiple personality disorder, yet there was no psychology professional interviewed to substantiate the story. Obviously this is a misnomer, since very rarely does someone with MPD become psychotic. Actually, the official diagnostic label is Dissociative Identity Disorder, . . . .

EXTRA CREDIT
You can receive 5 points of extra credit by filling out the instructor evaluation survey. You will receive an email from the Dean’s office close to the end of the semester with instructions on how to access that survey. I will only get a list of those who completed the survey: I will not be able to see any of the responses until after grades have been posted. Please be honest and candid with your answers, as the results of these surveys most definitely impact my teaching in terms of course improvement.

Login at Blackboard:
Point your web browser to: [http://unco.blackboard.com/](http://unco.blackboard.com/)
Click on login (There is additional information on the gateway page for logging in.)
Your **username** is the first 8 characters of your UNC email address (e.g., boop1234 or BOOP 1234).
Your **password** is your student number (Bear Number).
The email address added to the Blackboard system will be “your name” @bearaddress. **ALL CORRESPONDENCE FOR THIS CLASS WILL BE DONE THROUGH YOUR UNC BEAR EMAIL ACCOUNT.** Contact User Support at 970-351-4357 for problems and questions. Once you get logged in, you will see your Blackboard course page with PSY 255-970 listed under “Courses in which I am participating.” You will need to click the link to get into the course.

Blackboard Help
To succeed in this class, you must be proficient in the use of Blackboard. To receive help with Blackboard, go to [http://www.unco.edu/blackboard/student_help.htm](http://www.unco.edu/blackboard/student_help.htm), or call the Help Desk at 351-4357 or 1-800-545-2331.

NOTES:
**Communication between Student and Instructor**
Students are encouraged to stay in contact with the instructor to ensure that all questions are answered and all assignments are clearly understood. The following procedures are recommended for communicating with me:

- Use the “**General Class Questions**” forum to ask any questions that you may have regarding assignments, course requirements, etc., especially if the answer will benefit the entire class.
- Send an email to me to ask questions about private issues, such as a score that you received on an exam or assignment. When sending an email, always include “PSY 255” in the subject line of the message.
- I will post important information, such as revised deadlines or reminders of tasks that need to be done, on the announcements page of UNC’s Blackboard Page.
- Be sure to check your email/Blackboard Announcement page weekly.

**Academic Dishonesty**
All work done for PSY 255 must be your own work. Students who cheat and/or plagiarize will receive an “F” for the course. The University of Northern Colorado’s Student Code of Conduct ([http://www.unco.edu/dos/student_conduct.html](http://www.unco.edu/dos/student_conduct.html)) and Honor Code ([http://www.unco.edu/dos/honor_code/index.html](http://www.unco.edu/dos/honor_code/index.html)) strictly prohibit any form of academic misconduct. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and knowingly or recklessly encouraging or making possible any act of plagiarism, cheating, or fabrication. Academic misconduct is an unacceptable activity in scholarship and is in conflict with academic and professional ethics and morals. All incidents of alleged plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will be investigated and violations of academic integrity will result in a consequence that may be as severe as an F in the class and a recommendation for expulsion. For more information on plagiarism and appropriate paraphrasing, please see: [http://www.unco.edu/dos/honor_code/defining_plagiarism.html](http://www.unco.edu/dos/honor_code/defining_plagiarism.html).

**Disability Support Services**
Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services at 351-2289.