

# Abnormal Psychology (809-159)

## Syllabus

Fall 2009

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**Welcome to Abnormal Psychology!** My name is Dr. Krause. Our world is full of unusual behavior that interests many people. Our news media is full of stories that have psychological issues underlying the unusual behavior being reported. For those fascinated by unusual behavior, the field of abnormal psychology may offer some insights—and perhaps some new questions—about human functioning and treatment for problems that humans encounter.

**Contacting the Instructor:** You may stop by my office, call me by telephone, or email me. If you choose to email, please be aware that you must use your MSTC email account. Messages received from other email accounts are quarantined by our system. Further, instructors are asked not to open emails from unknown sources.

**Textbook:** The text for the course is *Fundamentals of Abnormal Psychology 5/e* by Ronald Comer.

Much of the text is covered in this course. You are expected to be prepared for class discussions and activities by doing the reading **before** class.

**Course Description:** The course in Abnormal Psychology surveys the essential features, possible causes, and assessment and treatment of the various types of abnormal behavior from the viewpoint of the major theoretical perspectives in the fields of abnormal psychology. Students will be introduced to the diagnosis system of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV). In addition, the history of the psychology of abnormality will be traced. Cultural and social perspectives in understanding and responding to abnormal behavior will be explored as well as current topics and issues within abnormal psychology.

A variety of teaching methods will be utilized in this course, including lecture, discussion, videos, written assignments, group activities, and exams.

**Competencies:** Upon completion of this course, it is expected that you will be able to:

1. Discuss historical theories and treatments for psychological disorders.
2. Analyze current theoretical understandings of psychological disorders.
3. Identify primary aspects of the current diagnostic system.
4. Identify major categories of psychological disorders.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of key symptoms, course, and prognosis of various psychological disorders.
6. Identify effective treatments for psychological disorders.

**Core Abilities:** MSTC has identified four Core Abilities, all of which are addressed in this course, that all students should be able to demonstrate before graduating:

- Act with integrity
- Communicate effectively
- Demonstrate effective critical and creative thinking
- Demonstrate global and social awareness

**Attendance:** Attendance is **mandatory** and **recorded at every class period**. Being prompt in your attendance shows responsibility and respect for others. Please be aware that being tardy and sleeping in class will count as an absence. Regular attendance is necessary to demonstrate the core abilities, receive assignments, and to participate in classroom discussions and activities.

**The General Education Division policy states that missing a minimum of 6 class hours** is grounds for being **dropped** from the class roster. This means that you need to be present for 90% of the class hours. Please keep this in mind so that you do not find yourself in a position where you may be dropped. While dropping you from the course is an option that the instructor may exercise, it is ultimately your responsibility to drop the course if you stop coming to class. Keep in mind that those who attend class regularly tend to perform well on exams and written work.

Having **perfect attendance or missing up to two class hours** will earn you a **bonus 1%** (of the total points possible) added to your final course grade. Being in class pays off! It would be great to see everyone work towards receiving the bonus!

**ADA Statement:** If you know you have a recognized disability, or suspect that you might have one, it is your responsibility to identify yourself as soon as possible to the Disability Services staff in Student Services (Patti Lloyd). Course standards will not be lowered, but various kinds of accommodations are available to you. Adequate and reasonable time will be required to develop and provide appropriate accommodations, so contact Disability Services as soon as possible. It is MSTC's goal to assist you in your educational plan.

**Course Grading:** Your course grade will be determined by total points earned. Letter grades will be assigned based on the following averages:

93-100	A
90-92.9	A-
88-89.9	B+
83-87.9	B
80-82.9	B-
78-79.9	C+
73-77.9	C
70-72.9	C-
68-69.9	D+
63-67.9	D
62 and below	F

Plan to **earn** the grade that you wish to receive. Seek assistance early if you are not reaching your goal. If any extra credit opportunities arise, these will be announced in class.

**Exams:** Exams must be taken on the day they are scheduled. Failure to contact me prior to missing an exam will automatically result in 0 points for the missed exam. Please do not request to take an exam at another time unless you have extenuating circumstances.

**Written Assignments:** For full credit, you must turn in a **hard copy** of your written assignments on the day they are due. The latest that they will be accepted for full credit will be 3:30 p.m. Assignments that are late will automatically have 10% of points deducted from them for each day up to three days. Once an assignment is three working days late, it will no longer be accepted and you will receive a grade of 0 for the work.

**Class Presentation:** You will be asked to do a short class presentation that coincides with a paper. Details are outlined in another hand-out.

**Participation Points:** Developing professional behavior is critical to your success in the work world. Regular attendance and appropriate participation in class is a large part of your professional behavior. You will be given up to 40 attendance and participation points for this course if you: 1.) attend all class sessions; 2.) show an interest in the material; 3.) participate in group activities; and 4.) contribute meaningfully (but not excessively) to discussions. Each of these four categories is worth 10 points toward the possible 40 points that you may earn. You will not fare well on this portion of your grade if your behavior is disruptive or disrespectful (e.g., receiving calls on your cell phone, talking to one's neighbor, making disrespectful remarks to instructor or peers, sleeping, etc.).

**Academic Integrity:** The MSTC board, administration, faculty, and staff believe that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of higher education. All students are expected to maintain and promote the highest standards of personal honesty and professional integrity. These standards apply to all examinations, assigned work, and projects. Therefore, a student who is found to have been dishonest, fraudulent, or deceptive in the completion of work or is willing to help others to be so; or who plagiarizes (presents the work of others as his or her own) is subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension.

***Please silence your cell phone prior to the start of class. Do not check messages or do text messaging during class time.***

**Join me on this journey of exploring the abnormal side of behavior.**