

American University of Beirut  
Department of Psychology  
**Adult Abnormal Psychology – PSYC 214 – Section 2**

Instructor: Dr Ghina Ismail  
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Class Time: MWF 11-11:50  
Class Location: Nicely Hall 214  
Office Hours: Wed 12:30-2:30  
or by appointment

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*“An abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal behavior.” Victor E. Frank*

### **Course Description**

This course will cover the major theories and controversies around the concept of abnormal behavior, its assessment and diagnosis. We will cover most of the psychological disorders seen in adulthood, their symptomatology, causal theories, risk factors and treatments.

### **Student Learning Objectives**

- 1) to demonstrate knowledge of the various approaches to assessment and diagnosis of psychological disorders (PLO 5b,2a)
- 2) to demonstrate knowledge of the various theories and treatment approaches to psychological disorders (PLO5b,2a)
- 3) to differentiate empirically validated psychotherapy from pseudo-scientific psychotherapy (PLO1c)
- 4) to demonstrate an attitude of critical thinking concerning the process of assessment, diagnosis and treatment (PLO2a,b,c)
- 5) to understand the role of social, environmental and cultural factors when assessing, diagnosing and treating adults. (PLO2b)
- 6) to gain a solid knowledge base in the ethical standards of clinical research and practice (PLO4b,c)
- 7) to effectively and fluently communicate psychological knowledge and critical thinking skills through writing assignments and oral discussions. (PLO6a,b)

### **Required Reading**

Susan Nolen-Hoeksema (2017) *Abnormal Psychology*. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. McGraw Hill, New York.

### **Class Format and Environment**

Classes will be made up of lectures, activities, and group discussions.

Class time has been designed to elaborate on reading material, to apply it to real case examples, and to stimulate critical thinking and discussion. Classes will *not* be a point by point summary of the reading.

Readings are assigned in advance (see schedule at the end of the syllabus). Students are expected to read the material before class. Modifications to the schedule and other aspects of the syllabus will be made available on Moodle.

Students are strongly encouraged to express their thoughts, opinions and ideas, and to be open-minded and respectful in allowing others to express their thoughts, opinions and ideas, even if they are different from theirs.

Any informal and constructive feedback throughout the semester on how to improve the class or its content is warmly welcomed. It is important to me that classes are useful and interesting to all students.

### **Cell phone and laptop policy**

I respectfully request no cell phone usage in class, as well as no laptop or tablet use unless related to the class (i.e. note taking). If you need to leave your phone on for personal reasons, please do let me know before the class and step out of the class if you need to take a call.

### **Self-care**

The discussion of mental illness and related experiences and difficulties can be triggering and some may, at times, find it distressing. You are expected to take good care of yourselves and to please ask for help when you need it. Available sources include the AUB Student Counseling Center or the AUBMC Department of Psychiatry.

### **Evaluation Methods**

Final grades will be based on 3 exams and a final written assignment. Grades will be calculated as follows and graded out of 100:

- 5% - Attendance
- 5% - Participation
- 25% - Exam 1
- 20% - Exam 2
- 20% - Exam 3
- 25% - Written assignment

**Attendance and participation.** Students are required to attend all classes for their entirety, and to arrive on time. If you are unable to attend class due to valid reasons or unforeseen circumstances, such as illness, you are expected to provide formal evidence of your reason for absence (e.g. a doctor's note from the University Infirmary). Attendance makes up 5% of your overall grade.

Participation makes up a further 5% and includes participation in class and group discussions as well as listening to lecture material and discussion and refraining from activity likely to disrupt class (e.g. private conversations and whispering).

**Exams.** Exams are based on the core reading and material discussed in class. They are not cumulative. All exams are conducted during class time. When an exam is conducted on Moodle you will be informed ahead of time of the location. Any students with accommodations, such as extra time, must contact me at least 1 week before the exam in order to make arrangements. Make-up exams will only be arranged if you provide formal evidence of a valid reason for your absence. Attendance makes up 5% of your grade.

**Written assignment.** The written assignment is worth 25% of the overall grade. Details about the assignment will be provided in class.

Late submissions will incur a 2-mark penalty for every day the assignment is late, unless the student can provide evidence of extenuating circumstances in which case a new deadline can be negotiated. Submissions that exceed the word count will not be read past the word limit, with no re-submission possible.

### **AUB Policies**

**Academic Integrity.** Students are expected to be honest and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity in their academic work and assignments. Cheating or plagiarizing will result in the student receiving a zero for that test or paper and the office of the Dean may/will be notified. I will strictly enforce the student code of conduct in the AUB handbook. Please see AUB Student Code of Conduct on:

<http://www.aub.edu.lb/pnp/generaluniversitypolicies/Documents/StudentCodeConduct/StudentCodeConduct.pdf>.

**Accessibility of learning.** AUB strives to make learning experiences accessible for all. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to a disability (such as ADHD, learning difficulties, mental health conditions, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please do not hesitate to inform the Accessible Education Office. In order to ensure that you receive the support you need and to facilitate a smooth accommodations process, you must register with the Accessible Education Office (AEO) as soon as possible: [accessibility@aub.edu.lb](mailto:accessibility@aub.edu.lb); +961-1-350000, x3246; West Hall, 314.

**Discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct.** AUB is committed to facilitating a campus free of all forms of discrimination including sex/gender-based harassment prohibited by Title IX. The University's non-discrimination policy applies to, and protects, all students, faculty, and staff. If you think you have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual misconduct, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. If you speak to a faculty or staff member about an issue such as harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, the information will be kept as private as possible, however, faculty and designated staff are required to bring it to the attention of the University's Title IX Coordinator. Faculty can refer you to fully confidential resources, and you can find information and contacts at [www.aub.edu.lb/titleix](http://www.aub.edu.lb/titleix). To report an incident, contact the University's Title IX Coordinator Trudi Hodges at 01-350000 ext. 2514, or [titleix@aub.edu.lb](mailto:titleix@aub.edu.lb). An anonymous report may be submitted online via EthicsPoint at [www.aub.ethicspoint.com](http://www.aub.ethicspoint.com).

## Adult Abnormal Psychology Schedule

**Course Schedule may be subject to change.**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Commencing</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Week 1	Aug 31	Introduction to the course		
Week 2	Sept 3	- Abnormality - Theories and Treatment	Ch 1 & 2	
Week 3	Sept 10	- Abnormality - Assessment & Diagnosis	Ch 2 & 3	
Week 4	Sept 17	- Research - (PTSD Specific Phobias, Agoraphobia, Panic Disorder, Separation Anxiety	Ch 3 & 4	
Week 5	Sept 24	Social Anxiety, GAD, OCD)	Ch 5	<b>Exam 1</b>
Week 6	Oct 1	- Somatic Symptom and Dissociative Disorders - Mood Disorders & Suicide	Ch 6 & 7	
Week 7	Oct 8	Mood Disorders & Suicide - Schizophrenia & Psychosis	Ch 7 & 8	
Week 8	Oct 15	Schizophrenia & Psychosis - Personality Disorders Personality Disorders	Ch 8 & 9	
Week 9	Oct 22	- Neurodevelopmental & Neurocognitive Disorders - Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders	Ch 10 & 11	<b>Exam 2</b>
Week 10	Oct 29	Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders - Eating Disorders	Ch 11 & 12	
Week 11	Nov 5	- Sexual Disorders - Substance Use & Gambling	Ch 13 & 14	
Week 12	Nov 12	- Health Psychology - Mental Health and the Law	Ch 15 & 16	
Week 13	Nov 19		To be Decided	<b>Written Assignment</b>
Week 14	Nov 26		To be Decided	
Week 15	Dec 3			<b>Exam 3</b>

**Modifications to the class syllabus will be made available on Moodle.**