

PSYC 300A: Introduction to Abnormal Psychology



Acknowledgement

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. This means that anyone who is not of xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) descent is allowed to live and study on these lands at the discretion of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. A 1976 declaration of land title and rights can be found [here](#). The land UBC is situated on has always been a place of learning for the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people, who have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site for thousands of years. For those of us who are guests on these lands, it is our responsibility to respect the land, the culture and practices of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people, and to recognize our position as settlers. You can learn more about the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people and their history [here](#).

Course Information

Course Title: Abnormal Psychology

Course Code Number: PSYC 300A 901

Credit Value: 3

Prerequisites

Either (a) PSYC 100, or (b) all of PSYC 101, PSYC 102, or (c) 6 credits of 200-level Psychology (but not 205 or 263).

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Bethany Michel (bmichel@psych.ubc.ca)

TA: see Home page

*Include the course number (300A 901) in the subject line of your email. We will typically respond within 3 days. If you haven't heard back after this time, feel free to email again.

Office Hours: Office hours are held in person for the hour following the end of lecture.

About Your Instructor

Dr. Michel is a registered psychologist and a sessional lecturer in the Department of Psychology. She is white (of European and Mexican descent) and therefore a guest on the Musqueam lands. She teaches undergraduate courses in abnormal psychology and graduate courses in child and adolescent treatment. She is also the Director of the Child, Adolescent, and Family Division at the DBT Centre of Vancouver, where she works as a clinician with children and youth (ages 5-20) and their families and supervises graduate students and postdoctoral fellows learning DBT. Dr. Michel earned her doctorate in Clinical Science at Harvard University and completed her pre-doctoral internship at Brown University. Her research interests include child and adolescent suicide and self-injury, as well as factors that influence their response to treatment. She may or may not be obsessed with dogs.

Course Structure

This course is a 3-hour weekly evening lecture course. In addition to lecture, there will be discussions on selected topics on Canvas. Canvas modules contain lecture slides, thought questions, and additional reading and online video resources.

Schedule of Topics

Week 1	Overview of Abnormality, Research Design, Historical Views
Week 2	Causes & Treatment of Mental Illness
Week 3	Stress & Anxiety Disorders
Week 4	Midterm I
Week 5	OCD & Mood Disorders
Week 6	Bipolar Disorders & Suicide
Week 7	Eating Disorders & Substance Use Disorders
Week 8	Midterm II
Week 9	Psychosis and Schizophrenia
Week 10	Childhood Disorders
Week 11	No class
Week 12	Personality Disorders
Week 13	Legal and Ethical Issues

Learning Outcomes

In this course, we will examine the nature of abnormal psychology, paying close attention to factors that contribute to the etiology (what causes it), presentation (the signs and symptoms), and treatment (how to reduce symptoms and suffering) of mental illness. In order to construct the most complete picture, we will approach this from multiple angles, including biological, psychological, and social perspectives. The primary goal of this course is to develop your ability to think critically about how we think about mental illness using theory, research findings, logic, and applied knowledge. A secondary goal is to become educated consumers of mental health information to be able to predict the factors that increase the likelihood of a given disorder developing and discriminate between treatment types based on efficacy demonstrated in the research literature.

Learning Activities

Over the course of the term, students will attend lectures, have an opportunity for regular discussions about selected topics (online and in class), and take 3 exams (2 midterms and a final). There will be regular opportunities to ask questions and discuss issues with Dr. Michel and other students during lecture and office hours.

Learning Materials

Textbook:

Hooley, J.M., Butcher, J.N., Nock, M.K., & Mineka, S. (2020). *Abnormal psychology* (18th edition). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

This is available in two formats:

- etextbook
- Hard copy
 - 17th or 18th edition (in the 17th edition, the chapter numbers may be different, so be sure that you are reading on the correct topic)

Assessments of Learning

Assessment of learning will be based on performance on assigned tasks with the following weightings:

Midterm I	30%
Midterm II	30%
Final exam	40%

In the Psychology Department, we aim to offer learning experiences that welcome and challenge all students to engage meaningfully in our discipline. We strive for grades that accurately reflect student learning and achievement of course learning objectives, rather than solely reflecting their performance relative to others.

In Psychology at UBC-V, we employ department-wide grading standards to promote equitable alignment, supporting students and course instructors as they learn and teach across many diverse courses and sections. For each Course Section, instructors should aim for a grade average in the following Target Ranges (before any bonus HSP points are added, but including any mandatory HSP points): **B- (68-71%) in Introductory 100-level and 200-level courses; B (72-75%) in Intermediate 300-level courses; B+ (76-79%) for Advanced 400-level courses and Selective-Entry lower-level courses** (e.g., PSYC 277, 278, 312, 370, 371, 349, 359, 365). Ranges are intended to provide some flexibility to instructors and account for differences that can occur between classes. Ranges increase across year levels to account for improvements in student learning, and students' ability to self-select into more specialized courses.

During the course, instructors may choose to adjust grades and/or difficulty of the assessments, to align with the Target Range. At the end of the course, if the average falls outside the Target Range (either direction), instructors will typically be expected to use a linear transformation to adjust final grades (i.e., add or subtract the same number of points to all students' marks, while ensuring no student fails the course due to this transformation). If a course mean falls in within one +/- letter grade band above the Target Range (e.g., in the B+ range for Intermediate courses), and the instructor believes these grades to be justified, the instructor may submit a justification request using the departmental approval final grades submission form, and the grades may stand. This Upper Range is intended to inspire further excellence in learning and teaching, and allow for the possibility that some classes select for higher performing students. Courses with means exceeding the Upper Range will be expected to provide justification as well as use a linear transformation to fall within the Upper Range.

Grades are not official until they appear on students' academic record. Students will receive both a percent and a letter grade for this course. At UBC, they convert according to the key below:

A+	90-100%	B+	76-79%	C+	64-67%	D	50-54%
A	85-89%	B	72-75%	C	60-63%	F	0-49%
A-	80-84%	B-	68-71%	C-	55-59%		

EXAMS

The midterm and final exams will include multiple-choice, short answer, fill-in-the-blank questions, and at least 1 biopsychosocial model. They will cover material from lectures and other information included on the modules and course website. They will *not* include information from the textbook that is not covered in lecture or on the modules/course website.

The final exam will be offered during the regular exam period. Do not make travel plans before the final exam schedule comes out; there is no alternative exam date. For more information, see the *Midterm Exam Information* and *Final Exam Information* on the *Assignments* page.

Students have the right to view their marked examinations with instructional staff, if they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. However, the examination itself is the property of the university.

LATE/MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will not be accepted, unless accompanied by a physician's note documenting the student's incapacitating illness with the dates of incapacity.

The midterms will be given only on the published dates. Students with a physician's note documenting the illness and dates of inability to participate in schoolwork will have their marks adjusted accordingly; only under rare circumstances will a makeup midterm exam be offered.

Students who miss the final exam must apply for academic concession from [Arts Academic Advising](#) or the [Centre for Accessibility](#). Makeup final exams may consist entirely of essay questions.

University Policies

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is the foundation for your education and the development of the critical thinking skills you will need in your personal and professional life. University requires you to invest a considerable amount of time, effort, and money as you build your knowledge and ability to analyze and interpret information with increasing acumen as you work toward your degree. Engaging in academic integrity is a practice of self-respect, respect for learning, and for your university. We are invested in helping each student grow. As such, cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct are *very* serious concerns. Please review the [Academic Integrity](#) page for university policies and procedures on academic misconduct and consequences. Also visit the Learning Commons Academic Integrity for information on academic integrity, and tips on appropriate citation of sources.

All graded work in this course, unless otherwise specified, is to be original work done independently and without the use of AI programs (e.g., ChatGPT). Evidence of cheating or plagiarism may result in zero credit for the work in question. In cases of academic misconduct, UBC has the right to impose harsher penalties including (but not limited to) a failing grade for the course, suspension or expulsion from the University, cancellation of scholarships, and/or a notation on the student's transcript.

Learning Analytics

Learning analytics includes the collection and analysis of data about learners to improve teaching and learning. Canvas provides analytics by capturing data about your activity and providing information that can be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In this course, I plan to use analytics data to:

- View overall class progress

- Assess overall class understanding (via statistics on exams)
- Review statistics on course content being accessed to support improvements in the course
- Track participation in discussions
- Assess your participation in the course

Advice for a Career in Psychology

There are a lot of factors that go into deciding on a career path in psychology. If you are considering this, you will want to learn about some of the specific steps to be taken on the path toward graduate school. [The Psychology Students' Association \(PSA\)](#) puts on a series of events to discuss many of the issues related to considering and preparing oneself for graduate school. The Department of Psychology also puts on [events](#) that can provide more information about the process of applying for graduate school. I highly recommend looking into these if you are considering pursuing a career in psychology.

Copyright

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