

PSYC 277: Psychopathology
Pow, Bam, Snikt: Comic Books and Psychopathology
Course Syllabus
Spring 2023
M, W, F: 12:00 – 1:10

<u>Instructor</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Google Classroom Code</u>
Chris Dabbs, Ph.D.			

Time & Place:

LECTURE: 4th period (12:00-1:10), MWF, SMC A-203

Student hours: I host virtual drop-in hours via Zoom on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00AM – 11:00AM. These are optional times for you to come ask any course-related questions you may have! [Click here](#) for the Zoom link to student hours.

Email: Email will be the form of communication that I will use most and will respond to quickest. My email hours are 9:00am to 6:00pm, Monday-Friday. I will try to respond to your emails within 24 hours, unless I am otherwise unable. If email is sent outside of my email hours, response times may vary.

Teaching Assistant:

Description of course from the Knox College Office of the Registrar Course Catalog:

PSYC 277 – Psychopathology

1 credit

Psychopathology is the study of psychological disorder. In this class, we will study contemporary perspectives on the development, maintenance, and treatment of the major classes of disorder, including anxiety, mood disorders and suicide, schizophrenia and psychosis, trauma/PTSD, eating disorders, dissociation, personality disorders, and disorders that affect children and older adults. Students will read and write about case studies and will engage in experiential exercises related to these diagnostic areas.

*A note about the content of the course: developmental and acquired disabilities and diagnoses—ADHD, ASD, intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, and spinal cord injuries—are the purview of PSYC 300F: Developmental and Acquired Disabilities and are minimally covered in this course.

The required texts for the course:



1. Bridley, A. & Daffin, Jr. L. W. (2022). *Fundamentals of Psychological Disorders*
 - a. <https://opentext.wsu.edu/abnormal-psych/front-matter/title-page/>
2. Rosenberg, S. & Canzoneri, J. (2008). *The Psychology of Superheroes*.

Supplemental reading

3. Rosenberg, R. S. (Ed.). (2013). *Our Superheroes, Ourselves*
4. Langley, T. (Ed.). (2019). *The Joker Psychology: Evil Clowns and the Women Who Love Them*
5. Morrison, J. (2014). *DSM-5 Made Easy: The Clinician's Guide to Diagnosis*
6. American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. (Eds. 5 and 5-TR). DSM-5 TR
7. Other course materials will be made available to you on Google Classroom.

We will be drawing from an open-access (free) textbooks for this course (#1 above). A .pdf of this text is available on Google Classroom. We will also read an excerpt from *DSM-5 Made Easy: The Clinician's Guide to Diagnosis* by Morrison. This book is not a required purchase for this course, but you may find it helpful for your presentations and/or case report papers—the full text is available on ProQuest via [this link](#). The DSM-5 is on reserve in the SMC Library. The only required book purchase for this course is *The Psychology of Superheroes*, which you can buy new for around \$18, used for around \$8, or on eBook for around \$5.

Course Goals and Learning Objectives

Welcome to PSYC 277, Psychopathology! Throughout this course, we will be exploring the world of psychopathology, mental health, and diagnostics. We will discuss benefits and disadvantages of our systems of diagnosing, stigma and, of course, specific mental health diagnoses and their presentations—all while reading about how comic book characters are reflections of real-life mental health struggles. My informal learning goals for this course are: a) to help you become a more critical diagnostician, b) to grow empathy for commonly misunderstood mental health conditions, c) to develop an understanding of cultural considerations in diagnostics, and d) to help you learn a little bit more about mental health as processes.

In addition to our informal goals, every course that you take at Knox is designed to help you acquire formal knowledge and skills. The course will help you achieve the following psychology department learning goals:

1. Effectively and ethically apply the scientific method to studying the mind, the brain, and behavior.
2. Understand the basic theoretical approaches and classic empirical findings of psychology.

3. Effectively communicate with clear, grammatically correct writing.
4. Demonstrate an empathetic understanding of people of diverse abilities, experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives.

Assignments

In-class assignments/activities (15%).

Many days, we will engage in short assignments and participatory activities in class. These activities may take many forms, some of which include: group conversation/discussion and diagnostic practice. Other days, we will engage in in-class demonstrations of material and discuss readings, videos, experiences, etc. The bulk of these points will be earned through Continuum Activities—where we will watch people living with real diagnoses and think critically about their situations. You must be present in class to complete these assignments, and no make-up assignments are given. If you have an excused absence for the class period, the missing assignment will not count against your grade. If your absence is unexcused, you will receive a zero on the assignment.

Exams (three exams, 10%, 15%, and 15%, respectively).

We will have three exams in this class that cover course material. Exams will have multiple choice, short answer, and case study vignette questions. Exams will have two-hour time limits and will assess your understanding of course material and supplemental material. Exams are open-note to encourage effective note-taking skills. We do not meet on exam days. Exams are not cumulative and will be administered asynchronously via Google Classroom.

Presentation (15%)

Student groups of four (4) will give in-class presentations about disorders we have not covered or considered in class. Students will be required to have their topic approved by the professor beforehand—topics may not be repeated by groups and are on a first-come, first-serve basis. Topics must come from the DSM-5 or DSM-5 TR. Each group of students will select and rank three disorders that they would like to cover, and one will be approved for presentation. Each presentation should be approximately 15 minutes in length and should take the form of a micro-lesson in which you discuss the nature of your chosen disorder, potential etiologies of the condition, diagnostic considerations (including cultural considerations), and common or empirically supported treatments. Your group's level of preparedness will also factor into your grade. The intent of this presentation is to *teach the class*. In facilitating this goal, I encourage use of audio, video, handouts, or other teaching and learning materials. Questions from student presentations will comprise part of the final exam.

Case Reports (15%)

Before the end of the semester, you will engage in writing case reports about characters from various films/series. Your case report(s) should include a brief description of the plot, a complete DSM diagnosis of an individual in the film, and a complete treatment plan. Treatment plans should include where treatment might take place, which kinds of treatment might be most beneficial, how long the individual should be in treatment, and any cultural considerations about

the individual’s treatment. A rubric for this assignment is provided on Google Classroom. Your grade on this assignment is less dependent on selecting the “right” diagnosis or the “right” treatment plans and more dependent on the justifications you provide for each of these components. Chapter 12 of *Psychology of Superheroes* (‘What Would Freud Say? Psychopathology and the Punisher’) gives a good example of a case study. Each film or TV series can only be reviewed by a maximum of two students—sign-ups for these are on a first-come, first-serve basis. I discourage you from selecting a movie or series you have already seen and know well.

There are two paths you can take for this assignment. First, you may select any *two movies* on this list, watch them, and write a case report for each. Minimum page length per report: six double-spaced pages. Second, you may select any *one series* on this list, watch it, and write one case report. Minimum page length: 10 double-spaced pages. These papers are expected to be written in APA-style and follow the Knox Psychology Department Writing Policy. The due dates for these reports are rolling—that means you may turn them in anytime throughout the term. However, there are recommended submission dates (best-by dates) in the syllabus to keep you on track in the course. If you do not submit the case report by best-by date, you will be required to submit a *work plan* to me within two days of the missed best-by-date. The work plan is a step-by-step timeframe in which you plan to complete the assignment. If you miss a best-by-date, and you do not submit a work plan, your case report grade will be penalized by 15%. You may select from the following media:

<u>Brightburn (2019)</u>	<u>Moon Knight (2022)**</u>
<u>Birdman (2014)</u>	<u>Mystery Men (1999)</u>
<u>Black Panther (2018)</u>	<u>Super (2010)</u>
<u>Constantine (2005)</u>	<u>WandaVision (2021)**</u>
<u>Hancock (2008)</u>	<u>Watchmen (film; 2009)</u>
<u>The Incredibles (2004)</u>	<u>Zebaman (2004)</u>
<u>Joker (2019)</u>	<u>Unbreakable (2000)*</u>
<u>Logan (2017)</u>	<u>Split (2016)*</u>
<u>The Mask (1994)</u>	<u>Glass (2019)*</u>

* Part of the [Unbreakable](#) Trilogy

**only available on Disney+

These films are on reserve in the Knox College Seymour Library as DVDs or Blu-Rays. You may also acquire and watch them any way that is convenient to you (stream, rent, borrow, etc.). Case report papers must abide by the Knox Psychology Department Writing Policy.

Participation in Psychological Research (extra credit opportunity)

By participating in research projects being conducted in our department, you can earn extra credit. You are free to participate in as many studies as you like, and you will earn one point for each half-hour of research that is an online survey and two points for each half hour of research that requires showing up at a laboratory. However, no one will earn more than 8 points through research participation. If you volunteer to participate in an experiment and fail to show up, you will no longer be eligible to participate in research for extra credit.

Grading:

There grade cutoffs in this course are: A = 93%; A- = 90%; B+ = 88%; B = 83%; B- = 80%; C+ = 78%; C = 73%; C- = 70%; D+ = 68%; D = 63%; D- = 60%; F < 60%.

Attendance:

Decades of college learning research shows a positive connection between class attendance and success—when you come to class you do better. That said, I do not count your course attendance for points in this course. Please do not interpret this to mean that course attendance is not important; it is. **Regular attendance is expected.** In giving you agency over your decisions as budding scholars, I will not be micromanaging your time. My attendance policy is to encourage you to take time off when you **absolutely need it**. A non-exhaustive list of time-off needs may include: unexpected family or friend emergencies, dependent-care needs, irregular employment conflicts, or mental/physical health needs. Please let me know via email if you are going to miss class. Although attendance is not mandatory, I will be keeping attendance records. If you miss more than three course periods over the semester, I will ask that you meet with me to discuss how I can help you succeed in the course.

Mask Policy

The nature of COVID can rapidly shift throughout the semesters. Especially in Winter Term, when students are returning to campus after traveling and visiting extended family, COVID may be a more significant consideration. This class is a mask-friendly environment.

Illness Policy:

Please do not come to class sick. In coming to class ill, you expose everyone in the class to your illness. Please don't share your germs.

Late Work:

Google Classroom assignments are due by 11:59pm on the due date. It is your responsibility to see that work is turned in on time. If you know that you will be unable to submit an assignment on time, please let me know, and we can work through it together. Communication is a vital part of becoming a successful professional, and your communication with me regarding your work will be important to your success.

Plagiarism and Writing:

The Knox College Honor Code was written by students, just like you. You are expected to follow the Honor Code throughout your time at Knox. You can find information on plagiarism, the Knox College Honor System and the Psychology Department writing policy at the following links:

https://www.knox.edu/documents/AcademicAffairs/Honor_System.pdf

Use of AI:

Artificial Intelligence has begun to democratize the workplace and education, permeating many facets of everyday academic life. There are ways to use AI as a tool to assist in writing, and ways that using AI would be a violation of the Honor Code. Having an AI write sections of your paper

for you is an example of an Honor Code violation. Please see [this helpful Twitter thread](#) for ways that AI can be used morally and ethically to assist in writing and reading.

Academic accommodations: Students with disabilities who have approved accommodations should have Disability Support Services notify me about the specifics of the accommodations as soon as possible. If you receive accommodations, please schedule a meeting with me early in the semester so we can discuss how to most effectively implement these for you in the term!

Commercial course material websites: Use of (e.g., uploading to or downloading from) websites that charge fees or require uploading of course material (e.g., Chegg, Course Hero) has the potential to violate Knox College’s honor policy. Also, please do not upload or distribute any aspect of the course materials that the instructor has created (e.g., handouts, exams, assignments, presentations) outside of this class as that is a violation of copyright.

Nature of Course Material: In this class, we will study the development, maintenance, and treatment of psychological disorders. It may be the case for some of you that some past personal experience around one or more of these topics would make it difficult for you to engage with it academically. Because these topic areas are core to the study of abnormal psychology, we will engage with these topics in an academic way through lectures, class activities, assignments, and exams; we will read, write, and apply knowledge about these topics. You will never be asked or expected to self-disclose personal information in class or through assignments. If you feel uncomfortable engaging with any of the material in this class, I encourage you to talk with me right away.

Week	Date	Topics	Assignment
1	Wednesday 03/22	Intro to the course; syllabus overview	
	Friday 03/24	Psychopathology: the field, different views, stigma	
2	Monday, 03/27	Psychopathology: Historical perspectives, causes, current trends	
	Wednesday, 03/29	Models of Psychopathology	
	Friday, 03/31	Classification and Assessment	
3	Monday, 04/03	Diagnosis	
	Wednesday, 04/05	Research methods	
	Friday, 04/07	No Class Exam 1	Group presentation selection due by 11:59 pm
4	Monday, 04/10	Anxiety disorders—phobias, panic disorder	
	Wednesday, 04/12	Obsessive-compulsive and related disorders	In-class: Rachel and Continuum activity
	Friday, 04/14	<u>Depressive</u> and bipolar disorders	
5	Monday, 04/17	Depressive and <u>bipolar disorders</u>	

	Wednesday, 04/19	Trauma-and-stressor-related disorders	
	Friday, 04/21	Trauma-and-stressor-related disorders	Treatment + ACES In-class: Darwin and Continuum activity Recommendation to submit first film case study by the end of this week
6	Monday, 04/24	Substance-related and other addictive disorders	
	Wednesday, 04/26	Substance-related and other addictive disorders	
	Friday, 04/28	Substance-related and other addictive disorders	In-class: Mark and Continuum activity
7	Monday, 05/01	No Class Exam 2	
	Wednesday, 05/03	Eating disorders	
	Friday, 05/05	Floating Flunk Day	
8	Monday, 05/08	Schizophrenia spectrum disorders	In-class: Cecilia Recommendation to submit case study by the end of this week for folks watching a series
	Wednesday, 05/10	Schizophrenia spectrum disorders	In-class: Andre and Continuum activity
	Friday, 05/12	Personality psychopathology, disorders, and APD	Recommendation to submit the second film case study by the end of this week.
9	Monday, 05/15	Personality psychopathology, diagnostic issues, dimensions, and current trends	In class: Tina and Continuum activity
	Wednesday, 05/17	Neurodevelopmental disorders: ADHD	
	Friday, 05/19	Neurodevelopmental disorders: Autism	
10	Monday, 05/22	Student Presentations of Disorder	
	Wednesday, 05/24	Student Presentations of Disorder	

	Final exam opens 05/25 and closes 05/30 at 5:00pm		
--	---	--	--

FPD = [Fundamentals of Psychological Disorder](#)

PS = Psychology of Superheroes

Date	Readings
Wednesday 03/22	Intro the course. Syllabus overview.
Friday 03/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 1.1 (pp. 16-21), 1.3 (25-29) ● Mental Health Alphabet Soup ● PS ch. 7: <i>Prejudice Lessons from the Xavier Institute</i>
Monday 03/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 1.4 (pp. 29-39) ● Rosenberg ch.1, <i>Our Fascination with Superheroes</i>
Wednesday 03/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2.1 (pp. 50-52) ○ 2.2.1.5 (p. 57) ○ 2.2.2 (pp. 58-59) ○ 2.2.3 (pp. 60-61) ○ 2.2.4 (p. 61) ○ 2.3 (pp. 62-80) ○ 2.4 (pp. 81-84) ● DSM-5 Made Easy Intro, pp. 1-17
Friday 03/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1.2 (pp. 22-24) ○ 3.1 (pp. 85-89)
Monday 04/03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3.2 (90-96) ○ 3.3 (96-99) ● Tyrer, 2014
Wednesday 04/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 1.5 (pp. 39-44)
Friday 04/07	EXAM 1
Monday 04/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 7 (pp. 155-172) ● PS ch. 14, <i>Coping with Stress the Superhero Way</i>
Wednesday 04/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 9.1.1 (p. 189) ○ 9.2.1 (p. 192)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 9.3.1 (pp. 193-194) ○ 9.4 (pp. 195-197) ○ 9.5.1 (pp. 198-199)
Friday 04/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4.1 (pp. 102-105) ○ 4.3.1 (p. 109) ○ 4.3.3 (p. 110) ○ 4.4.1 (p. 111) ○ 4.5 (pp. 112-117) ○ 4.6.1 (pp. 118-122) ○ 4.6.3.1 (p. 122)
Monday 04/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4.2 (pp. 106-108) ○ 4.3.2 (p. 109) ○ 4.4.2 (p. 111) ○ 4.6.2 (p. 122) ○ 4.6.3.2 (p. 123)
Wednesday 04/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 5.1-5.5 (pp. 125-136) ● Langley, WandaVision: Complicated Grief Causes Life Complications ● Langley, <i>The Joker Psychology</i>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch. 14, <i>Trauma: More Than One Bad Day</i>
Friday 04/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 5.6 (pp. 137 – 140) ● Tolokun, O. Y. (2021). <i>N'Jadaka and Intergenerational Trauma</i>. In <i>Why Wakanda Matters</i> (ch. 11).
Monday 04/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 11.1-11.2 (pp. 218-227)
Wednesday 04/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 11.3-11.4 (pp. 228-231) ● White (2021). <i>Analyzing representations of addiction treatment and recovery in comic books and graphic novels</i>.
Friday 04/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 11.5 (pp. 232-235)
Monday 05/01	EXAM 2
Wednesday 05/03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 10 (pp. 203-217)
Friday 05/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 12.1-12.4 (pp. 238-249) ● Floating Flunk Day
Monday 05/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 12.5 (pp. 249-253)

Wednesday 05/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 13.1-13.4 (pp. 254-269) ● Rosenberg ch. 6, <i>Our Superheroes, Our Supervillans: Are They All That Different?</i>
Friday 05/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interview with Dyshae
Monday 05/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPD 13. 5 (pp. 270-273) ● PS ch. 3, <i>Superman's Personality: From Krypton, Kansas, or Both?</i>
Wednesday 05/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Natri, H. (2021). <i>How and why neurotypicals misunderstand and mistreat autistic people.</i>
Friday 05/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Watch ADHD Myth or Reality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hDY517S0Xo&list=PLQnwECjj19TrXF04vXFL2szKewyYochXn
Monday 05/22	Student Presentations
Wednesday 05/24	Student Presentations