



University of Toronto at Scarborough
Department of Life Sciences

Current Topics In Abnormal Psychology



Clinical Psychology
*Evaluation of, Diagnosis of, and Intervention for
Mental Disorder*

Course Instructor	Zachariah Campbell
Course Code	PSYD33H3
Lecture Details	Thursdays, 7 to 9 pm, AA 205
Office Hour Details	Thursdays, 6 to 7 pm, SW418C
Course E-mail	zac.campbell@utoronto.ca

Brief Description

In your Abnormal Psychology class you were taught that throughout history, whether a person's behavior is labeled abnormal has often depended on the cultural norms for appropriate behavior and the gender and ethnicity of the person and that current definitions of abnormality focus on the person's ability to function in daily life and his or her level of distress and grasp of reality. You were also told that many biological and psychological tests are used to assess people's functioning and well-being and that the information gathered in these tests is compared to criteria for diagnosing psychological disorders provided in guidebooks such as the DSM. You were also shown that several modern biological and psychological theories provide different ways of understanding and treating people with psychological disorders and that most disorders appear to be influenced both by biological and psychosocial factors, and some of these theories integrating these factors have proven most useful in understanding and treating abnormality, while others have failed miserably.

In short, we tried to answer the question "what is abnormality?"

In others words we answered the "what" question.

What remains to be asked, however, is "how are these abnormalities established and supported in the scientific literature?" In other words, we need to answer the "how" question.

To do so, this course will provide students with a framework for critically assessing the research literature. That is, we typically accept 'scientific findings' if they have been found to equate to established statistical criterion (e.g., $p < .05$). When a research hypothesis (e.g., frontal lobe reduction in schizophrenia) is supported with significant statistical evidence (i.e., $p < .05$), research scientists will then argue in support of their hypotheses (i.e., frontal lobe reduction causes schizophrenia).

This methodology is both faulty and illogical.

We will explore why this methodology is faulty and illogical. Students will then be shown alternative methodologies for assessing the 'significance' of a research study (i.e., effect size analyses and meta-analysis), and then asked to apply these alternative methodologies to their chosen area of interest.

Students will be expected to demonstrate the following:

1. A clear understanding of statistical significance testing and its limitations
2. Theoretical knowledge and practical application of alternative methodologies for assessed the 'significance' of a research study
3. An ability to demonstrate that he/she can critically evaluate the research literature of a chosen area of interest
4. And finally, a greater understanding of a chosen area of interest

Overall

This course is meant to be a comprehensive seminar to clarify the various perspectives surrounding the understanding of mental disorder. This includes evaluation methods, diagnostic criteria, and the efficacy of various intervention methods. Accordingly, you will find that the nature of a seminar is unlike many of the courses you have taken to date. Moreover, a seminar is much like the type of learning experience you would gain in graduate or medical school. Because of its smaller size, there is greater opportunity for independent learning under the supervision of the instructor. At the same time, students are expected to learn from each other by way of participation during presentations. Hence, you will find that your final grade is very much tied to your ability to learn independently (e.g., by gathering appropriate and plentiful readings) and to your participation in class.

Required Readings

Wolf, F. M. (1986). *Meta-analysis: Quantitative methods for research synthesis*. Newbury, London: Sage.

Zakzanis, K. K. (1998). Brain is related to behavior ($p < .05$). *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology*, 20, 419-427.

Zakzanis, K. K. (2001). Statistics to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth: Formulae, illustrative numerical examples, and heuristic interpretation of effect size analyses for neuropsychological researchers. *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology*, 16, 653-657.

*Once you have grasped the content of these readings, you are expected to gather your related readings in keeping with your chosen focus of interest.

Important Notes

- A. All course related inquiries are to be directed to the instructor's email address listed on the first page. Please ensure that you put "PSYD33H3" in the subject line of every email to ensure that it is properly received.
- B. Every enrolled student must ensure that they have access the course website via the UTSC intranet. All course related content will be posted here (e.g., lecture slides, important announcements, and midterm grades). The only format that will be used for all posted documents is Adobe PDF. Free reading software is available at www.adobe.com.
- C. Every effort will be made to post the lecture slides on the Wednesday evening prior to each class (before 10 pm).
- D. The prerequisites for this course are PSYB32H3 and one C-level half-credit in psychology.
- E. If a lecture is cancelled because of an unforeseen circumstance (e.g., unexpected illness), students are still responsible for the material that was to be discussed that day (e.g., assigned readings).
- F. If a student is absent for their presentation or the final examination due to illness or other extenuating circumstance, they must contact the instructor as soon as possible. For medical reasons, students must use the University of Toronto Student Medical certificate. It can be downloaded on the UTSC website. Matters concerning the final examination are dealt with solely by the Registrar's office.
- G. Students with a disability/health consideration are encouraged to approach me and the AccessAbility Services Office. You can also drop by their office, S302B, inside the Resource Centre. A coordinator is available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations.

Grading Scheme

Participation (10%)

Students are expected to learn from each other by way of attendance and participation during presentations. Hence, you will find that your final grade is very much tied to your participation in class—10% of your final grade to be exact.

Final Paper Proposal (10%)

On October 26, 2006 your proposal is due by email. Prior to the following class, each student's proposal will be reviewed by the instructor to determine (1) whether you grasp the task at hand required to successfully complete the critical review paper, and (2) determine whether your area of interest is suitable for critical review.

To meet these requirements, your proposal should include a very brief outline of your critical review paper (e.g., what you will cover, what you won't). It should include evidence that you have begun an exhaustive search for research studies (e.g., outline your search methods to date, and how many studies you believe are appropriate to be included into a critical review—i.e., you can calculate effect sizes from). Finally, it should include a detailed example of your ability to calculate an effect size from an actual research study, and your ability to interpret it appropriately.

Presentation (20%)

Students are required to present a 25-minute review of their chosen area of study followed by 5 minutes of questions.

The presentation will be evaluated on your demonstrated knowledge of your area (e.g., a fluent understanding of the topic—hence, you do not want to stand there and read).

The order in which you will present will be decided on the following: The student who has the earlier date of presentation, will have first choice of topic. Note: no two students may have the same topic.