Course Outline
Current Topics in Abnormal Psychology
Psychology D33 Lec 01

Professor: David Nussbaum, Ph.D.   Email: dnussbaum@utsc.utoronto.ca
Time: Wednesdays 3:10 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.   Room: AA 204
Readings: Sessions 1 – 4: Provided

Session	Date	Topic
1.	Jan. 11	Course Organization &: Is Psychology a Science? Can it Be?
2.	Jan. 18	Structural Overview & History of DSM: I to V
3.	Jan. 25	Basic Neuroscience Background (+ Videos)
4.	Feb. 1	Towards a Comprehensive Model for Psychology
5.	Feb. 8	Quiz on Sessions & Readings 1- 4
6.	Feb. 15	Organizational Session 2: Topic Selection & Scheduling
7.	Feb. 22	Reading Week No Class
8.	Feb. 29	Class Presentations 1 - 4
9.	Mar. 7	Class Presentations 5 - 8
10.	Mar. 14	Class Presentations 9 - 12
11.	Mar. 21	Class Presentations 13 – 16
12.	Mar. 28	Class Presentations 17 – 20
13.	Apr. 4	Class Presentations 21 – 24

Evaluation: Quiz: 25%; Presentation: 30%; Term Paper: 35%; Attendance: 10%
Topics for Presentation and Term Paper can be the same or different.

Expanded Course Description

As a D Level (4th year) course D33 has a number of distinct objectives. Most of you are approaching graduation and, aside from the independently wealthy among you, will, depending on circumstances, either leave UTSC to find employment or pursue higher levels of education. The course objectives are designed to advance both goals with the realization that those entering the work force immediately may eventually return to pursue graduate studies whether in Psychology or elsewhere, while those entering grad programs will (eventually, aside from the independently wealthy noted above) have to enter the work force.

At the more general level, this course will help you develop organizational skills to more effectively deliver oral presentations and written expositions of your factual research and reasoning. As graduates of UTSC, you will aspire to management and executive positions where written and oral presentations, when done well, will help you advance even in the non-academic world. For those of you continuing in academia, communication of your research design, findings, conclusions and ideas in both written and oral presentations will be the "life-blood" of your careers. It is difficult to develop these skills effectively in much larger lower level courses, underscoring the importance of taking D levels courses very seriously.

In terms of content, the course will begin with a broad introduction to clinical/abnormal behaviour, a critique of present limitations and presentation of an alternate framework. To a limited extent, I will utilize areas that I am familiar with through my own research developed in tandem with approximately 20 years of clinical practice as a forensic, clinical and neuropsychologist. My bias in conceptualizing and attempting to understand any behaviour is to describe and delineate the external manifestation very carefully, and then identify the neurobiological mechanisms processing the requisite information at the neuroanatomical, physiological, endocrine, pharmacological and genetic levels. This will be contrasted with the current clinical approach to psychiatric diagnosis that relies on elaborate "symptom checklists" rather than identification of information processing deficits in cognitive and emotional systems; a stage that eventually will be reversed with advances in behavioural neuroscience.

The content of your papers and presentations will be left entirely up to you although I would like to see and approve your topics, just to insure that a) they fall within the general purview of abnormal behaviour and b) there exists a "multi-level" empirical literature for you to consult when preparing your papers and presentations. The first 3 lectures might be considered "templates" for your projects. So begin to think about selecting your own topic. My reason for adopting this multi-level approach is that it furnishes the most complete conceptual and informational schemata within which to understand a) the various clinical conditions that affect individuals, b) correctly understand the individual and his/her idiosyncratic responses to the condition and the environment, in turn providing c) the most comprehensive method for designing interventions involving psychological (informational) as well as medical (processing mechanism) treatment and management strategies.

Term Paper & Seminar Presentation Outline

Psychology D.33: Special Topics in Abnormal Behaviour
Clinical Section (5 minutes max for presentation)

1. Choose topic from any abnormal behaviour topic that can be diagnosed   (i.e.,   has diagnostic criteria whether in or out of DSM, such as psychopathy that is   diagnosed with the PCL-R-2) and for which there have been some empirical data regarding the brain bases underlying the condition.
2. Present the diagnostic criteria (can be in Table form).
3. Describe what the behavioural difficulties and deficits are in real life situations
4. Describe any neuropsychological or emotional deficits that are associated with the condition

Neurobiological Section (5 minutes max for presentation)

1. Describe which areas of the brain are involved or reputed to be involved in the condition
2. Identify the principal neurotransmitter or transmitters that have been identified as responsible for the information processing defects/symptoms of the condition
3. Specify the receptor subtype that has been implicated in the condition

Treatment Section   (3 minutes max for presentation)

1. Elucidate which drugs have been utilized for treatment of the disorder, what they target (i.e., transmitter/receptor complex) and how effective they are.
2. If treatment involves only psychological interventions, describe the putative mechanism of its actions.

Empirical Section (17 minutes max for presentation)

1. Chose a paper from the post-2003 literature on a particular topic that provides empirical evidence that tests some hypothesis involving the topic.
2. Identify the purpose of the study   (1 min)
3. Identify the hypotheses tested   (1.5 min)
4. Describe how the hypotheses were tested (i.e., manipulation or quasi-manipulation, what was varied, did that present a reasonable test of the hypothesi/e/s)
                   (3 minutes)
5. Describe how the results were analyzed (what statistics were used and were they appropriate…why or why not)   (1.5 minutes)
6. Describe what the ***major*** results were (4 minutes)
7. What are the author's conclusions?   (2 min)
8. **Do they follow from the design and data? Evaluate. (3 min)**
9. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the paper?   (1 min)

Style
Use APA Style for the paper   (i.e., body and reference sections). Page limit: 20