

Department.: Psychology

Course Number: PSYC 245W

Course Title: Abnormal Psychology

Credits: 3

Contact Person: Deborah Fein

Catalog Copy: Prerequisite: PSYC 135 or 133; ENGL 105 or 110 or 111 or 250.

W Criteria:

1. This course covers topics in abnormal psychology, including specific syndromes of psychopathology. Each writing assignment is to read a book written by or about a person with a specific syndrome (from a list provided or otherwise approved by the instructor) and write a 5-7 page paper in which the book is summarized, and a thesis is developed. The thesis can concern the book itself (e.g., should the diary of a young girl who dies of a drug overdose be given to adolescents at risk of drug abuse?) or can concern other aspects of the syndrome for which material in the book can be taken to support the thesis (e.g., adolescent drug abuse is strongly influenced by family dynamics).

Three papers are given of 5-7 pages each. There are two exams (midterm and final). The midterm counts for 50 points, the final for 60 points, and the three

papers for 30 points each. The writing component is therefore 90 of 200 points. If the student fails the writing component of the class, they will fail the class.

2. Writing instruction is given in several ways. First, the students must read relevant chapters of the Psychology Student Writer's Manual, which covers

stylistic issues as well as writing requirements specific to psychology papers. Second, a handout is given and reviewed that covers the most common errors in student writing, both in grammar and punctuation and in organization. Third, when papers are turned in, students meet individually with the instructor, and then in small groups to review and critique each other's papers. They must then revise their papers based on peer and instructor feedback, keeping track of edits with track changes. They then hand in their papers, which are returned with a grade that takes into account the final product and the degree of revision done. They also receive comments pointing out strengths and weaknesses of the paper, and are given an opportunity to do a second revision of each paper for a higher grade (the first revision is mandatory).

3. There are two opportunities for revision for each paper, one mandatory and one optional (see #2).

Role of Grad Students: none