Instructor Details

Professor Kate Loewenthal

I am available for individual discussions after the class, and at other times by appointment.

Class Details

Abnormal Psychology

Location: TBA

Prerequisites

Introduction to Psychology
AND either Social or Developmental Psychology

Class Description

This course provides an overview of the field of abnormal psychology. The focus is on forms of psychopathology, their causes, and diagnostic and treatment issues.

The course is delivered in a traditional lecture format, with DVD material (cinematic and documentary), student presentations, samples of psychological tests, and discussion material. Student participation and group discussion are encouraged and expected. Handouts will be provided.

Student presentation of material is invited, not more than one presentation each week once the course is up and running, organised at least a week in advance, on a topic of the student’s choice. Presentations can also be given in the penultimate week of the course. It is optional to make a presentation and an alternative form of coursework is acceptable.

Desired Outcomes

1. Course participants will gain knowledge of forms of mental disorder.
2. Course participants will develop a conceptual framework for understanding mental disorder and abnormal behavior. This includes learning about the history of the field, different explanatory models (e.g., biological, behavioral, psychodynamic, cognitive), current controversies in the field.
3. Course participants will develop understanding of diagnostic and treatment issues by analysing case material.
4. It is hoped that the course will interest some students to engage in further study of abnormal psychology; for example, by entering a graduate school program in clinical psychology or another mental-health related field.

Assessment Components

1. One coursework essay (1,200 words), 30% of the final mark

2. EITHER a) A printed copy of a 15-20 minute class presentation. The date and timing of the class presentation will be arranged individually with the course instructor. It can be done in session 14 if wished. A presentation may be offered as the first piece of coursework (instead of an essay) if it is ready in time.

   OR b) a further 1,200 word essay

   30% of the final mark.

3. Examination: 40% of final mark.

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.
This must include number of pages of written work and time of oral presentations.  
[Please ensure that a graded piece of work is returned to students by week 7]

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

### Assessment Expectations

**Grade A:** Mastery of the issues and literature, and an ability to make some original contribution. Demonstration of original and independent thinking, and evidence of genuine insight, combined with a well-structured, fluent, and clear argument, backed by research evidence whenever appropriate and possible.

**Grade B:** Mastery of issues and literature, grasp of theory and research, but limited original contribution, evaluation and attempt to back up with evidence.

**Grade C:** Unsure grasp of the issues and material

**Grade D:** Failure to grasp issues but some attempt made

**Grade F:** Little or no attempt made.

### Required Text(s)


### Supplemental Texts(s) (not required to purchase as copies are in NYU Library)

- Comer, R. & E.E.Gorenstein (2014) *Case studies in abnormal psychology*, 2nd edition. Worth. ISBN: 9780716772736. (Or any other collection of case studies could be used as a possible source of material, but this collection incorporates the DSM5 framework, as does Oltmann's collection, including disorders not previously covered in such an anthology)
- Davies, J. *Cracked: Why Psychiatry is doing more Harm than Good*. Icon Books, 2013. (no current print edition, so no ISBN for the print edition, but used copies available on Amazon and in also available on Kindle and other e-formats). AVAILABLE AS AN EBOOK

### SUGGESTED BIOGRAPHICAL AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIVE CASE MATERIAL

The following are suggested as illustrative case material to be used if wished. You may find other illustrative material which is just as good or better!


Kesey, Ken. *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. Picador, 1973 (or reprint).


Solomon, Andrew: *Noonday Demon*. Scribner, 2002


We will watch excerpts of some of the movies listed below, and some of the documentaries. Copies of should be available in the library, and and/or accessible via YouTube or other internet sources:

**Movies:**


*One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, (1975) Directed by Forman.

*Shine* (1997) Directed by Hicks.

*Sybil* (2007) Directed by Sargent

*A Beautiful Mind* (2002) Directed by Howard

*The Horse Boy* (2009) Directed by Scott

*Silver Linings* (2012) Directed by Russell

**Documentaries:**

*The Secret Life of the Manic Depressive* (2005) Directed by Fry

*The Madness in Me* (2011) BBC4

*CBT for Anxiety Disorders* (2007) Mentor Media

*Dying to be Thin* (2000) Directed by McPhee

*10 minute CBT in Primary Care.* (2015) See www.10minuteCBT.co.uk for details

A is for Autism (1992) Directed by Webb

In Treatment (2008) Directed by Garcia

Take these Broken Wings (2008) Directed by Mackler

Born Naughty (2015) Channel 4

Further illustrative material may be shown in class, and (optionally) look at YouTube and/or the internet generally- these can be a valuable source of personal accounts (search using the name of the psychiatric condition you are interested in). Also, the UK Royal College of Psychiatrists hosts a blog offering descriptions and discussions of some movies featuring psychiatric issues: http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/discoverpsychiatry/mindsonfilmblog.aspx

Internet Research Guidelines

While the course handouts, books and articles will provide enough material to write your essays and case study adequately, the quality may be improved by reference to some relevant material from journals, books, and appropriate online sources. The most convenient way of doing this is by searching the internet. You will get the most scholarly results from PsycINFO which can be accessible via NYUHome, MedLine, Web of Knowledge, http://scholar.google.com and http://books.google.com may also be helpful. Abstracts are almost always available from these sources, and often give sufficient information, and some full text articles are accessible. NYU is particularly good for full text articles.

Warning: books.google will not let you print the pages (they want to persuade you to buy the book) – so you will need to take notes, or get the book from a library if necessary. A regular Google (or other general search engine) search can sometimes be useful, especially if looking for case material. Amazon may offer useful extracts from some books. Note that Wikipedia is not always regarded as a reliable source for academic purposes, though for psychology and psychiatry it is normally good, and can point you to (normally) reliable sources.

If using an electronic copy of this syllabus, the links should work if online (ctrl+click).

Remember that cutting and pasting material into an essay without acknowledging the source is regarded as plagiarism. You can make clear when you are quoting (then it’s not plagiarism): use quote marks and acknowledge the source. It is normally preferable to summarise and paraphrase, again acknowledging the source/s of the points being made. Only use quotations where these enhance the points you are making.

Additional Required Equipment

None

Session 1

Introduction to abnormal psychology: Overview of past and present views on the nature of psychiatric illnesses, their causes, treatment and diagnosis.

Supplementary reading: you are unlikely to be able to read before this session. If you wish to do supplementary reading, try to look at least one of the following.

Note. Case material is marked C - and other sources may cite some case material. In future weeks, seminar presentations will be invited- these may focus on case material, or specific conditions, or any other relevant focus of interest.

Hooley et al, chapter 2 (history)/chapter 3 (models/viewpoints)

C Barnes & Berke: Mary Barnes (or an alternative)

C Kesey: One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest. (and/or the DVD of the same title)


Szasz et al: *Is Depression a Disease?* (use link) http://www.szasz.com/isdepressionadisease/transcript.html (on www.szasz.com). *(This highlights an important concern in abnormal psychology and psychiatry: are we really dealing with illnesses?) Watters: *The Americanization of mental illness* (use link) http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/10/magazine/10psyche-t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0. *(This discusses the question whether culture-specific disorders are disappearing, and modern American disorders such as anorexia are increasing in prevalence with American-led globalization, homogenizing “the way the world goes mad”)*.

**Session 2**

**Anxiety and Obsessive Compulsive Disorders**

**Essential reading:**
Hooley et al, chapter 6 (Panic, anxiety, obsessions)

**Supplementary reading:**
- *Comer & Gorenstein: Case studies*
- *Freud: Case Histories 1: Little Hans*
- *Limburg: The woman who thought too much: A memoir of obsession and compulsion.*

**Session 3**

**Unipolar Depression**

**Essential reading:** Hooley et al, chapter 7 (sections on unipolar disorders)

**Supplementary reading** Select from:
- *Comer & Gorenstein: Case studies*
- *Sanghera: Shame*
- *Solomon: Noonday Demon*
- *Wurtzel: Prozac Nation.*

**Session 4**

**Disorders related to anxiety and depression: PTSD, suicide, eating disorders, alcohol abuse**

- **Essential reading:** Hooley et al, chapter 5 (PTSD section) chapter 7 (suicide section), chapter 9 (eating disorders), chapter 11 (alcohol abuse and dependence section)

**Supplementary reading** Select from
- *Comer & Gorenstein: Case studies*
- *Grahame: Dying to be Thin.*
- *Hornbacher: Wasted*
Sanghera: Shame
Terr: Unchained memories.

**Session 5**

**Somatic disorders**
**Essential reading:** Hooley et al, chapter 8 (somatic symptom disorders section)

**Supplementary reading** Select from:

- Comer & Gorenstein: *Case studies*
- Salmon et al: Patients’ perceptions of medical explanations for somatisation disorders, *British Medical Journal*, 1999 (use the link) [http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/318/7180/372](http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/318/7180/372)
- Feldman & Ford: *Patient or Pretender*
- Loewenthal: chapter 6

**Session 6**

**Dissociation and dissociative identity disorder**
**Essential reading:** Hooley et al: Chapter 8 (dissociative disorders section)

**Supplementary reading** select from

- Comer & Gorenstein: *Case studies*
- Schreiber *Sybil.* (and/or the DVD of the same title)
- Oltmanns et al: Chapter 6
- Loewenthal. Chapter 7

**DEADLINE FOR COURSEWORK 1** (Essay, or printed copy of presentation)

**Session 7**

**Borderline and other personality disorders**
**Essential reading:** Hooley et al: Chapter 10 (Personality disorders)

**Supplementary reading** select from

- Comer & Gorenstein: *Case studies*
- Kesey: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.* (and/or the DVD of the same title)
- Kaysen: *Girl Interrupted* (and/or the DVD)

**Session 8**

**Psychosis: Schizophrenia**
**Essential reading:** Hooley et al, chapter 13 (Schizophrenia)

**Supplementary reading**

- Comer & Gorenstein: *Case studies*
- Lopez: *The Soloist* (or DVD)
- Nasar: *A Beautiful Mind* (and/or DVD)
Helfgott & Tanskaya: *Love you to bits and pieces* (or *DVD: Shine*)

**Session 9**

**Psychosis: Bipolar disorder**

**Essential reading:** Hooley et al, chapter 7 (bipolar disorders sections)

**Supplementary reading:**
- Comer & Gorenstein: *Case studies*
- Cheney: *Manic*
- Fry: *The Secret Life of the Manic Depressive* (*DVD*)

*(No class 4 April - mid-semester break)*

**Session 10**

**Childhood disorders**

**Essential reading:** Hooley et al, chapter 15 (Child and adolescent disorders)

**Supplementary reading**
- Comer & Gorenstein: *Case studies*
- Oltmanns et al, chapter 21
- Isaacson: *The Horse Boy* (or the *DVD*)
- Hayden, Torey: *Somebody Else’s Kids*: Harper, 1981. (Or other books by this author)

**Session 11**

**Treatments and their efficacy: Psychodynamic therapies**

**Essential reading:** Hooley et al, chapter 16 *(psychodynamic therapy section)*

**Supplementary reading** select from
- Freud: *Case Histories 1: Dora*
- Barnes & Berke: *Mary Barnes*
- Taylor: *The Last Asylum: A Memoir of Madness in Out Times*.

Freud Life & Work: [http://www.freudfile.org/](http://www.freudfile.org/) *This website is a convenient source of basic Freudian psychoanalytic concepts for those who would like an introduction or overview.*

**Session 12**

**Treatments and their efficacy: CBT, positive psychology and other approaches.**

**Essential reading:** Butcher et al, chapter 16 *(Therapy)*

**Supplementary reading.** Select from

- Seligman, M. & Csikszentmihalyi, M. Positive Psychology *(use link:)*
http://www.msu.edu/~dwong/CEP991/CEP991Resources/Seligman-PositivePsych.doc

Authentic happiness websites for tests, examples, training (use links):
http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/Default.aspx
http://www.coachingtowardhappiness.com/

Session 13

Religious and spiritual coping.


Supplementary reading: select from:
Loewenthal chapter 4 pp 60-67.


Session 14

Exam Preparation, including discussions of case histories and other examination topics.

Presentations.

DEADLINE FOR COURSEWORK 2 (PRINTED COPY OF PRESENTATION, OR AN ESSAY)

Session 15

EXAMINATION

Classroom Etiquette

Toilet breaks should be taken before or after class or during class breaks.

Food & drink, including gum, are not to be consumed in class.

Mobile phones should be set on silent and should not be used in class unless in emergencies.

Laptops, IPads and Tablets are only to be used with the express permission of the teacher.

Please kindly dispose of rubbish in the bins provided.

None. It will be understood that there are significant ethical problems involved with groups of students entering and observing psychiatric treatment facilities, so unfortunately such visits cannot be arranged. Illustrative video material will be shown in class, and (optionally) you might wish to look at YouTube
which can be a valuable source of personal accounts

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Co-currucular Activities</th>
<th>None</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Travel Costs</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggested Co-curricular Activities</td>
<td>Students will be advised of any public lectures, exhibitions and seminars of interest, as they come to the attention of the course leader. These will be optional.</td>
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**Your Instructor**

Kate Loewenthal: Kate taught psychology at Royal Holloway (formerly Bedford College) for over thirty years, and has also taught in the University of Wales at Bangor, the City University, and Kings College London. She is currently Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Royal Holloway, London University, Visiting Professor at Glyndwr University (Wales), and Heythrop College (London University), and here – NYU in London! Her research has focused on social factors in mental health, particularly how religious and cultural factors can affect mental health. She has been involved in a range of community work and has recently become more involved in psychotherapy. She has published several books (the last to appear was Religion, Culture and Mental Health: Cambridge University Press) and numerous articles, edits the journal Mental Health, Religion and Culture, and is frequently invited to speak at conferences and professional training sessions.

**NYU GLOBAL ACADEMIC POLICIES**

Policies and procedures for Global Academic Centres, including policies on academic integrity and the Study Away Standard, can be found here: https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/student-services.html

Absences: Key information on NYU London’s absence policy, how to report absences, and what kinds of absences can be excused can be found here: http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/attendance-policy.html

NYU London work submission policies can be found here: http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/academic-policies.html

Classroom conduct: Academic communities exist to facilitate the process of acquiring and exchanging knowledge and understanding, to enhance the personal and intellectual development of its members, and to advance the interests of society. Essential to this mission is that all members of the University Community are safe and free to engage in a civil process of teaching and learning through their experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Accordingly, no student should engage in any form of behaviour that interferes with the academic or educational process, compromises the personal safety or well-being of another, or disrupts the administration of University programs or services.

Please refer to the NYU London Disruptive Student Behaviour Policy at https://goo.gl/Nvt5Vu for examples of disruptive behaviour and guidelines for response and enforcement.