You've probably already watched my awkward welcome video. If not, click the image above.

**FORMAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

I’ve been told that I need some. Apparently, “to set sail toward the borderlands of sanity” doesn’t cut it. So here goes—by the end of this absurd expedition, I bet that you’ll be able to…

- wield nosological, psychopathological, and psychiatric jargon with confidence;
- identify (name) the major classes of mental disorders;
- list the specific criteria that mental health professionals use to diagnose a few common psychological conditions;
- distinguish some of the trickier varieties of mental illness from one another;
- debunk psychopathology myths when you meet them in the real world;
- communicate more effectively with the public—friends, family members, people you’d like to impress at parties—about mental illness;
- and—here’s the big one—provide an intelligible academic (pretentious) answer the question, what *is* mental illness, really?

But those are just window dressings. What I *actually* want from you is simple.

I want you to join me. Because these ideas can be disorienting. Because it’s dangerous to go alone.
What You’ll Need

You’ll need just two things to survive our semester-long journey into madness:

1. **Reliable Access to UF’s Canvas System**

   Our everything portal.

   If you aren’t already comfortable with the Canvas platform ([http://elearning.ufl.edu](http://elearning.ufl.edu); click the blue e-Learning button), I’d recommend carving out some time to poke around and torture-test the system early on (before the semester picks up steam). Quickstart Guide for the uninitiated: (1) watch this video, then (2) browse the rest of the Canvas Help module within the course site.

2. **One of These Brilliant Books:**

   ![book covers]

   You’re looking at twelve of my favorite trade books—most published within the last ten years or so—on psychopathology-related topics. Penned by some of the brightest minds our field has to offer, each of these books has profoundly changed the way I think about the mind. Some present cutting-edge, controversial ideas in the world of psychological science. Others are critically-acclaimed personal memoirs, designed to pull readers into the *bona fide* phenomenological experience of someone living with a “mental disorder.” They’re all bestselling, gripping, and full of elegant prose.

   Choose wisely. I ask that you **pick one (just one) of these books to read as we move through the semester.**

   On the next page you’ll find a full APA-style citation for each book, a paperback ISBN, and a link to each book’s Amazon.com page (where you can find a synopsis and reviews; most have fairly comparable page counts and used prices in the ten-to-fifteen dollar range).
Don’t let bigger page counts scare you—I’ll never test your memory on your book’s content. Instead, I’ll ask you to write up a little Amazon-esque book review (one that I hope you’ll seriously consider actually posting on a site like Amazon). In other words, I’m betting that you won’t be able to put these books down even without a read-this-super-carefully-because-your-grade-depends-on-it mandate. If the reading ever feels like work, say so—I’ll help you to find another book that won’t.

That review comes due on November 18th (it’s one of five things that I’ll ask you to post on the discussion board; keep reading for details), but I’d probably suggest cracking the book open about a month before that in order to avoid that oh-shit-I-have-to-read-a-whole-book-by-tomorrow feeling. (Though I did manage to cordon off two whole weeks—nothing for you to do for this class but read the book—right before that due date hits. So, if you’re cool with reading a whole paperback non-fiction book and writing up a little (300-word-ish) review within two weeks (with no other Abnormal Psychology work on your plate), forget about all of this until mid-October. (I’ll remind you when we get closer.)

***


There is no textbook for this class.

That’s not to say that there aren’t any viable Abnormal Psychology textbooks out there, of course. The marketplace is flooded. But I reckon that they’re all too expensive, especially considering that, with access to the entire UF (virtual) library, you can find most of the information that’s contained within those textbooks online for free. So I wondered, why not just curate my own collection?

Done. At the beginning of each week between now and the end of the term, I’ll post a selection of readings (articles, book chapters, blog posts), listenings (podcasts), and viewings (videos) for you to peruse. All free. I’ll pop in every now and then to set the scene and fill in some gaps.

HOW YOU’LL BE GRADED

We’re on the point system, with 100 up for grabs across two “assignment” categories:

1. **Weekly Quizzes** *(80 points out of 100)*

   Most weeks, you’ll find that our home-page to-do list *(This Week at a Glance)* ends with a quiz. In principle, these quizzes are **non-cumulative**—they’ll present you with a handful of questions (mostly multiple-choice) about *that week’s* content. But there’s definitely a progressive *feel* to them, such that questions tend to become increasingly more complicated, drawing on ideas that we wrestled with earlier in the term. The major focus will always be on the topic at hand (e.g., the depths of depression), though. 10 quizzes x 8 questions apiece x 1 point per question = 80 points overall.

2. **Talk To Each Other. (It’ll Help.)** *(20 points out of 100)*

   Sometimes, I’ll ask you to bang out some words on the class discussion board, too. You’ll find detailed guidelines (rubrics) for each of these little “writing assignments” on the course home page during the relevant weeks.

   I. Where Are You?  (4 points)
   II. Connect       (4 points)
   III. The Answer   (4 points)
   IV. Book Reviews  (4 points)
   V. Sappy Goodbyes (4 points)

80 quiz points + 20 discussion points = 100 points total. Raw points translate into a percentage (formula = points you’ve accumulated divided by 100), which in turn corresponds to a letter grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>68—69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60—67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>00—59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
That’s it. No mid-term, no final exam, and no term projects. Just (1) a curated collection of stuff that (I hope) tells the bewildering story of mental illness at a junior-year-at-UF level; (2) some quizzes to check that you’re following along (the part I like least about this job); and (3) a few chances to really talk to each other.

TL;DR (BLAH BLAH BLAH I’M NOT READING SEVEN PAGES OF SYLLABUS HOW DO I PASS?)

At the beginning of every week between now and the end of the semester, log into our E-Learning (Canvas) site and read all the words beneath this logo:

![This Week at a Glance](image)

It’s a list of the tasks you’ll need to complete before that week’s end (Sunday at 11:59pm). It’ll usually consist of (1) watching an awkward introduction video; (2) perusing a selection of readings, audio clips, and TED Talks (all free content that I’ve collected from around the web); and (3) taking a quiz. Some weeks we’ll digress and I’ll ask you to do something weird (like write a discussion post), but the general idea is the same—just follow the “This Week at a Glance” guide. It’s all about raw course points—the more you end up with (out of 100), the higher your letter grade.

You’re calling most of the shots here—you determine when (within a given week week) you complete readings, watch videos, and listen to audio clips; when you take quizzes and talk to each other (on the discussion board for points); and when you ask for help. But don’t let the autonomy fool you. We’ll be with you all the way through, behind the scenes and happy to chat if you care to.

We? (IT TAKES A VILLAGE.)

I can’t do this alone. Thankfully, I’ve got a crack team of co-pilots:

![Janelle Bacotti](image)

**Janelle Bacotti**  
*PhD Student*  
*Behavior Analysis*

![Nick Gensmer](image)

**Nick Gensmer**  
*PhD Student*  
*Counseling Psychology*

![Alexandra Weis](image)

**Alexandra Weis**  
*PhD Student*  
*Counseling Psychology*

We share emails, so don’t be alarmed if Janelle, Nick, or Alexandra replies to a message that you’ve sent to me (at [SwanClasses@psych.ufl.edu](mailto:SwanClasses@psych.ufl.edu)) before I do.
COMPUTER TROUBLES (THE SHIT HAPPENS CLAUSE)

The scene: It’s 11:53pm on a Sunday night. You’re a classic procrastinator, having waited until the literal eleventh hour to take your weekly quiz, but you’re not bothered. In fact, you’re feeling rather confident about your performance—I tossed a handful of questions your way, and you parried back a handful of answers that you’re pretty sure are correct.

Then, disaster. Maybe your cat pounces onto your laptop, mashing a hapless housefly into your function keys and closing your browser just before you could hit submit. Or perhaps a meteorite crashed improbably through your ceiling to cauterize a perfectly destructive hole right through the center of your hard drive. Either way, you’re up a creek…no saved answers, no time, and no hope of contacting me in time to ask for a “reset.” Panic.

Don’t panic. Bad news first, though: once we release all the questions and answers out into the public domain ether, the ship, we’re afraid, will have already sailed. We don't usually have any extra questions lying around, so there’s not much we can do after the quiz due date passes. But…if the unthinkable happens; if the universe decides that your living room really is the best place to deposit a bit of cosmic debris on a Sunday night, there is hope.

Just send us an email (SwanClasses@psych.ufl.edu) to let us know that you missed a quiz.

No questions asked. Suggested subject line: “Shit Happens.”

We have a get-out-jail-free card for you.

THE FINE PRINT (TEXT REQUIRED IN ALL SYLLABI)

Ken Hereby Certifies That…

“…requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx


Academic Honesty

“Cheating is defined in the UF Handbook, and it is the student’s responsibility to be familiar with its many forms (including plagiarism). If a student is caught cheating, the first offense will result in a zero for that exam or assignment and a record of the event will be placed in a temporary file with the Office of Student Affairs. The second offense will result in an “E” for the course, and the student will go before the Honor Court. As a result of completing registration at UF, every student has agreed to the following statement: “I understand that UF expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.”

(Cheating behavior is fascinating. Dan Ariely wrote a great book about it. Absolutely worth the read. Cheating is human.)

Disability Accommodations

“Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.”

(If we’re missing something in the accommodations department, let me know how I can make it right.)

Late Work Policy

Our whirlwind journey through madness moves at a brisk pace. We’ll all need to stay on target to make it through to the other side. Behavioral incentive (they work): each day that an assignment is late levels a 10% point deduction (e.g., a discussion post two days late can at best receive an 8/10). No late submissions for quizzes, I’m afraid—if you miss one of those, email SwanClasses@psych.ufl.edu and ask for your get-out-of-jail-free card.
Customer Satisfaction

“Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results.”

(The scores you dole out on these evaluations can matter more for our—professor’s—careers than most people think. Rightfully so, I reckon. Never forget that your tuition dollars are paying for this class.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Assignments Due (Sunday @ 11:59M)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>08/22-08/26 (Wed) (Sun)</td>
<td>Welcomes and Warnings</td>
<td>Nope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>08/27-09/02 (Mon) (Sun)</td>
<td>Boxes</td>
<td>Boxes Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>09/03-09/09 (Mon) (Sun)</td>
<td>Fears</td>
<td>Fears Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>09/10-09/16 (Mon) (Sun)</td>
<td>Splits</td>
<td>Splits Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>09/17-09/23 (Mon) (Sun)</td>
<td>Moods</td>
<td>Moods Quiz, Discussion # 1 (Where Are You?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>09/24-09/30 (Mon) (Sun)</td>
<td>Psychoses</td>
<td>Psychoses Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/01-10/07 (Mon) (Sun)</td>
<td>Recipes</td>
<td>Recipes Quiz, Discussion # 2 (Connect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10/08-10/14 (Mon) (Sun)</td>
<td>(Dis)Abilities</td>
<td>(Dis)Abilities Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/15-10/21 (Mon) (Sun)</td>
<td>Stop.</td>
<td>Discussion # 3 (The Answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10/22-10/28 (Mon) (Sun)</td>
<td>Solutions</td>
<td>Solutions Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>10/29-11/04 (Mon) (Sun)</td>
<td>Bullshit</td>
<td>Bullshit Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/05-11/18 (Mon) (Sun)</td>
<td>Books (Double Week)</td>
<td>Discussion # 4 (Book Reviews)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11/19-11/25 (Mon) (Sun)</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break!</td>
<td>Nilch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11/26-12/05 (Mon) (Wed)</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Control Quiz*, Discussion # 5 (Sappy Goodbyes)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Due Weds 12/05 at 11:59pm.