

PSB 4240: Psychobiology of Abnormal Behavior

University of Florida

Spring 2025

Meeting Times: M, W, F, 12:50 - 1:40 PM

Location: PSY 151

Instructor: Matt (Wendel) Friedl, Ph.D.

Office hours: M, W, F 2:50-3:50 PM. Other times by request.

email: Please use Canvas messaging; alternate email: wfriedl@ufl.edu

Office: Psychology 017 (basement level)

*I reserve the right to revise the syllabus in order to accommodate the needs of the course. Any updates will be posted to the course announcements section of Canvas.

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Course Description

Introduces the relationship between biological processes (genes, hormones, and neural processes) and psychopathology as it is represented in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.).

Learning Outcomes

The goal of this course is to understand the scientific bases of contemporary biological theories of common psychological problems and to appreciate the societal impact of mental health issues.

COURSE SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

Demonstrate familiarity with:

- common psychological disorders and their biological components
- explanations for the development of psychological disorders
- differences in biological- and behavioral-based approaches to defining abnormal behavior

Course Requirements and Policies

REQUIRED READINGS

All readings will make use of Perusall, a software program designed to make required readings a more interactive and collaborative experience. Perusall will be discussed more during the first week of the course.

Text:

All readings will be available through the Canvas course page. Readings will be published research articles and selected textbook chapters. The textbook readings will be sourced from is:

- Fundamentals of Psychological Disorders, 3rd edition (July 2023) by Alexis Bridley and Lee W. Daffin Jr.

Which can be downloaded for off-line reading from: <https://opentext.wsu.edu/abnormal-psych/>

COURSE PREREQUISITE

PSB 3340 and STA 2023

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Access to official UF e-mail

Check your UF e-mail regularly (daily). All course announcements, including any modifications to this syllabus, will be communicated via e-mail and Canvas announcements. Any grade-related information will only be sent to a UF e-mail address or discussed in-person.

- Computing / technology

This course requires adherence UF's minimum technology requirements (recommendations [here](#)). These include a computer with webcam, microphone, speakers, and access to a stable internet connection.

A wired connection is recommended when taking quizzes.

- A dedicated room for online assessments is available in UF Library West. To make a reservation for a time of high demand go to the following website: <http://ufl.libcal.com/spaces?lid=4458&gid=8873>
- Other on-campus computer options can be found here <https://labs.at.ufl.edu/>

For technical support, contact the UF Help Desk: <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>.

In the event of a technical problem, a support ticket must be obtained from the UF help desk. Technical support will be able to diagnose and certify the source of any problem. The course instructor will not respond regarding *any* technical problems that do not have a prior support ticket from the UF helpdesk—include this support ticket # when communicating the problem.

- CANVAS

Course materials and assignments will be posted to the course Canvas page (<http://lss.at.ufl.edu>; click “Canvas Login”).

Be sure to familiarize yourself with the page and how/where to access information during the first week of class.

COURSE POLICIES

- Make up policy for missed exams, quizzes, or readings

Extensions will only occur in extreme circumstances. A Dean of Students note (<https://care.dso.ufl.edu/instructor-notifications/>) or documentation from a medical provider on official stationary/letterhead verifying illness or a personal hardship must be provided. All requests for completing assigned work at days or times other than provided in the syllabus should be submitted well in advance of the regularly scheduled assignment. In emergency situations where advance notice is not possible, provide notice and documentation **within 24 hours** (1 day) of the due date for the scheduled assignment.

Note that **an e-mail prior to class will not be considered sufficient**, unless it is just to provide notice that you will be missing class and that some form of corroborating documentation is forthcoming.

Due dates for make-up Exams or quizzes will be adjusted according to the number of days outlined in supporting documentation. For example, if a doctor's note states that a student should be excused for a Friday class period and can return to school on Monday, due dates will be adjusted by 1 business day such that a quiz or exam scheduled on Friday will need to be completed by the end of the day on Monday.

All exams must be taken in-person with a proctor. Thus, the available times and dates for make-up exams will be limited.

Reading assignments and Perusall posts are available throughout the week and are **not intended to be completed at the last possible minute. It will usually not be possible to earn full points on a Perusall assignment by reading and posting comments in a single day.**

- Accommodation for disabilities

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). **Accommodations are not retroactive**, so students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodation. Documentation should be provided prior to taking quizzes or exams – the earlier the better. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation (an accommodation letter) to the student and the instructor.

- Religious observances / UF sponsored activities

Documentation is not required, but a student needs to inform the instructor if religious observances of their faith or UF sponsored activities (e.g. sports, student government, etc.) will conflict with scheduled quizzes or examinations **prior to** the class or occurrence of that test or activity.

- Illness or other personal emergencies

For any medical conditions, psychological conditions, illnesses, or injuries that prevent completing scheduled quizzes or examinations, the student should notify the instructor as soon as possible and arrange to provide supporting documentation. The student healthcare center (<https://shcc.ufl.edu>) can provide verifications of visits, as well as excuse notes in certain situations (see <https://shcc.ufl.edu/forms-records/excuse-notes/>).

- Counseling and wellness center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
- University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

- Sexual harassment

Sexual Harassment is not tolerated in this class, in the Department of Psychology, or at the University of Florida. Sexual harassment includes: the inappropriate introduction of sexual activities or comments in a situation where sex would otherwise be irrelevant. All UF employees and students must adhere to UF's sexual harassment policy which can be found here: <https://hr.ufl.edu/forms-policies/policies-managers/sexual-harassment/>. Please review this policy and contact a university official if you have any questions about the policy.

As mandatory reporters, university employees are required to report knowledge of sexual harassment to UF's Title IX coordinator. For more information about UF's Title IX office see: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/>. You can also complete a Sexual Harassment Report online (Title IX) at: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/title-ix-reporting-form/>.

- Course evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the e-mail they receive from GatorEvals. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

- Academic honesty

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

Students who share information pertaining to course content from quizzes or exams will be referred to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (SCCR) Office in the Dean of Students Office (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>).

- Lecture recordings

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are

prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

Publication without permission from the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section.

Grading

Grade points will be assigned according to current UF policy:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Final course grades will follow the standard grading scale shown to the right.

- **No individual exceptions to this grading scale will be considered for any reason.**
- Letter grades will be applied **without rounding**; for example, 93.499% would be an A- and 93.500% would be the lowest average to earn an A.
- No grading curve will be applied unless the final class average is lower than 72.5% (C-). If the average final course grade is lower than 72.5%, an equal number of points will be added to each student’s grade until the average is 72.5% (C).
- No extra credit assignments are anticipated. If extra credit is available, it will be announced to the entire class.

Letter Grade	Range
A	100% to 93.5%
A-	< 93.5% to 89.5%
B+	< 89.5% to 86%
B	< 86% to 82.5%
B-	< 82.5% to 79.5%
C+	< 79.5% to 76%
C	< 76% to 72.5%
C-	<72.5% to 69.5%
D+	< 69.5% to 66%
D	< 66% to 62.5%
D-	< 62.5% to 59.5%
E	< 59.5% to 0%

FINAL GRADE CALCULATION

	each	Total
Exams (2)	30%	60%
Quizzes (10)	2.00%	20%
Perusall readings (12)	0.83%	10%
Group paper		9%
Group attendance		1%

EXAMS

Two non-cumulative exams will be taken in-person. Each exam will be composed of approximately 30 multiple choice questions. Each exam must be completed within a standard class period (50 minutes), with any unanswered questions at the end of the period counted as incorrect. Exams must be completed and turned in before leaving the room (such as for bathroom breaks or to answer a phone call) or accessing phones for any reason. Phones should be kept out of sight once the student ID has been entered on the exam Scantron form.

Exams will cover only the text and lecture material from the chapters that have been covered since the last exam or the first day of class (exam 1). Syllabus information will not be tested on Exam 1.

Exams are closed book, but you may bring **one page of handwritten notes** (standard sized paper, front and back).

Be sure to be on time for exams. Anyone arriving after the first person has turned in his/her/their exam will not be allowed to take the exam and thus will receive a 0. Students with DRC accommodations should schedule to take exams at the DRC office at the beginning of the semester.

Answers will be marked on a scantron sheet with a #2 pencil. Be sure to **bring a pencil, your student ID card, and your single page of handwritten notes** to class on exam days.

No course material will be covered on exam days.

To preserve the integrity of exam materials across classes and years, exam answers will NOT be provided on the class Canvas page or submitted in any electronic format (e-mail, Zoom, etc.). Feedback pertaining to missed questions or correct answers will be provided only during office hours for an individual student. During office hours meetings to discuss exams, a hardcopy (printed on paper) version of the exam will be available for review only (no pictures, no recordings). You will never see these exact questions again, so there is no need to memorize them anyway.

Each exam will be available for review during office hours for a period of two weeks following the exam.

QUIZZES

Each week there will be a 5-question quiz on the Canvas course website. Quizzes will cover only new material since the preceding quiz (non-cumulative).

Quizzes are **open notes and open book**. However, quizzes will be limited in time, so you will not be able to look up or Google-search every question. Each quiz must be **completed within 3 minutes** of starting it, after which time the quiz will be automatically submitted, and any

unanswered questions will be counted as incorrect. Be sure you are well prepared before beginning the quizzes.

Quizzes must be taken twice before the due date (different questions will usually appear), and the highest score will be kept. Starting at 12am following the due date for a quiz, **completing the second attempt after 12am will result in an automatic deduction of 10% per day.**

There will be an initial quiz covering the syllabus. This initial quiz serves both to familiarize students with the structure and timing of the quizzes and to ensure course policies are known. On the initial syllabus quiz only, you will be able to re-take the quiz an unlimited number of times until you score 100%.

GROUP RESEARCH PAPER

A group research paper on a topic of abnormal psychology not covered during the course will be due towards the end of the semester. Topics will be chosen by groups by the third week of the semester (only one group per topic). This APA-formatted paper will include a title page, introduction, discussion, and a reference section. Papers will be submitted through Canvas and will be scanned by Turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection service.

- Full assignment description and a grading rubric will be posted on Canvas.
- Groups will be assigned in the second week of class.
- Any paper not submitted by 11:59 PM on the due date will receive an automatic reduction of 20% (starting at 12:00 AM) each day following the due date.
- Groups will give a short in-class presentation of their topic towards the end of the semester. Attendance will be taken on these days.

PERUSALL DISCUSSIONS AND QUESTIONS

Perusall is a social annotation tool designed to make course readings interactive, akin to social media posting. It has been estimated that after two weeks, we only remember about 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, but 70% of what we discuss with others (Dale, E. (1969). Audiovisual methods in teaching.)

Note that posts must demonstrate proper written English, including capitalization, spelling, and grammar. A link to Perusall will be in the Canvas course menu, and instructions for using this tool will be provided.

Each week, you will be required to access Perusall at least twice as you complete your reading and commenting – DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE.

You will make 4-7 total annotations each week. At least one post should be in response to classmates' questions or posts, and at least one post should be a question.

Posts will be evaluated for quality by Perusall's automated AI algorithm. **Four (4) posts that are evaluated as "high quality", spread throughout the reading assignment (not all within one section), along with reading the entire assignment and accessing reading material on at least two separate days, are all criteria used to arrive at an overall score for each assignment.**

Based on the overall body of your annotations, you will receive a score for each assignment as follows

3 = demonstrates exceptionally thoughtful and thorough reading of the entire assignment

2 = demonstrates thoughtful and thorough reading of the entire assignment

1 = demonstrates superficial reading of the entire assignment OR thoughtful reading of only part of the assignment

0 = demonstrates superficial reading of only part of the assignment

ATTENDANCE

Attendance will be taken on designated group workdays (most Wednesdays). On these Wednesdays, a brief daily activity (the activity will be given at the beginning of class) will need to be turned-in on Canvas before the end of the period, and each group member present will receive credit for attendance. **Only group members who are physically present in the classroom will receive credit for these assignments. Unless arranged in advance, credit will not be granted for videoconference, e-mail, text, etc. participation.** Attendance points will be calculated as (number of days attended / total number of group-work days) and this will make up 1% of the overall grade.

Excused absences (with documentation) will not count against the final attendance calculation. For example: If attendance gets taken 10 times during the semester and a student misses two attendance days without documentation and one day with a doctor's note that student would receive 7/9 (one day is removed from the denominator for the excused absence) or 78% of the maximum attendance points.

Any individual missing more than 2 group discussion class sessions without documentation/prior arrangement will need to turn-in an individual research proposal paper.

Attending class and taking notes is highly recommended, as material that is covered during the lecture will be included on the quizzes.

Exams are in-person, and **physical presence** within the Gainesville area should be maintained throughout the semester.

Reading & Course Schedule

Dates		Monday	Wednesday*	Friday	Reading
1/13/2025	1/17/2025	Syllabus	Perusal	Background	famous cases
1/20/2025	1/24/2025	Holiday	Diagnosis →	→	Text: Module 3
1/26/2025	1/31/2025	trauma & stress →	→	→	Text: Module 5
2/3/2025	2/7/2025	Stress →	→	→	Stress & health
2/10/2025	2/14/2025	PTSD →	→	→	PTSD primer
2/17/2025	2/21/2025	RDOC →	→	→	RDOC (2 art.)
2/24/2025	2/28/2025	Developmental &	Motor Disorders	Exam 1	Text: 16.2
3/3/2025	3/7/2025	Autism Spectrum	Disorders →	→	Autism (2 art.)
3/10/2025	3/14/2025	Williams Syndrome	→	→	WS genetics
3/17/2025	3/21/2025	Spring Break			
3/24/2025	3/28/2025	Schizophrenia	Spectrum Dis.	→	Text: Module 12
3/31/2025	4/4/2025	Schizophrenia	→	→	Schizophrenia. Article
4/7/2025	4/11/2025	Neurocognitive	Disorders	→	Text: Module 14
4/14/2025	4/18/2025		Group Pres.	Group Pres.	
4/21/2025	4/25/2025	Group Pres.	Exam 2	Reading Days	
*most Wednesdays there will be a group assignment					

FAQ

Q: Will there be a study guide for exams?

A: No. The best review sources will be class PowerPoints, and the learning objectives found at the beginning of each assigned reading in the textbook. PowerPoints are already my summary of the most important topics for each chapter. Visual summaries at the end of each chapter in the textbook are also good for review.

Q: What do I have to do to get an A (or a B, or a C...)?

A: There is no guaranteed path to success but reading the text before each class and *actively* taking notes during class are common habits of students who do very well.

There will **not be any extra credit opportunities or “reopening” of missed assignments or quizzes at the end of the semester** to boost grades. Consistency throughout the semester is key to doing well.

Q: I had some challenging personal situation(s) throughout the semester that negatively impacted my academic performance. What can be done?

A: Legitimate hardships are, unfortunately, going to occur. Each student must decide for themselves if they are able to continue attending school if/when encountering these types of situations. If you decide to remain in the class, you will be graded no differently than anyone else (see grading policy).

Be sure to understand your options for dropping or withdrawing from classes and/or taking medical leave:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/dropping-courses-withdrawals/#droppingcoursestext>

<https://umatter.ufl.edu/concern/taking-medical-leave-withdraw/>