



PLNU Department of Psychology

PSY3021-4 Abnormal Psychology

3 Units

Fall 2025

INFORMATION	SPECIFICS FOR THE COURSE
Instructor:	Kelsy L. Richardson, PhD
Contact Info:	(714) 504-0960; krichar1@pointloma.edu
Meeting Times:	Thursdays, 3-5:30pm; Liberty Station, Room 207
Office hours:	By appointment

PLNU Mission

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Course Description

This course is designed as an introduction to psychopathology and the study of abnormal psychology. Topics of exploration include the assessment, classification, etiology, and treatment of the major psychological disorders.

Catalog Description

Study of etiology, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of various forms of abnormal behavior from various psychological perspectives.

Program and Course Learning Outcomes

1. Understand the history behind mental health disorders and western diagnostic classification systems.
2. Examine the core symptoms and features of psychological disorders.
3. Understand the competing theories attempting to explain how psychological disorders develop.
4. Identify the various empirically supported therapeutic treatments for psychological disorders.
5. Critically evaluate the value of diagnosing mental illnesses when taking into consideration the

benefits, limitations, critiques, and implications of diagnostic classification.

6. Explore how aspects of human diversity may affect the expression of psychopathology.

Required Texts

Sue, D., Sue, D. W., Sue, S., & Sue, D. M. (2016). *Essentials of understanding abnormal behavior* (3rd ed.). Cengage Learning.

Course Credit Hour Information

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3-unit class delivered over 15 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 112.5 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes.

Assessment and Grading

The final grade will be based on a combination of weekly reading quizzes, four exams, and one paper.

Weekly Quizzes	120 (10 each)
Exam 1	90
Exam 2	120
Exam 3	120
Exam 4	60
Paper	100
TOTAL	610

Grades will be based on the following:

A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F Less than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

Use of Technology

I am asking you not to use laptops:

I strongly recommend not using laptops in class. The reasons are three fold:

1. It is hard to not check other things, which impairs your learning. You most likely are not aware of the impairment, but the research is quite clear.
http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2013/05/multitasking_while_studying_divided_attention_and_technological_gadgets.html
2. Even if it doesn't impair your learning, it impairs others learning.
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254>
3. You write more but learn less. Writing your notes creates synthesis which increases your learning. <http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/04/22/0956797614524581.abstract>
http://chronicle.com/blogs/linguafranca/2014/08/25/why-im-asking-you-not-to-use-laptops/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

So I am asking you not to use laptops unless you need or strongly prefer a laptop to take notes. In that case talk to me and we will make that work.

Content Warning

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. In PSY3021 all of the class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, it can manifest in feelings of discomfort and upset. In response, I encourage you to come talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

Spiritual Care

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact your professor or the [Office of Spiritual Life and Formation](#).

State Authorization

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer

distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

PLNU Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.]

PLNU Recording Notification

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

Language and Belonging

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced a bias incident regarding language, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias.

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/title-ix.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an “F” grade.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc.) is prohibited in this course for any aspect of your work, including idea generation, drafting, editing, or final submissions. This course is designed to assess your independent critical thinking, writing, and research skills without the assistance of AI technologies. Violations of this policy will be treated as breaches of academic integrity.

Lomabooks Instructions for Students:

*This course is part of our course material delivery program, **LomaBooks**. The bookstore will provide each student with a convenient package containing all required physical materials; all digitally delivered materials will be integrated into Canvas.*

You should have received an email from the bookstore confirming the list of materials that will be provided for each of your courses and asking you to select how you would like to receive any printed components (in-store pick up or home delivery). If you have not done so already, please confirm your fulfillment preference so the bookstore can prepare your materials.

For more information about **LomaBooks**, please go: [HERE](#)

Course Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENTS
WEEK 1 Thurs 9/4	Intro to Abnormal Psychology		

WEEK 2 Thurs 9/11	Understanding the Abnormal Behavior	Ch. 1	Ch. 1 Reading Quiz
WEEK 3 Thurs 9/18	Understanding & Treating Mental Disorders	Ch.2	Ch. 2 Reading Quiz
WEEK 4 Thurs 9/25	Anxiety & Obsessive-Compulsive & Related Disorders	Ch.4	Ch. 4 Reading Quiz EXAM 1 (Ch 1, 2, 4) Due Sat 9/27 at 11:59pm
WEEK 5 Thurs 10/2	Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders	Ch.5	Ch. 5 Reading Quiz
WEEK 6 Thurs 10/9	Somatic Symptom & Dissociative Disorders	Ch.6	Ch. 6 Reading Quiz

WEEK 7 Thurs 10/16	Depressive & Bipolar Disorders & Suicide	Ch.7 & Ch. 8	Ch. 7 & 8 Reading Quiz EXAM 2 (Ch 5, 6, 7, 8) Due Sat 10/18 at 11:59pm
WEEK 8 Thurs 10/23	NO CLASS- FALL BREAK		
WEEK 9 Thurs 10/30	Eating Disorders	Ch.9	Ch.9 Reading Quiz
WEEK 10 Thurs 11/6	Substance-Related & Other Addictive Disorders	Ch.10	Ch. 10 Reading Quiz
WEEK 11 Thurs 11/13	Schizophrenia Spectrum Disorders	Ch.11	Ch. 11 Reading Quiz

WEEK 12 Thurs 11/20	Sexual Dysfunctions, Gender Dysphoria & Paraphilic Disorders	Ch. 13	Ch. 13 Reading Quiz EXAM 3 (Ch 9, 10, 11, 13) Due Sat 11/22 at 11:59pm
WEEK 13 Thurs 11/27	NO CLASS- THANKSGIVING		
WEEK 14 Thurs 12/4	Personality Psychopathology	Ch.14	Ch. 14 Reading Quiz
WEEK 15 Thurs 12/11	Disorders of Childhood & Adolescence	Ch.15	Ch. 15 Reading Quiz EXAM 4 (Ch 14, 15) Due Sat 12/13 at 11:59pm
WEEK 16 Thurs 12/18	FINALS WEEK		Paper Due Thurs 12/18 at 11:59pm