



College of Health Sciences | MA in Clinical Counseling

PSY6021: Psychodiagnostics and Mental Disorder Treatment

3 Units

Course Information:

Spring 2026

Course Dates: January 12 - May 10, 2026

Meeting days/times:

Thursdays 5:30 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.

Mission Valley Campus, Room 301

Instructor Information:

Instructor title and name: Carrie Tremble, PhD, LPCC, LAADC

Email: ctremble@pointloma.edu

Phone: 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 reviews the role and categories of psychopathology utilized in the assessment and treatment of individual, marital, and family dysfunction. Students develop their diagnostic skills through a mastery of the concepts in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR)*.

Program Learning Outcomes

The educational goals of Point Loma Nazarene University's *Masters of Arts in Clinical Counseling (MACC)* are to develop graduate students and clinicians who are:

1. competent clinicians and professionals that practice from a wide-range of clinically valuable and research-based approaches;
2. able to cultivate self-awareness and apply professional ethics to the practice of clinical counseling; and,
3. providing services that are respectful of individuals and families as well as the cultural contexts that shape them, particularly focusing on those who are underserved.

PLO 1: Demonstrate competent application of theoretical models and research-based clinical interventions to therapeutic work with individuals, couples, groups and/or families

Competency 1: Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of theories, principles, and practices relevant to clinical counseling, particularly across the lifespan and in family systems.

Competency 2: Utilize assessment tools effectively to diagnose, develop treatment plans, and monitor progress.

Competency 3: Apply clinical knowledge by effectively implementing theory-informed intervention with individuals, couples, groups, and families.

Competency 4: Evaluate and apply relevant research to the practice of clinical counseling.

PLO 2: Develop and apply self-awareness and professional ethics to the practice of clinical counseling.

Competency 1: Demonstrate knowledge of the ACA/AAMFT code of ethics and identify ethical issues when they arise with clients

Competency 2: Demonstrate awareness and effective use of self in the therapeutic process

Competency 3: Develop personal characteristics that enhance professional competence, most importantly effective communication, empathy, boundaries, self-awareness, and respect for others

PLO 3: Demonstrate competence in working with clients from diverse backgrounds, particularly in settings where sociocultural factors influence treatment and there is limited access to care.

Competency 1: Integrate contextual factors, apply multicultural theories, and modify treatment approaches to effectively work with diverse client populations.

Competency 2: Demonstrate awareness of how personal values, beliefs, and sociocultural context impact work with clients.

Competency 3: Attend to the spiritual dimensions of clients and apply faith integration processes as clinically appropriate.

Course Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate foundational knowledge of the DSM-5-TR chapters form major diagnostic groups and potential alternative diagnoses.
2. Apply DSM-5-TR diagnostic terminology and criteria accurately when identifying disorders.
3. Develop the ability to conceptualize presenting problems and write concise, clinically relevant reports.
4. Build introductory skills for presenting clinical cases to peers, including treatment team settings.
5. Create cohesive assessment summaries that incorporate evidence-informed treatment plans.
6. Integrate cultural considerations into diagnostic formation, including awareness of how symptoms may present across diverse populations.

Course Credit Hour Information

It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their course work. As a graduate course, students can expect the work in this class to be significant, and students should plan on spending up to 15-20 hours a week engaged in the course. The estimated time expectations for this course are shown below:

Distribution of Course Hours

Assignments	Pre-Course Hours	Course Hours	Post-Course Hours
Face-to-face Class Sessions	16	48	--
Reading	32	70	--
Course Assignments	32	20	--
Case Presentation	32	12	--
TOTAL HOURS	108	150	--

Required Texts and Recommended Study Resources

American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th edition, Text Revision)*.

Kress, V. E, & Paylo, M. J. (2019). *Treating those with mental disorders: A comprehensive approach to case conceptualization and treatment—Enhanced Pearson eText – Access Card (2nd ed.)*. Columbus, OH: Pearson.

First, M.B. (2014). *DSM-5: Handbook of differential diagnosis*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association Publishing

NOTE: *Students are responsible to have the required course textbooks prior to the first day of class. Students are also encouraged to begin reading the books in preparation for the class as soon as possible.*

Assessment and Grading

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Exams

a) *Description:* This course requires the successful completion of two in-class exams, a midterm and a final. Each exam is worth 150 points and, as such, together they comprise 38.75% of your final grade. It is important that each student determine, on an individual basis, the appropriate amount of time needed to study for each exam. The exams may consist of various formats, such as multiple choice, essay, and oral formats.

b) *Requirements:* Both exams will cover the assigned readings, case conceptualization practice assignments in class, lectures, and any other material presented in class (e.g., audio and video presentations, as well as handouts). The final exam is not cumulative. You will be given a study guide for each exam. The course calendar indicates, in more specific detail, the readings and other assignments that will be covered on each exam.

c) *Style Standard:* Exams will consist of multiple-choice questions and case studies designed to facilitate your ability to use and recognize the DSM-5-TR diagnostic categories, along with application to treatment planning through evidence-based practices.

2. In-class vignette/case conceptualization assignments

Most weeks, we will apply the assigned reading to vignettes or case studies through using the I CAN START framework and/or the Differential Diagnosis tool. Five of these in-class activities will be graded at random as to ensure that you are comprehending the clinical application of the course material. For these assignments, it's not solely about arriving at the correct diagnosis; rather being able to demonstrate your clinical thought process and translate what you've learned into your clinical conceptualization practice.

3. Case Conceptualization Group Presentation

As a therapist, you will be presenting cases in treatment team meetings, utilization reviews, and in supervision. A clinician needs to be able to conceptualize their client's presenting problem, differential diagnosis, precipitating factors and present these aspects in a clear and concise manner for other therapists and providers. To assist in building this skill, you will be split into groups of three and will chose a movie character to assess and to present to the class in the manner just mentioned. Review the assignment page to see the complete directive, as well as the associated rubric.

4. Attendance

Participation in this class is essential and is directly tied to your preparation, engagement, and contribution

to the learning environment. A significant portion of your participation grade depends on completing the *assigned readings* before each session. These readings are the foundation for our discussions, activities, and assignments. Without engaging with the material, you will not only hinder your ability to fully understand and apply key concepts but also disrupt the collaborative learning experience for your peers. Active preparation allows us to dive deeper into the subject matter, fostering a richer, more meaningful class experience for everyone. Your participation grade reflects not only your individual effort but also your role in supporting the success of the group as a whole. Your grade will be impacted if it is clear that you have not been keeping up with the reading. Additionally, your participation in the lectures and in-class activities are also vital in providing an interactive and effective learning environment for the class as a whole. You are encouraged to ask questions when the clinical language is unclear, take risks in your clinical conceptualization, and support one another in their learning processes. Lastly, if you are not here, you cannot demonstrate your learning or contribute to the learning of the group. For all of these reasons, *your attendance is worth 10% of your final grade*. If a student is absent more than one time from class, they will lose 1/2 of the attendance points. Two tardies are equivalent to one absence. If a student is absent from class more than two times, they will lose 100% of the attendance points, and will need to complete a makeup assignment in order to avoid being withdrawn from the course.

5. Professionalism is worth 10% of your course grade.

All papers written in the Graduate Counseling program should be in APA style. Here are some helpful websites to help you write and format your paper:

- [APA 7th Edition Help File](#)
- [The OWL at Purdue: APA Style](#)

All papers should include the following sections unless indicated otherwise:

1. Title page
2. Abstract
3. Main body with headings
4. Reference page

Please check the *APA Manual* or the website for further formatting helps.

Assignment Distribution by Points:

Assignments with Point Values

Assignments	Points
Exams (2 at 150 pts. each)	300
I CAN START Homework Assignments (5 at 20 pts. each)	100
Group Case Presentation	35
Attendance and Participation	160
Reading Quizzes (11 at 10 point each)	110
	TOTAL: 800

Grading Scale:

Grading Scale

Grade Scale Based on Percentage of Points Earned				
A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F ≤ 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

Students must achieve a minimum grade of B- to pass this class.

NOTE: It is your responsibility to maintain your class schedule. Should the need arise to drop this course (personal emergencies, poor performance, etc.); you have the responsibility to first contact the professor. Then if no accommodations can be made, you are responsible to follow through (provided the drop date meets the stated calendar deadline established by the University).

Late Policy

Assignments submitted up to 24 hours past the due date will be deducted 25% of the grade. Assignments submitted up to 48 hours past the due date will be deducted 50% of the grade. Any assignment turned in after 48 hours past the due date will receive no credit. Students are encouraged to alert the professor if an assignment is anticipated to be late. Professors can extend these late penalties if arrangements are made in advance.

COURSE POLICIES

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.

1. Academic Honesty

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. As explained in the university catalog, 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. Violations of university academic honesty include cheating, plagiarism, falsification, aiding the academic dishonesty of others, or malicious misuse of university resources. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for a) that particular assignment or examination, and/or b) the course following the procedure in the university catalog. Students may appeal also using the procedure in the university catalog. See Academic Policies in the [current PLNU catalog](#) for further information.

2. Identity Fraud

Committing identity fraud is considered particularly serious and could have legal as well as institutional implications. Any student who has another individual impersonate or in any other way commit identity fraud in any course, assignment, exam, or any type of academic exercise will be permanently suspended from Point Loma.

3. Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the midterm and examination **on their scheduled days**. The midterm and final examination dates are shown on the syllabus calendar. No requests for taking examinations before or after the scheduled date will be approved.

4. Participation

Class participation is necessary to demonstrate familiarity with the assignments and the ability to transfer theory into practice, especially during your practicum. The following criteria will be used to evaluate participation.

Participation in discussions

- Appropriateness of comments
- Comments useful for clarification or meaningful contribution to the class
- Willingness to participate in exercises and simulations
- Sensitivity to participation of others in the class; avoids dominating discussions
- Class participation demonstrates understanding of concepts reviewed

5. Classroom Etiquette

Students are expected to actively engage in an adult learning environment. Behaviors that disrupt the classroom environment and interfere with the learning of others are prohibited. Examples include talking with other students during a presentation or when others are speaking, texting, gaming, internet browsing, or reading non-course-related materials. **All pagers, cellphones, and other electronic communication devices will be turned off at the beginning of class. Tablets and computers are allowed in class for note-taking purposes only, unless otherwise directed by the instructor.** Arriving late and leaving early are strongly discouraged and disruptive to the class.

Respect each person's opinions. Be considerate while your peers are speaking and actively engage them

only when they have completed their point. Discourteous comments and side conversations will not be tolerated and will be addressed openly and directly by the instructor. Should a student's behavior become disruptive to the productivity of the course they will be asked to leave the classroom and not receive credit for attendance.

6. **Withdrawal**

If you need to withdraw from the class, please notify the instructor **and** your Point Loma advisor immediately. A student may withdraw by the end of the first week of class and receive a grade of W. If a student withdraws from the program, he/she must submit a letter for withdrawal. A last date to withdraw is posted in the Academic Calendar on the PLNU website. Students will be assigned a grade of W or WF consistent with Point Loma Nazarene University policy in the grading section of the catalog. Failure to attend class does not constitute a withdrawal and students will receive an "F" if not properly withdrawn. Withdrawing from a class may result in a graduated refund and may affect your financial aid. Be sure to contact your financial aid counselor.

7. **Use of Technology**

In order to be successful in the online environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the Technology and System Requirements page. Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work. If you do need technical help you may click on the HELP button (located on the top-right corner of Canvas) and choose from whom you want assistance, or you may contact the campus help desk (619.849.2222).

8. **University Catalog**

For additional Point Loma policy items, review the latest [Point Loma Nazarene University Catalog](#).

9. **Accessibility of Historical Data in Point Loma Classes**

PLNU strives to protect and preserve student data in accordance with FERPA laws. It is important for students and faculty to note that due to the nature of digital information, no data transmitted via emails or online learning management systems is entirely free from observation. The contents of this class, including the class discussion, may be monitored by PLNU faculty and staff at any time for the purposes of assisting students, gathering data, instructor training, or assessing the program.

10. **Confidentiality of Course Discussion and Assignments**

Materials posted to the class discussion or to an assignment thread are for class use only. Students and faculty are to protect the confidentiality of all classroom materials and should never transmit any classroom materials without specific written permission of the person quoted and the instructor.

PLNU Spiritual Care

Mission Valley: PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as a whole person. To this end, we provide resources for our Graduate students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith. At the Mission Valley (MV) campus we have an onsite chaplain who is available during class break times across the week. If you have questions for or a desire to meet or share any prayer requests with the onsite chaplain, you may email Dr. Sylvia Cortez Masyuk at scortezm@pointloma.edu.

In addition, on the MV campus there is a prayer chapel on the third floor. It is open for use as a space set apart for quiet reflection and prayer.

PLNU Copyright Policy

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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 [Graduate Academic and General Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

Note: Additionally, include the below if this pertains to your course:

During the first week of class, you will be asked to submit an Academic Honesty Verification Statement. Submitting the statement is a requirement of this course. By submitting the Academic Honesty Verification Statement, you will be verifying all assignments completed in this course were completed by you. Carefully review the Academic Honesty Statement below.

Statement: "In submitting this form, I am verifying all the assignments in this course will be completed by me and will be my own work."

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. If you have any doubts about using AI, please gain permission from the instructor.

[MLA Style Center: Citing Generative AI](#)

[APA Style: How to Cite ChatGPT](#)

[Chicago Manual of Style: Citing Content Developed or Generated by AI](#)

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.

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 or as shown in the PLNU Spiritual Care section of this syllabus.

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 Course Modality Definitions

1. Online Courses: These are courses with class meetings where all instruction and interaction is fully online.
 - Synchronous Courses: At least one class meeting takes place at a designated time.
 - Asynchronous Courses: All class meetings are asynchronous.
2. Hybrid Courses: These are courses with class meetings that take place both in the classroom and online synchronously and/or asynchronously.
3. In-Person Courses: These are courses that meet in person with the instructor and students in a physical classroom setting. With approval by the area dean, this may include up to 25% of qualified class interactions through a Learning Management System (such as Canvas).

PLNU Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. Therefore, regular attendance and participation in each course are minimal requirements.

PLNU Policy: 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 (equivalent to two (2) classes in the MACC program), the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an “F” grade.

Note: If a student incurs a third absence, they may petition the faculty to remain enrolled in class. The faculty will provide a make up assignment proportionate in length and difficulty to the class missed. This third absence may also result in a referral to the Student Development Committee.

In addition to the university policy, 10% of your course grade will reflect your attendance. Coming to class is mandatory and expected. As extenuating circumstances may happen that prevent you from attending class, a student may incur one absence without losing points. Each subsequent absence will drop this portion of the grade by 5% of the total course points (up to 10%). Note: absences are not categorized as excused or unexcused.

Attending class on time is essential to promote a respectful and professional learning environment. Arriving to class more than 15 minutes late is counted as a tardy. Two tardies count as one absence. Arriving 30 minutes or more late to a class will be considered an absence.

Refer to [Academic Policies](#) for additional detail.

Professionalism

Student professionalism will be assessed in each course, constituting 10% of the total course grade. Professionalism indicators include class participation, interactions with peers and instructors, and self-awareness. The full rubric can be found here: [PLNU MACC Professionalism Rubric](#).

Late Policy

Assignments submitted up to 24 hours past the due date will be deducted 25% of the grade. Assignments submitted up to 48 hours past the due date will be deducted 50% of the grade. Any assignment turned in after 48

hours past the due date will receive no credit. Students are encouraged to alert the professor if an assignment is anticipated to be late. Professors can extend these late penalties if arrangements are made in advance.

Use of Technology

MACC is committed to a distraction-free learning environment. Students are welcome to bring devices to class, but they *must remain stored* throughout class time unless directed otherwise by the instructor. Phones, laptops, iPads/tablets, and other personal devices are not permitted to be passively used during lectures, discussions, or any other activity unless expressly communicated by the instructor.

GPS Academic Resources

PLNU offers the following free academic resources virtually for Graduate Professional Studies (GPS) Students. Visit myPLNU through the links below for more information.

- [The GPS Writing Center](#) offers:
 - **Zoom Writers Workshops** offered each quad on a variety of helpful topics
 - **One-to-one appointments** with the Writing Coach
 - **Microlearning YouTube Video Library** for helpful tips anytime
- [Research Help Guide](#) to help you start your research
 - The physical office is located on the third floor of the [Mission Valley Regional Center](#) off the student lounge
- [Academic Writing Resources Course](#): Found on your Canvas Dashboard, this course is non-credit with 24/7 access, no time limits, and self-paced content. [Watch a quick video run-through](#) and take time now to explore!
- [Grammarly](#): Students have unlimited FREE access to Grammarly for Education, a trusted tool designed to help enhance writing skills by providing real-time feedback, identifying areas for improvement, and providing suggestions. Grammarly’s Generative AI is NOT available with our student accounts.
- [Tutoring](#): Students have access to 24/7 live or scheduled subject tutoring through Tutor.com, including a Paper Drop-Off Service with feedback within 12 hours.

We are here to support you! Contact us anytime: GPSWritingCenter@pointloma.edu

Course Schedule and Assignments

Course Schedule

Date	Topics
WEEK 1 - 1/15/26	<p><i>Light week:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment planning: effective treatment plans, real world treatment plans, and ethics of safety-related clinical issues • Introductions via Canvas
WEEK 2 - 1/22/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case formulation through the I CAN START model • Assessment through the Mental Status Examination
WEEK 3 - 1/29/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differential diagnosis introduction • Practice with Differential Diagnosis tool
WEEK 4 - 2/5/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depressive Disorders • Coding & Recording Procedures

WEEK 5 - 2/12/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bipolar & related Disorders • Group presentation #1
WEEK 6 - 2/19/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schizophrenia Spectrum & Other Disorders • Group presentation #2
WEEK 7 - 2/26/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance-Related & Addictive Disorders (includes Stages of Change) • Group presentation #3
WEEK 8 - 3/5/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-term examination • Review exam • Anxiety Disorders introduction
Week of 3/12/26	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK
WEEK 9 - 3/19/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety Disorders • Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders • Group presentation #4
WEEK 10 - 3/26/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma Disorders • Dissociative Disorders • Group presentation #5
WEEK 11 - 4/2/26	<p>Light Week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Paraphilic Disorders ◦ Sexual Dysfunctions ◦ Gender Dysphoria ◦ Sleep-Wake Disorders
WEEK 12- 4/9/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality Disorders • Group presentation #6
WEEK 13 - 4/16/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeding & Eating Disorders • Somatic Symptom Disorders • Group presentation #7
WEEK 14 - 4/23/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neurodevelopmental Disorders • Elimination Disorders • Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders • Group presentation #8
WEEK 15 - 4/30/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neurocognitive Disorders • Group presentation #9

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final Exam preparation
WEEK 16 - 5/7/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final Examination• End-of-Course Evaluation due