

**PSYCHOLOGY 4303: W01 – ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY-WEB
SPRING – 2026**

INSTRUCTOR :

Dr. James W. Downing

LH 302

Office Hours:

In Person: Wednesdays, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm,
Thursdays, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Fridays, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Virtual: Wednesdays, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm,
Thursdays, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm,
Fridays, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm,
or by appointment

Email: jdowning@sulross.edu

PREREQUISITE:

Introduction to Psychology-PSY 1302 or equivalent

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Sue, D., Sue, D., Sue, D., & Sue, S. (2017).

Essentials of understanding abnormal

behavior. (3rd ed.). Boston, MA:

Cengage

Memo to: Students in PSY 4304:W01, Sul Ross State University

From: Jay Downing

Abnormal Psychology! Oh no! What a bland title for such a potentially interesting course. Fortunately, the title does imply a chance to do anything we wish that will add significantly to our own learning about the field of abnormal psychology. It gives an opportunity for each of us to read about and think about such things as: understanding and treatment of mental disorders, the nature of specific categories of abnormal behavior, and law and ethics in abnormal psychology. This is only a partial list based on the Sue, Sue, Sue, and Sue text but it gives one a notion of the broad range in which each can develop her or his own curriculum. I will be interested to see what you make of this semester in terms of your learning.

Here are some of my own thoughts for the course thus far. All my plans are subject to change if you wish, within the limits of my own schedule and yours.

In the following pages you will find the tentative topic schedule for the course. The specific days and topics are subject to change, but the schedule should prove relatively accurate with respect to order of coverage.

Requirements

There are several aspects of the course which will be required. These are as follows: I wish to have a log of the readings you have done for the course turned in at the end of each week in what I call a “Reading Log”. In the log you will write entries that indicate the way you have read the selection. For example, you might list a book and state, “Chapters 3 and 6 were read thoroughly.” You might list another book and state “Skimmed the book and found it was over my head.” You might list another book and say, “I got so much out of this book that I read it twice and made careful notes on Chapters 5 through 12.” You might state, “I was repelled by the

whole point of view and only read enough to become convinced that I was disgusted with the author.” In other words, what is wanted is an honest account of what you have read and the depth to which you have read the material you covered. I do want to read entries for everything you read for this course during the fall term. As you get into the Sue, Sue, Sue, and Sue text please write a separate entry for each chapter in the text as you complete your reading log each week. Your first reading log post is due by Sunday, January 18, at midnight. Introduce yourself and in the first reading log post, commenting on the syllabus and other handouts.

The **second requirement** is that you write a paper, which I refer to as a “Compact Research Paper”. This paper should be written in APA format and include the following elements:

1. Explore one disorder, therapeutic approach, or mental health issue;
2. Explain how it develops/its etiology/its contributing factors;
3. Describe who it affects, how, and why;
4. Explain how it has impacted you, your family/friends, U.S. society, AND the global community (our world);
5. How can this issue be improved for the betterment of all? What is your responsibility in this?

Your research paper should have at least six (6) references other than the text. Use at least two (4) peer-reviewed journals (which can be electronic). Use the APA reference manual for format guidelines. Go to library or SRSU Writing Center for help or use the internet resources provided on Black Board for this course. Please ask for help early on so that you do not get overwhelmed. See the attached COMPACT RESEARCH PAPER CHECKLIST at the end of the syllabus for specifics on components of the paper. **The personal change paper will be due by midnight on Sunday, May 3.**

A **third requirement** is that you write one reaction report every other week based on any readings, any experience, or any discussion you may have had. This report can be as long or as short as you desire. It should, however, be limited to your reactions, by this I mean your feelings. I want you to feel as free as possible in these reports in expressing your feelings about anything you want to write about, whether or not it has anything to do with the course. Your first reaction report is due by Sunday, January 25, at midnight. Subsequent reaction reports are due on Sunday at midnight on February 8, 22, March 8, 22, April 5 & 19. The submission period for your reaction reports will close at midnight on the Sundays they are due.

A **fourth requirement** is that you turn in to me a statement of your own evaluation of your work and the grade that you think is appropriate. This statement should include: a) the criteria by which you are judging your work; b) a description of the ways in which you have met or failed to meet those criteria; and c) the grade you think is appropriate to the way you have met or failed to meet your own criteria. If I find that my own estimate of your work is quite at variance with yours I will have a personal talk with you to see if we can arrive at some mutually satisfactory grade which I can in good conscience sign and turn in.

The **final requirement** is to be your personal reaction to the course as a whole. I would like this submitted to me in the portal I set up for it. You are at liberty, however, to let me know, “Please do not open until the final grades have been turned in.” If you mark the submission in this fashion, I assure you I will honor your request.

In this reaction, I would like you to state very honestly what the course has meant to you, both positively and negatively. I would like any criticisms you have to make of the course and suggestions of ways in which it might be improved. This in short is your opportunity to evaluate the course, the instructor, and the manner in which the course has been carried out. It will in no case have any influence on your final grade but if you are fearful that it might have such an influence please mark your submission as suggested, and I will not open it until all the grades have been turned in. **The personal reaction to the course will be due by midnight on Sunday, May 5.**

Other activities will come up during the term and you are expected to complete them fully and on time.

I feel it is important that students learn about deadlines. Therefore, I do not accept work after its due date.

Failure to complete any of the requirements will result in a failing grade being assigned for the course.

A passing grade in the course will not be turned in until all of these requirements have been fulfilled.

Attendance is very important in this class. I reserve the right to drop a student from the class with a failing grade if he or she misses three class days.

Attendance and Course preparation:

Class attendance is governed by the SRSU policy stated in the schedule of classes. Students will be dropped with an "F" when you have accumulated six (6) or more absences OR the equivalent in a web-based course. *Class attendance in this course includes logging onto Black Board during the first week of class, monitoring your SRSU email and Black Board announcements on a daily basis, taking exams, posting, and completing other assignments on time, as well as communicating in a timely and clear manner with the professor regarding challenges experienced related to the course.*

Course Schedule Template (Abnormal Psychology, Spring 2026)

Unit	Week	Dates (Mon-Fri)	Topic	Activities/ Assignments All Due Dates @ 12 AM CST
Start Here	Week 1	Jan 14 –Jan 16 (Short week since classes start on Wednesday)	Introduction	READ Syllabus, Preface XXV- XXXVIII, & Chapter 1-Abnormal Behavior by Friday, 1/16 SYLLABUS QUIZ and START HERE orientation to BLACK BOARD (by Sunday 1/18 <i>midnight</i>) READING LOG POST 1 <i>Introduce yourself</i> (by Sunday 1/18 <i>midnight</i>)
Unit 1	Week 2	Jan 19 – Jan 23 (Short week once again since we have the MLK holiday)	Understanding & Treating Mental Disorders	READ Chapter 2 Understanding & Treating Mental Disorders (by Friday 1/23) READING LOG POST 2 Over Chapter 2 by Sunday 1/25 <i>midnight</i> REACTION REPORT 1 by Sunday 1/25 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 3	Jan 26 – Jan 30	Clinical Research, Assessment, & Classification of Mental Disorders	READ Chapter 3 Clinical Research, Assessment, & Classification of Mental Disorders (by Friday 1/30) READING LOG POST 3 Over Chapter 3 by Sunday 2/1 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 4	Feb 2 – Feb 6	Anxiety & Obsessive-Compulsive & Related Disorders	READ Chapter 4 Anxiety & Obsessive-Compulsive & Related Disorders (by Friday 2/6) READING LOG POST 4 Over Chapter 4 by Sunday 2/8 <i>midnight</i> REACTION REPORT 2 by Sunday 2/8 <i>midnight</i>

Unit	Week	Dates (Mon-Fri)	Topic	Activities/ Assignments All Due Dates @ 12 AM CST
	Week 5	Feb 9 – Feb 13	Trauma & Related Stressor Disorders	READ Chapter 5 Trauma and Stressor-Related Disorders (by Friday 2/13) READING LOG POST 5 Over Chapter 5 by Sunday 2/15 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 6	Feb 16 – Feb 20	Somatic Symptom & Dissociative Disorders	READ Chapter 6 Somatic Symptom & Dissociative Disorders (by Friday 2/20) READING LOG POST 6 Over Chapter 6 by Sunday 2/22 <i>midnight</i> REACTION REPORT 3 by Sunday 2/22 <i>midnight</i>
Unit 2	Week 7	Feb 23 – Feb 27	Depressive & Bipolar Disorders	READ Chapter 7 Depressive & Bipolar Disorders (by Friday 2/27) READING LOG POST 7 Over Chapter 7 by Sunday 3/1 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 8	Mar 2 – Mar 6	Suicide	READ Chapter 8 Suicide (by Friday 3/6) READING LOG POST 8 Over Chapter 8 by Sunday 3/8 <i>midnight</i> REACTION REPORT 4 by Sunday 3/8 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 9	Mar 9 – Mar 13	SPRING BREAK	A WELL-DESERVED VACATION FOR ALL!
Unit 3	Week 10	Mar 16 – Mar 20	Eating Disorders	READ Chapter 9 Eating Disorders (by Friday 3/20) READING LOG POST 9 Over Chapter 9 by Sunday 3/22 <i>midnight</i> REACTION REPORT 5 by Sunday 3/22 <i>midnight</i>

Unit	Week	Dates (Mon-Fri)	Topic	Activities/ Assignments All Due Dates @ 12 AM CST
	Week 11	Mar 23 – Mar 27	Substance-Related & Other Addictive Disorders	READ Chapter 10 Substance-Related & Other Addictive Disorders (by Friday 3/27) READING LOG POST 10 Over Chapter 10 by Sunday 3/29 <i>midnight</i>
Unit 4	Week 12	Mar 30 – Apr 3	Schizophrenia & Spectrum Disorders	READ Chapter 11 Schizophrenia Spectrum Disorders (by Friday 4/3) READING LOG POST 11 Over Chapter 11 by Sunday 4/5 <i>midnight</i> REACTION REPORT 6 by Sunday 4/5 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 13	Apr 6 – Apr 10	Sexual Dysfunctions, Gender Dysphoria, & Paraphilic Disorders	READ Chapter 13 Sexual Dysfunctions, Gender Dysphoria, & Paraphilic Disorders (by Friday 4/10) READING LOG POST 12 Over Chapter 13 by Sunday 4/12 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 14	Apr 13 – Apr 17	Personality Psychopathology	READ Chapter 14 Personality Psychopathology (by Friday 4/17) READING LOG POST 13 Over Chapter 14 by Sunday 4/19 <i>midnight</i> REACTION REPORT 7 by Sunday 4/19 <i>midnight</i>
	Week 15	Apr 20 – Apr 24	Disorders of Childhood & Adolescence	READ Chapter 15 Disorders of Childhood & Adolescence (by Friday 4/17) READING LOG POST 14 Over Chapter 15 by Sunday 4/19 <i>midnight</i>

Unit	Week	Dates (Mon-Fri)	Topic	Activities/ Assignments All Due Dates @ 12 AM CST
Unit 5	Week 16	Apr 27 – May 1	Course Wrap Up	CUMULATIVE FINAL EXAM over all chapters on Black Board (90 minutes to complete) Open from 8 am (Monday April 27) CLOSES midnight (Friday, 5/1) COMPACT RESEARCH PAPER by Sunday 5/3 <i>midnight</i> SELF EVALUATION BY Sunday 5/3 <i>midnight</i> PERSONAL REACTION TO THE COURSE PAPER by Sunday 5/3 <i>midnight</i>

Below you will find the Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) dealt with in this course. The student learning outcomes follow and relate, to a greater or lesser extent, to each SLO dealt with in the course.

Student Learning Objective (SLO #1)

1. The students will be able to demonstrate competency in the biopsychosocial approach.

Student Learning Objective (SLO #2)

2. The students will be able to demonstrate their critical thinking skills via tasks related to student thought, complexity, and originality.

Student Learning Outcomes

Required Task-Reaction Reports:

Goal One: The student will demonstrate the ability to engage in the self-expression of emotions by writing bi-weekly reaction reports. (Affective Domain: Respond)

Goal Two: The student will demonstrate value development by reporting an emotion they experienced in the reaction reports. (Affective Domain: Value Development)

Required Task-Reading Log:

Goal Three: The student will write an evaluation of the readings they complete for the course that will be examined weekly until the end of the semester. (Cognitive Domain: Evaluation)

Goal Four: The student will demonstrate an awareness of their responsibility for their development as a life-long learner by taking personal responsibility for the volume of readings they complete. (Affective Domain: Value Development)

Required Task-Compact Research Paper:

Goal Five: The student will write a critical evaluation of the issues they have learned about concerning in the course. This evaluation will concern the state of their knowledge about an issue in abnormal psychology not covered in their textbook. (Cognitive Domain: Evaluation)

Goal Six: The student will create an original paper that demonstrates the state of their knowledge about abnormal psychology by researching a topic not covered in their textbook. (Psychomotor Domain: Creation)

Goal Seven: The student will freely express their opinion that demonstrates the student has been independently studying and thinking about issues in abnormal psychology. (Affective Domain: Value Development)

Marketable Skills Assessed by the Tasks Completed in this Course

1. Speaking Effectively: Students will demonstrate competency in public speaking and communicating scientific information to diverse audiences.
2. Describing Feelings: Students will demonstrate empathic or active listening and conversational skills, and/or write clearly about their affective stance, respectfully attuned to the needs of their audiences.

3. Identifying Resources: Students will demonstrate the aptitude to locate, organize and evaluate the credibility of information from multiple sources.

4. Analyzing: Students will demonstrate ability to examine the underlying issues of scientific problems, attending to the pertinent details and creating action plans, recognizing ambiguity and complexity as essential components. Students will communicate effectively in writing.

Distance Education Statement: Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as Smarthinking, library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

SPECIAL NOTATION FOR EDUCATION STUDENTS:

I know that some education students may take this course. This course addresses some of the objectives of the TExES Exam for the subject area of social science, which includes a psychology portion. Specifically, this course may address the following objectives, among others.

Domain III

Geography, Culture, and the Behavioral and Social Sciences

Competency 13 (Social, Anthropological, and Psychological Concepts and Processes)

The teacher applies sociological, anthropological, and psychological concepts and processes to understand cultural formation and change, intergroup relations, and individual development.

- Demonstrates knowledge of the history and theoretical foundations of psychology.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the behavioral, social, cognitive, and personality perspectives of human learning.
- Understands basic psychological principles and including those related to motivation, sensation and perception, personality, relationships between biology and behavior, and relationships between the self and others.

The interested student is informed that for full information concerning the TExES exam in education concerning psychology as a part of the social sciences, they should contact the SRSU Education Department for materials concerning test preparation and administration. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of this course if he or she is a candidate for the exam. If so, the instructor can guide them to resources that will assist with their exam preparation

Disabilities Act Statement

SRSU Disability Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal

access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Ronnie Harris, M.Ed., LPC-S, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203 (please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as we can during working hours). Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall (Suite 112), and our mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, SUI Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

Academic Integrity:

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

NAME: _____

COMPACT RESEARCH PAPER CHECKLIST

The following must be included in your paper: (from syllabus)

- 1) Explore one disorder, therapeutic approach, or mental health issue; _____
- 2) Explain how it develops/its etiology/its contributing factors;

- 3) Describe who it affects, how, and why; _____
- 4) Explain how it has impacted you, your family/friends, U.S. society,
AND the global community (our world); _____
- 5) How can this issue be improved for the betterment of all?
What is your responsibility in this?

- 6) Organization of Content/Spelling/Grammar/Writing style
(6 to 8 pages long)

- 7) APA Style Format
a) Title page with Running head

b) Abstract

c) Correct citation of references and quotes within paper

d) Reference page (5 to 6 references)

Things to Do to Help Improve Your Performance in Class

I, like most faculty, expect you to spend 2-3 hours outside of class studying for every hour spent in class each week. That means for this 3 semester credit hour course you should be studying between 6-9 hours outside of class each week.

Study your text regularly. As you will see, spending 30 minutes a day studying for six days is much more useful than studying for a single three-hour period.

Link the concepts that you learn with your own experience. Try to make the material come to life by thinking of people, events, etc., in your own life where you have seen the ideas you read about play themselves out.