

PSYCH 490 sections Spring 2012

Section 1: Dr. Alicia Grandey (industrial-organizational) **Emotional Intelligence: Real or 'Pop' Psychology?**

In this class, you will draw on your psychological knowledge about 'valid' scientific methods and measurement in order to discuss the 'hot' topic of emotional intelligence (EI). What is this concept – and what is it not? Is this really measuring something “new”, or just a new money-making consulting fad? Is this a skill that can be trained, or an innate trait? We will review the claims made by consulting firms and examine the validity of those claims by reading the original scientific research evidence. Students will engage in discussion and debate, self-assessments of EI, group presentations, and defend their views about EI through papers.

Section 2: Dr. Suzy Scherf (developmental/neuroscience) **Developmental Neuroscience of Adolescence**

This course is designed to teach you about the current state of knowledge (i.e., research findings) about the unique developmental period of adolescence, with special emphasis on the biological underpinnings of puberty and the interactions between pubertal, behavioral, and neural development. Puberty has a profound effect on the way brain circuits work in adolescents, which enables individuals to take on adult social roles, process social information in a much more sophisticated way, and take on new developmental tasks associated with finding romantic partners and navigating social hierarchies. However, these dramatic changes also appear to make adolescence a uniquely vulnerable developmental period. This is the time for the onset of many mood disorders (e.g., bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, schizophrenia) and also when individuals engage in incredibly risky behaviors. This course will be presented from the perspective of both developmental psychology and neuroscience. It is extremely helpful if students already have a background in neuroscience in this course.

Section 3: Dr. Michelle Newman (clinical) **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**

The seminar is designed to provide students with a solid background in cognitive behavioral therapy and its empirical foundations. This seminar is not designed as a practicum, but instead is designed to provide basic knowledge of a broad range of areas relevant to the conceptualization of cognitive behavioral therapy to build upon. This class will provide information about research, theories, and techniques associated with cognitive behavioral approaches to therapy. What are the basic principles of change in cognitive behavioral therapy? What are some of the basic skills that people are taught with respect to cognitive behavioral therapy? How does it work and how efficacious is it?

Therefore, in this seminar we will examine cognitive behavioral therapy through a consideration of relevant theory, empirical investigations, and clinical case material. We will attempt to keep a fairly even balance between focusing on the historical background, the current research related to particular techniques and maladies, and the more clinical or applied aspects of working clinically. Major topics covered will include: theoretical principles of change; specific techniques associated with principles of change; and research and theory on application of these theories and conceptualizations to specific disorders.

#### Section 4: Dr. Jose Soto (clinical) **Emotions in the Context of Culture**

This course will review the literature on emotions, from classic theories to recent empirical studies, to examine how culture shapes various emotional processes and how this knowledge informs our understanding of emotions.

#### Section 5: Dr. Aaron Pincus (clinical) **Personality Disorders**

This capstone seminar focuses on an increasingly important topic in clinical psychology—Personality Disorders. We will review conceptualization, classification, assessment, research, and treatment of personality disorders from multiple perspectives (e.g., Psychodynamic, Attachment, Interpersonal, Trait, Cognitive, Evolutionary, and Neurobiological). While “abnormal personalities” are well documented throughout the history of clinical psychology and psychiatry, their unique clinical status in contemporary psychology only began with the publication of DSM-III Axis II in 1980. Because focal attention to personality disorders is relatively new, current theory, research, and treatment of personality disorders reflects a significant diversity of assumptions, perspectives, and models. While we can’t cover everything in depth each week, the seminar is designed to help you think broadly about the best ways to define and describe personality pathology. While this certainly includes the DSM system, the seminar attempts to go well beyond the DSM when possible. This seminar is particularly suited for students intending to pursue graduate training or careers in clinical psychology, psychiatry, social work, and other professions where personality disorders are commonly encountered.

#### Section 6: Dr. Ginger Moore (clinical) **Emotion and Psychopathology**

This course will examine the role that emotion processes play in the emergence, expression, and treatment of psychological disorders from a developmental psychopathology perspective. Topics covered will include emotion and emotion regulation as core elements in etiological theories of psychopathology, normal and abnormal emotion processes, and emotion-focused techniques in treatments for psychological disorders. A prior course in abnormal psychology, such as 212, 412, or 494, is recommended.

#### Section 7: Dr. Terri Vescio (social) **The Social Psychology of Gender and Power**

In this class we will study the prevailing beliefs about the differences between men and women and examine the extent to which people are aware and unaware of their gendered beliefs. We will examine ways in which gender attitudes affect our expectations, judgments, feelings and behaviors. In this class we will also consider the rewards of conforming to stereotypes such as feminine “niceness” and masculine “assertiveness” – and the costs of deviating from them. Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to think critically about theory and research on gender and link scholarly research to broader social issues of import.

Section 8: Dr. William Ray (clinical) **The mind and brain of madness: psychological and neuroscience perspectives on psychopathology**

Presently, descriptions of psychopathology such as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) use observable behaviors and self-report to classify mental disorders. In this seminar we will go beyond DSM and examine psychopathology from both a psychological and neuroscience perspective. We will consider how the neurosciences might offer a deep structure perspective as well as a better classification scheme to the traditional surface level one currently in use. The focus will be on brain mechanisms which are involved in basic human processes such as emotionality, cognition, and motor processes and how these lead to the behavior and experience involved in psychological disorders. DSM Axis I disorders (e.g. schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, PTSD) and Axis II disorders (personality disorders) will be emphasized. We will also examine treatment implications.

Section 9: Dr. Stephanie Shields (social) **Psychology of Women**

We will consider a variety of topics in the psychology of women, including: girls' lives; sexuality and sexual identity; body image; emotion; psychological perspectives on women's health; violence against women; friendships and close relationships; mothering; women and work; feminist psychotherapy; and other topics/issues in the psychology of girls and women that are of special interest to class members. Intersectional and international perspectives will be emphasized. We will also investigate how research on the psychology of women can be used to understand pressing social issues and to promote positive social change. The class is designed for psychology majors who have some background in women's studies and/or psychology of gender and who want to build on and extend their knowledge of the psychology of women and gender. Course requirements include preparation and participation (15%), reaction papers and other brief assignments (25%), two seminars which you and a partner facilitate (15% each), and an exam/project option to be determined by the class before Week 3 (30%). Assigned readings will be drawn from research literature, secondary sources, and mass media compiled in a course reader. If you have questions about the course, would like more information, or are trying to figure out whether this is the right 490 for you, please don't hesitate to contact me ([sashields@psu.edu](mailto:sashields@psu.edu)). Professor Stephanie A. Shields, 514 Moore Bldg., 863-1729

Section 10: Dr. Dawn Witherspoon (developmental) **Development in the Neighborhood Context**

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the theoretical and empirical literature about how community and neighborhood characteristics are associated with development during childhood and adolescence. Topics to be discussed in this class include attention to cultural variables (i.e., race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status), exposure to violence, parenting strategies in neighborhoods, and a variety of youth academic, behavioral, and psycho-social outcomes (e.g., academic self-concept, deviance, friendships, sleep, and identity). An important aspect of this course is the attention to multiple forms of data and various methodologies (i.e., quantitative and qualitative) to elucidate a greater understanding of how place and its social characteristics are related to family functioning and youth outcomes. This course is designed for students who have had exposure to developmental psychology and want to learn more about how contexts outside of the family may shape development. The course will be discussion based with some lectures to introduce concepts and themes.