Psychology 954:
Cognitive-Behavioral Theory

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Overview: The purpose of this course is to provide students with a foundation in cognitive-behavioral theory and its associated therapeutic techniques — including more recent extensions into mindfulness, acceptance, and commitment procedures. I take a “clinical science” approach to teaching this course, which to me means that I see the science and practice of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) as inextricably linked. Students will learn the theoretical underpinnings and implementation of empirically supported behavioral and cognitive techniques for a range of psychopathology across the lifespan. Students will be exposed to a variety of viewpoints on cognitive-behavioral practice and its public health implications, beginning with historical perspectives.

Course Objectives: The goal is for students to acquire the following knowledge and skills:
1. An understanding of the basic tenets of behavioral and cognitive theories, beginning with historical perspectives;
2. Understanding of the public health impact of CBT;
3. Ability to conceptualize cases from a CBT framework;
4. Knowledge of empirical methods and findings regarding effective CBT interventions for common forms of psychopathology in adults and children;
5. Beginning ability to apply specific procedures of behavioral and cognitive treatment;
6. Ability to distill common principles across techniques and treatment packages;
7. Awareness of the influence of environmental and contextual factors (e.g., culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation) on delivery of CBT procedures;
8. A basic understanding of the CBT approach to supervision

Disclaimer: As it happens with most, if not all, courses, students receive education on a particular topic through the lens of their instructor. This course is no exception. Therefore, I feel it is important that you know a little about my lens. I am a clinical psychophysiohistologist who specializes in the study and treatment of anxiety (and to a certain extent depression). Therefore, I think about psychological disorders across response systems — subjective experience, physiologic, cognitive, and behavioral. I also think about psychological problems as falling along a continuum from mild to severe with patients falling at the extreme end of the spectrum. My therapeutic orientation is primarily cognitive-behavioral, with a stronger emphasis on the behavioral component.
That being said, I am primarily interested in things that work; that is, I’m interested in therapies that have garnered empirical support. I like parsimony and the idea of transdiagnostic protocols, but also see the benefits of specific procedures for specific problems. If you have any questions or concerns about this approach, please feel free to bring them up during class or office hours. Finally, I see this syllabus not as a “contract” per se but rather as a document that we can discuss and modify as meets the needs of us all.

**Format:** Class meetings will focus on group discussions of readings. To facilitate discussions, students will be expected to reflect on assigned readings in 1-2 page papers to be completed and submitted via D2L by 9pm the Sunday before each class. All students are expected to submit 5 reflection papers during the first half of the semester only (last one due March 1; i.e., class before Spring Break). Students should also bring their reflections with them to class in some format so as to help them remember their reflections. In each reflection, you should discuss your thoughts on and reactions to the readings. In writing these, you should ask yourself things like: 1) What have I learned from the readings, 2) What do these readings make me think about and/or feel, 3) What issues/questions do these readings raise for me with regard to the science and practice of CBT and therapy more broadly? Videos and problem-based learning exercises (role plays; case conceptualizations) will also be used throughout the class to reify the material.

Primarily, this course will be taught on Tuesdays by me, Jason Moser, however, there will be some guest lecturers (see schedule) and co-teaching during the semester. First, on Jan. 12 and Jan. 26, I will co-lead these sessions with Alytia Levendosky, who teaches our Psychodynamic Theory class in parallel, to understand and appreciate the historical and empirical bases of therapeutic approaches derived from different theoretical orientations. Finally, towards the end of the semester, I will co-lead 2, 1 hour sessions with Alytia during the Psychodynamic Theory class time (April 14 & 21; 10:20am - 1:10pm) in which an advanced clinical psychology student will give a case presentation which the class will then discuss from CBT and psychodynamic perspectives. Only clinical psychology students are expected to attend these latter 2 sessions; however, school psychology students are welcome to attend if possible.

**Evaluation:** Grades will be based on scores on reflection papers/class participation, a midterm exam, a case formulation and an intervention development paper.

Reflection papers are described above.

The midterm exam will be take-home, distributed February 25 and due Midnight March 3. This exam will cover material from the first half of the semester. Students may use any materials they find useful with the exception of other students. Questions will be in essay format.

You will be asked to write a formulation and treatment plan for a case that I will provide. This assignment is designed to provide you with an opportunity to apply your knowledge
about cognitive and behavioral principles to a therapy case. The formulation and treatment plan should be approximately 5 double-spaced pages. Further details and an example will be provided in class. The case formulation will be distributed March 18 and due April 8 at 5pm.

The intervention development paper is intended to enhance your learning by getting you more intimately involved with a particular subject matter. It will require you to integrate material from different sources, think critically, and be creative. You will be required to: 1) develop a novel intervention/technique (e.g., happiness training); or 2) apply an existing intervention to a new problem or in a new context (e.g., exposure for substance use disorders); or 3) modify an existing intervention/technique to meet an existing need (e.g., additional exposure sessions for treatment refractory OCD). Your paper should include: 1) a solid rationale, 2) a detailed description of your intervention/technique, and 3) methods and materials describing how you would implement and evaluate your novel approach. Topics must be approved by the instructor ahead of time. The paper should be 10 double-spaced pages and follow American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines. The intervention development paper is due during finals week May 5 at 5pm.

Your final grade in this class will be determined as follows:

- **Reflection papers/Class participation = 20%**
- **Midterm Exam = 30%**
- **Case Formulation = 20%**
- **Intervention Development Paper = 30%**

**Required Texts:**


**Topics and Readings:**

*The past, present, and future of cognitive-behavioral theory and therapy*


Readings for co-lead session to facilitate understanding across CBT and psychodynamic perspectives


Establishing empirical support for CBT and its underlying theory

Readings for co-lead session to facilitate understanding of empirical support for CBT and psychodynamic therapies


*Where the rubber meets the rode: At the intersection of theory and practice*


**Introduction to CBT in youth and diversity considerations**

Weisz & Kazdin chs. 1-3, & 29


**Exposure-based interventions**

Barlow ch. 4

Weisz & Kazdin ch. 6


Chorpita & Weisz Getting Acquainted-Anxiety — Maintenance; Trauma Narrative

*Cognitive and behavioral interventions I*

Barlow ch. 3


Weisz & Kazdin ch. 4

Chorpita & Weisz Cognitive: STOP

Weisz & Kazdin chs. 12-14

Chorpita & Weisz Engaging Parents — Booster Session


*Cognitive and behavioral interventions II*

Barlow chs. 7 & 9


Weisz & Kazdin chs. 7 & 30

Chorpita & Weisz Getting Acquainted-Depression — Safety Planning

Barlow ch. 17


**Unifying treatments**

Barlow ch. 6


**Supervision**


**Recommended Reading:**

Barlow chs. 2, 5, 10, 12, & 13

## Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan-12</td>
<td><em>The past, present, and future of cognitive-behavioral theory and therapy</em></td>
<td>Stampfl &amp; Levis — Lillienfeld</td>
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<td>Jan-19</td>
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<td>Beck — Mennin</td>
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<td>Jan-26</td>
<td><em>Establishing empirical support for CBT and its underlying theory</em></td>
<td>Kazdin — Baardseth</td>
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<td>Feb-2</td>
<td><em>Establishing empirical support for CBT/Where the rubber meets the rode: At the intersection of theory and practice</em></td>
<td>Ost — Herbert</td>
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<td>Feb-9</td>
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<td>Dobson &amp; Beihai — Persons et al.</td>
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<td>Feb-16</td>
<td>No Class — San Francisco</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<td>Feb-23</td>
<td><em>Introduction to CBT in youth and diversity considerations</em></td>
<td>Kazdin chapters</td>
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<td>Mar-1</td>
<td><em>Introduction to CBT in youth and diversity considerations</em></td>
<td>Purcell — Carter; Midterm Due Midnight March 3</td>
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<td>Mar-8</td>
<td>Spring Break No Class</td>
<td>Spring Break No Class</td>
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<td>Mar-15</td>
<td><em>Exposure-based interventions</em></td>
<td>Barlow ch. 4 — Friedman</td>
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<td>Mar-22</td>
<td><em>Exposure-based interventions</em></td>
<td>McLean — Chorpita &amp; Weisz</td>
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<td>Mar-29</td>
<td><em>Cognitive and behavioral interventions I</em></td>
<td>Barlow ch. 3 — Chorpita &amp; Weisz</td>
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<td>Apr-05</td>
<td><em>Natalie Moser &amp; Brooke Ingersoll guest lecturers</em></td>
<td>Weisz &amp; Kazdin chs. 12-14 — Ingersoll; Case Formulation Due April 8 5Pm</td>
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<td>Apr-12</td>
<td><em>Cognitive and behavioral interventions II</em></td>
<td>Barlow chs. 7 &amp; 9 — Chorpita &amp; Weisz</td>
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<td>Apr-19</td>
<td>Kelly Klump guest lecturer</td>
<td>Barlow ch. 17 — McIntosh</td>
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<td>Apr-26</td>
<td><em>Unifying treatments &amp; Supervision</em></td>
<td>All readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>May-5</td>
<td>Finals Week</td>
<td>Final Paper Due By 5Pm</td>
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*Notes: Chapters/papers should be read prior to coming to class on the day(s) they are being covered. This is a tentative schedule of the semester’s topics. Changes to a specific week’s topic will be announced in class or via email.*