**PSYCH280, Psychological Disorders, Fall 2025**

## **Instructor**: Julie M. Woltil, Ph.D. (she/her)

Email: msupsych180fall25@gmail.com

Office Hours: Via zoom by appointment only

**TA:**

Fiona Gui – guoziyi2@msu.edu

**UAs:**

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**Course Description:** This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to mental health science and practice.

**Course Objectives:** This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to mental health science and practice. Honestly, this class is essentially an “Introduction to Clinical Psychological Science”, like the other sub-field classes “Social Psychology” and “Cognitive Psychology”.

*By the end of this course, students should be able to:*

* Compare and contrast scientific approaches to the study of mental health
* Define common mental health disorders across the lifespan
* Identify common assessment tools and treatments for mental health concerns
* Explain current understandings of the causes of and maintenance factors involved in mental health concerns
* Appraise the interface between ethics, law, society, and mental health

**Required Material**

Comer, R.J. & Comer, J.S. (2024). *Psychopathology: Science and Practice* (12th ed.). Macmillan Learning/Worth Publishers.

**Course Requirements**

**Format and Expectations**

Class meetings will be a mix of lecture, active learning exercises, and case presentations illustrating various disorders. Regular attendance and participation in class discussion is expected. Attending each session, completing the required reading, and participating in active discussion will help you do the best you can in this class. Lectures will cover most content in the textbook, but based on time and discussion of cases, we may not be able to cover all reading material in class. It is therefore expected of students to attend class and complete all reading. Should you have any questions about the course, the TA will be a great place to start, or you can email me directly. Keep an eye on our class site for additional sources posted, which could be assessed during an exam.

**Evaluation/Grades**

Flash Facts

During the semester, there will be 13 flash facts which will be a short assessment of the lecture. They will only be made up of 5 multiple choice questions, and will be at the professor’s discretion. The purpose of these is to get practice with the types of questions you might see on the quiz and exam, and also to reward those who regularly attend. I will only count 10 of those for points, therefore you can miss 3 and not be impacted.

Interview Paper

Students are required to submit a 5-page paper based on an interview they conducted with a mental health professional, or someone they know who has interacted with the mental health system in the past or present. The goal of the paper is to investigate one’s experience as it relates to the class content, which can include questions relating to the following: stigma/prejudice in getting services, socio/cultural challenges in diagnosing and treating mental health disorders, the role of insurance and psychotropic drugs in obtaining help for mental health concerns, specific symptom manifestation of a given disorder, or other related topics which were covered in the class. You do not need to include a transcript of the interview, although quotes should be incorporated. Please see the rubric to guide your writing on d2l.

Quizzes

A total of 4 quizzes worth 50 points will be given, which will be composed of multiple-choice questions, some which may have been used during the flash facts exercise. Dates for the quizzes are posted on the syllabus and you should make note of them now. Should you need accommodations, or have a scheduling conflict, please email me asap. I will also replace your lowest quiz score, with your highest quiz score, as a way of dropping one of them.

Cumulative Final Exam

During finals week, we will have a cumulative final exam which will be composed of multiple-choice questions, which will likely be pooled from past quizzes, and 3 diagnostic short answers. You will be presented with a case study and you will need to state which DSM-V diagnosis is most appropriate given the data you have been given. We will have many opportunities to practice this skill during the semester.

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| Breakdown of Points |  |
| **Assignments** | **Points** |
| Flash Facts (10 total) | 50 (5 points each) |
| Interview paper | 100 points |
| Quiz (4 quizzes Total) | 200 (50 points each) |
| Cumulative Final Exam | 200 points |
| **Total Points Available** | **550** |

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| **Grade** | **Percentage of Total Points** | **Grade** | **Percentage of Total Points** |
| 4.0 | 90% to 100% | 2.0 | 70% to 74.9% |
| 3.5 | 85% to 89.9% | 1.5 | 65% to 69.9% |
| 3.0 | 80% to 84.9% | 1.0 | 60% to 64.9% |
| 2.5 | 75% to 79.9% | 0.0 | Under 60% |

# **Course Policies**

**Email:**

In the subject of your email, please always include PSY 280. Please direct emails to the TA first, and they will loop me in if required. Emails should be professional, concise, and provide appropriate context; this is an important skill to practice with all emails directed to professors and in your professional life.

For tips on emailing a professor see https://academicpositions.com/career-advice/how-to-email-a-professor.

Expect 48-72 hours for a response, then send a reminder email. **Please email instead of messaging via D2L.**

**Extra Credit:**

We will use SONA HPR hours as extra credit for this course. You can receive up to 3 percentage points on your final grade and each hour is worth 0.5% point (so if you do 6 hours, you get the full 3%). Details are outlined on D2L. Alternative extra credit opportunities for those not interested in participating in research will be outlined on D2L.

**Policies Regarding Missed or Late Quizzes, Exams, and Assignments:**

Granting of make-up exams is solely at the discretion of the instructor. Please reach out ASAP if you have issues so that alternative plans can be explored.

**Policies Regarding Grading:**

If you believe there is an error or issue with your grade on any assignment in this course, you must raise this issue with the instructor within 7 days of the date on which you received the grade (defined as the date on which the grade is posted on D2L). After that point, I will not consider any requests for grade changes.

**Policies Regarding Recording or Dissemination of Course Material:**

As members of a learning community, students are expected to respect the intellectual property of course instructors. All course materials (slides, lectures, homework assignments, rubrics, quizzes, and lectures) presented to students are the copyrighted property of the course instructor and are subject to the following conditions of use:

1. Students may use the course material only for their own course-related purposes.

2. Students may share their course material with other students enrolled in the class, provided that they also use the course material only for their own course-related purposes.

3. Students may not post course materials online or distribute them via any emails to anyone not enrolled in the class without the advance written permission of the course instructor, and if applicable, any students whose voice or image is included in the material (e.g., recordings).

4. Any student violating the conditions described above may face academic disciplinary sanctions, including receiving a penalty grade in the course.

### **Applicable policies, syllabus statements, and resources for students:**

* [Spartan Code of Honor](http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/spartan-code-of-honor-academic-pledge)
* [Mental Health](https://caps.msu.edu/faculty-staff/Syllabus-Language.html)
* [Religious Observance Policy](https://reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/ReligiousPolicy.aspx)
* [Student Athletes](https://ombud.msu.edu/classroom-policies/#absence-athletics)

### **Commit to Integrity: Academic Honesty**

Article 2.III.B.2 of the [Academic Rights and Responsibilities](http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities-at-michigan-state-university/article-2-academic-rights-and-responsibilities) states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the [insert name of unit offering course] adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in [General Student Regulations](http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/regulations/general-student-regulations) 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the [all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations](https://ombud.msu.edu/academic-integrity/). See [Spartan Life Online](http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/) (splife.studentlife.msu.edu) and/or the [MSU Web site](http://www.msu.edu/) (msu.edu) for more.

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also the [Academic Integrity webpage](https://ombud.msu.edu/academic-integrity/).)

### **Limits to Confidentiality**

Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of MSU community members and others. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices (including the Department of Police and Public Safety) if you share it with me:

* Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,
* Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and
* Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center.

### **Inform Your Instructor of Any Accommodations Needed**

[From the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities](https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/get-started/faculty-departmental-resources/model-statements-disability-inclusion) (RCPD): Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at [rcpd.msu.edu](https://rcpd.msu.edu). Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible.

### **Disruptive Behavior**

Article 2.III.B.4 of [Student Rights and Responsibilities](http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities-at-michigan-state-university/article-2-academic-rights-and-responsibilities) for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.III.B.10 states that "The student and the faculty share the responsibility for maintaining professional relationships based on mutual trust and civility." [General Student Regulation 5.02](http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/regulations/general-student-regulations) states: "No student shall . . . obstruct, disrupt, or interfere with the functions, services, or directives of the University, its offices, or its employees (e.g., classes, social, cultural, and athletic events, computing services, registration, housing and food services, governance meetings, and hearings).” Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Judicial Affairs office.

**AI Tools**

The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, etc.) is not permitted in this class; therefore, any use of AI tools for work in this class may be considered a violation of Michigan State University’s policy on academic integrity, the Spartan Code of Honor Academic Pledge and Student Rights and Responsibilities, since the work is not your own. The use of unauthorized AI tools will result in a zero on the assignment.

### **Technical Assistance**

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem you can:

* Visit the [Distance Learning Services Support Site](https://www.lib.msu.edu/dls/) (lib.msu.edu/dls)
* Visit the [Desire2Learn Help Site](http://help.d2l.msu.edu/) (help.d2l.msu.edu)
* Or call Distance Learning Services: (800) 500-1554 or (517) 355-2345
* To learn D2L use, login with your MSU NetID and password at [d2l.msu.edu](https://d2l.msu.edu/d2l/home), select “Self Registration” from the menu bar, register for and complete the course named “Students - Getting Started with D2L.” Also be aware of the “Help” option on the D2L Home page menu.

### **Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD)**

* To make an appointment with a specialist, contact: (517) 353-9642

Or TTY: (517) 355-1293

* [Web site for RCPD](http://MYProfile.rcpd.msu.edu): MYProfile.rcpd.msu.edu

**Course Schedule**

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| **Dates** | **Day** | **Topic** | **Reading / Assignment** |
| 8/26 | Tues | Intro – History | Ch1 |
| 8/28 | Th | Research | Ch2 |
| 9/2 | Tues | Models and Theories | Ch3 |
| 9/4 | Th | Clinical Assessment Diagnosis and Treatment | Ch4 |
| 9/9 | Tues | Cont. |  |
| 9/11 | Th | **Quiz 1** |  |
| 9/16 | Tues | Anxiety Related Disorders | Ch5 |
| 9/18 | Th | Disorders of Trauma | Ch6 |
| 9/23 | Tues | Depressive Disorders | Ch7 |
| 9/25 | Th | Bipolar Disorder | Ch7 |
| 9/30 | Tues | Suicide | Ch8 |
| 10/2 | Th | **Quiz 2** |  |
| 10/7 | Tues | Somatic Disorders | Ch9 |
| 10/9 | Th | Eating Disorders | Ch10 |
| 10/14 | Tues | Substance Use Disorders | Ch11 |
| 10/16 | Th | Sexual Disorders | Ch12 |
| 10/21 | Tues | **FALL BREAK – NO CLASS** |  |
| 10/23 | Th | **Quiz 3** |  |
| 10/28 | Tues | Schizophrenia and other Psychotic Disorders | Ch13 |
| 10/30 | Th | Cont. |  |
| 11/4 | Tues | Treatment | Ch14 |
| 11/6 | Th | Personality Disorders | Ch 15 |
| 11/11 | Tues | Cont. |  |
| 11/13 | Th | **Quiz 4** |  |
| 11/18 | Tues | Disorders of Childhood | Ch16 |
| 11/20 | Th | Disorders of Aging– **Interview Paper Due** | Ch 17 |
| 11/25 | Tues | Law and Mental Health | Ch 18 |
| 11/27 | **THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS** | | |
| 12/2 | Tues | Catch up |  |
| 12/4 | Th | Exam Review |  |

Final Exam: Tuesday (12/9) 7:45am - 9:45am in Psychology 118