Psychology 954:  
Cognitive-Behavioral Theory, Research & Intervention

Time & Location: Tuesdays, 10:20am — 1:10pm in PSY 153  
Professor: Jason Moser, Ph.D.  
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Phone: (517) 355-2159  
Email: jmoser@msu.edu **(definitely the best way to reach me)**  
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, cognitive and emotional techniques for a range of psychopathology in adulthood. The role of cognitive-behavioral practice in public health will also be discussed. Although this course will in no way provide a comprehensive review of the CBT tradition, it is intended to provide a solid foundation from which students can further explore CBT in subsequent supervised practica. A central emphasis of the course is learning how to think like a cognitive-behavioral therapist — this will provide a foundation for flexible applications of CBTs in your practice.

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, including historical perspectives;
2. Knowledge of empirical methods and findings regarding effective CBT interventions for common forms of psychopathology in adults;
3. Understanding of culturally responsive CBT research and practice;
4. Ability to conceptualize cases from a CBT framework;
5. Beginning ability to apply specific CBT techniques;
6. Appreciation for the role of CBT in healthcare;
7. Ability to distill common principles across techniques and treatment packages;
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
psychophysiologist 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. I am also constantly humbled by what we do not know about working with specific people — our theories and empirical findings, for the most part, collapse across race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class and disability status to suggest an implicit generalizability. Given we know that various social-cognitive, cultural and environmental factors influence the nature, expression and impact of psychopathology, I strive to achieve a culturally responsive approach to teaching CBT theory, research and intervention. 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. I have also included other recommended readings because I see this syllabus as a resource that will hopefully be useful to you going forward in your career.

**Format:** Class meetings will focus on group discussions of topics/readings. To facilitate discussions, students will be expected to complete “Personal Target Worksheets” included in the required Tolin text. These worksheets appear at the end of each chapter and take you through the phases of CBT by having you identify, conceptualize and intervene on a personal “problem” (e.g., stress, screen time, exercise, diet) you’d like to change. Please submit a copy of your completed worksheet via D2L by 9pm the Sunday before each class for which there is a Tolin chapter assigned (see Schedule below). These will provide a great way for you to understand and practice CBT principles and techniques first-hand.

Primarily, this course will be taught on Tuesdays by me. There will also be one co-teaching session with Alytia Levendosky held early in the semester during our class period (Jan. 29). Finally, towards the end of the semester, Alytia and I will co-lead one session during her class (April 18) in which an advanced clinical psychology Ph. D. student will give a case presentation that the class will then discuss from CBT and psychodynamic perspectives.

**Evaluation:** Grades will be based on scores on class participation, worksheets, a case formulation and treatment plan paper and take-home final exam.

I expect that you will participate in class by responding to my questions, initiating comments and questions, and responding to your classmates’ comments and questions.
You will also be expected to volunteer to participate in role plays and other related activities.

Personal Target Worksheets are described above.

You will be asked to write a formulation and treatment plan for a case that I will provide in class. You will follow the model presented in Tolin and develop your own conceptualization and treatment plan. Further details and an example will be provided in class. The formulation and treatment plan should be approximately 10 pages, double-spaced. It is due April 16 by 10am.

The take-home final exam will be distributed on April 23. Questions will be designed to promote the integration of course material and application of principles to cases. The exam should be approximately 10 pages, double-spaced. It is due at the end of finals week on May 3 at 5pm.

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

- **Class participation = 30%**
- **Worksheets = 20%**
- **Case Formulation & Treatment Plan = 25%**
- **Take-home final exam = 25%**

**Academic Dishonesty:** Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the Psychology Department adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide at http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/).

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including exams, without assistance from any source. Students who violate MSU rules are likely to receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course.

**Limits to confidentiality:** Assignments 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.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** 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. 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 may not be honored.

**Required Texts:**


**Topics and Readings:**

*Introduction to cognitive-behavioral theory and therapy*


Tolin Preface & ch. 1

Starting to do CBT & The CBT approach to understanding psychological problems

Tolin pages 109-116; ch. 7; chs. 2-4

Treatment Outcome Research I: The Great Debate (Joint class with Alytia Levendosky)


Read as a group of papers:


Read as a group of papers:


Leichsenring, F., Abbass, A., Hilsenroth, M. J., Luyten, P., Munder, T., Rabung, S., &

For further reading if interested (not required):


*Treatment Outcome Research II: Mechanisms of Change & Public Health*


*CBT Assessment & Conceptualization*

Tolin chs. 5 & 6


**CBT in Cultural Minority Populations**


**Behavior-level interventions**


**Cognitive-level interventions**


Emotional-level interventions & Unified treatments

Tolin chs. 18 & 19


Putting it all together

Tolin chs. 20-22

Supervision


**Schedule**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan-08</td>
<td><em>Introductions &amp; Syllabus Review</em></td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan-15</td>
<td><em>Introduction to cognitive behavioral theory and therapy</em></td>
<td>All readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan-22</td>
<td><em>Starting to do CBT &amp; The CBT approach to understanding psychological problems</em></td>
<td>All readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan-29</td>
<td><strong>Joint class with Alytia</strong> <em>(Treatment Research I)</em></td>
<td>All readings</td>
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<td>Feb-05</td>
<td><em>Treatment Research II</em></td>
<td>All readings</td>
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<td>Feb-12</td>
<td><em>CBT Assessment &amp; Conceptualization</em></td>
<td>All readings</td>
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<td>Feb-19</td>
<td><em>CBT in cultural minority populations</em></td>
<td>Organista — McDonald</td>
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<td>Feb-26</td>
<td><em>CBT in cultural minority populations</em></td>
<td>Friedman — Hall</td>
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<td>Mar-05</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break No Class</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spring Break No Class</strong></td>
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<td>Mar-12</td>
<td><em>Behavior-level interventions</em></td>
<td>Foa — Tolin</td>
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<td>Mar-19</td>
<td><em>Behavior-level interventions</em></td>
<td>Craske — Benson-Florez</td>
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<td>Mar-26</td>
<td><em>Cognitive-level interventions</em></td>
<td>Tolin chs. 13-17</td>
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<td>Apr-02</td>
<td><em>Cognitive-level interventions</em></td>
<td>Strunk — Fuchs</td>
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<td>Apr-09</td>
<td><em>Emotion-level interventions &amp; Unified treatments</em></td>
<td>All reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr-16</td>
<td><strong>Putting it all together</strong></td>
<td>All readings; Case Formulation &amp; Treatment Plan due by 10am</td>
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<td>Apr-18</td>
<td><strong>Joint class with Alytia</strong></td>
<td>Case presentation for 1.5 hours at beginning of class</td>
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<td>Apr-23</td>
<td><em>Supervision</em></td>
<td>All readings; Take-Home Exam Distributed</td>
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<td>May-03</td>
<td><strong>Finals Week</strong></td>
<td>Take-Home Exam Due By 5PM</td>
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**CBT and other evidence-based therapy resources:**


**Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies**
If you are interested in learning more about, and getting additional training in, cognitive behavioral therapies, consider joining this organization. It is a very student friendly organization and the conference is a great mix of clinically oriented workshops (presented by many of the founders of the therapies we will be learning about this semester) and scientific presentations. Information on student membership in ABCT is available on the organization’s website, [www.abct.org](http://www.abct.org).

**Society for a Science of Clinical Psychology (SSCP) Section III of Div 12 of APA**
It is easy and inexpensive to join this group and their listserv is a wonderful resource for helping psychologists (and trainees) to stay aware of important issues in this area. The website is [http://www.sscpweb.org](http://www.sscpweb.org)

You can also find a list of evidence-based practices, as well as resources for many of these treatments (which are continually being updated) at [http://www.div12.org/psychological-treatments/](http://www.div12.org/psychological-treatments/)

[http://www.cochrane.org/cochrane-reviews](http://www.cochrane.org/cochrane-reviews)
Cochrane Reviews are systematic reviews of primary research in human health care and health policy, and are internationally recognized as the highest standard in evidence-based health care.

In order to promote the dissemination of evidence based practice, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration keeps a National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP). NREPP is a searchable online registry of mental health and substance abuse interventions that have been reviewed and rated by independent reviewers.

This website is sponsored by the National Institute of Health and was developed to promote the adoption and dissemination of empirically-supported psychosocial treatment approaches among mental health practitioners.

**Evidence-based Practice Page (www.ebbp.org)**
This project is aimed at bridging the gap between behavioral health research and practice. There are a number of trainings and resources available on this page.
Resources for finding empirically supported treatments:
- NIH site on evidence-based behavioral practice (EBBP) [http://www.ebbp.org/](http://www.ebbp.org/)
- APA Division 12 Task Force on EST [http://www.psychology.sunysb.edu/eklonsky-division12/](http://www.psychology.sunysb.edu/eklonsky-division12/)