

BEHV 3002 ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

Credit Points 10

Legacy Code 101681

Coordinator Kim Dilati ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Kim Dilati/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Kim%20Dilati/))

Description This subject is focused on Psychopathology, which is the study of behaviours that cause distress or functional impairment or are judged as deviant within the individual's culture. This subject examines definitions of psychopathology, ways of assessing and diagnosing, theories of the causation of psychopathology and treatments for recognised psychological disorders. Diagnostic criteria from the latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders are applied to illustrative cases with emphasis on contemporary Australian research and theory. The development of integrated models of psychopathology, including biological, psychological and social factors, is a significant theme of the subject.

School Psychology

Discipline Behavioural Science

Student Contribution Band HECS Band 4 10cp

Check your fees via the Fees (https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/fees/) page.

Level Undergraduate Level 3 subject

Pre-requisite(s) Students in programs 4656 and 6000 must pass BEHV 1014 and HLTH 1012
Students in programs other than 4656 and 6000 must pass BEHV 1016 and BEHV 1018

Incompatible Subjects BEHV 3003 - Abnormal Psychology (online)

Restrictions

Note that only students enrolled at WSU Online may register in the WSU Online subjects offered at that location.

Assumed Knowledge

A basic understanding of core concepts of personality, social and developmental psychology.

Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this subject, students will be able to:

1. Distinguish features of contemporary theories of psychopathology within the major paradigms, and examine relationships between causal theory, diagnostic criteria and approaches to treatment (APAC Graduate Attribute 1.1, 1.1iii, 1.1iv, 1.1viii, 1.3).
2. Analyse theories of psychopathology in cultural contexts, including from Indigenous Australian perspectives (APAC GA 1.1iii, 1.1xi, 1.2, 1.4).
3. Apply diagnostic criteria to case material and research methodologies to discern the aetiology, course, and treatment of psychological disorders (APAC GA 1.1 1.1iii, 1.1iv, 1.1viii, 1.1xii, 1.3).
4. Critically evaluate empirical reports through literature searches and reviews (APAC GA 1.1xii, 1.3, 1.6).

5. Communicate findings from research, including professional perspectives, in an effective manner (APAC GA, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6).

Subject Content

1. Definitions, history and scope of psychopathology; psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioural, existential-humanistic and systems approaches to causation and treatment of abnormality;
2. Goals and ethics of counselling/therapy; the clinical assessment interview; diagnostic classification systems; a detailed analysis of DSM-5;
3. The impact of culture, gender and developmental stage on diagnosis and treatment; a bio-psycho-social model;
4. Stress, trauma and coping: vulnerability and reactions to stress across the lifespan; psychological factors affecting physical health, psychophysiological and somatic symptom disorders; adjustment disorders; dissociative disorders;
5. Anxiety disorders: diagnosis, aetiology and treatment from an integrated bio-psycho-social perspective;
6. Developmental and neurocognitive disorders: with emphasis on pervasive developmental disorders in childhood and neurocognitive disorders of adulthood;
7. Eating disorders;
8. Substance use disorders;
9. Psychotic disorders;
10. Mood disorders: major depressive disorder; bipolar disorder; the depression-suicide link;
11. Sexual variations and disorders: the continuum of human sexuality and problems of identifying and treating sexual disorders;
12. Personality disorders: definitional problems and classification; borderline personality disorder.

Assessment

The following table summarises the standard assessment tasks for this subject. Please note this is a guide only. Assessment tasks are regularly updated, where there is a difference your Learning Guide takes precedence.

Type	Length	Percent	Threshold	Individual/ Group Task	Mandatory
Literature Review	1,500 words	30	N	Individual	N
Reflection	1,500 words (3x500 word reflection tasks)	30	N	Individual	N
Final Exam	1.5 hours	30	N	Individual	N
Quiz	10	10	N	Individual	N

WSU Online Trimesters

The following table summarises the standard assessment tasks for this subject. Please note this is a guide only. Assessment tasks are regularly updated, where there is a difference your Learning Guide takes precedence.

Type	Length	Percent	Threshold	Individual/ Group Task	Mandatory
Literature Review	1,500 words	40	N	Individual	N
Reflection	1,500 words (3x500 word reflection tasks)	30	N	Individual	N
Final Exam	1.5 hours	30	N	Individual	N

Sydney City Campus

The following table summarises the standard assessment tasks for this subject. Please note this is a guide only. Assessment tasks are regularly updated, where there is a difference your Learning Guide takes precedence.

Type	Length	Percent	Threshold	Individual/ Group Task	Mandatory
Literature Review	1,500 words	30	N	Individual	N
Reflection	1,500 words (3x500 word reflection tasks)	30	N	Individual	N
Final Exam	1.5 hours	30	N	Individual	N
Quiz	10	10	N	Individual	N

Prescribed Texts

- There is no hardcopy prescribed text for this subject. However, an electronic ebook is available to purchase at a reduced rate to students, details are on the vUWS site. This ebook is adapted from Rieger, E. (2017). Abnormal psychology: leading researcher perspectives (4th ed.). North Ryde, Australia: McGraw-Hill education.

Teaching Periods

WSU Online TRI-2 (2025)

Wsu Online

Online

Subject Contact Rosalind Priestman ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Rosalind Priestman/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Rosalind%20Priestman/))

View timetable (https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=BEHV3002_25-OT2_OW_2#subjects)

Sydney City Campus - Term 2 (2025)

Sydney City

On-site

Subject Contact Liz Attaya ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Liz Attaya/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Liz%20Attaya/))

View timetable (https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=BEHV3002_25-SC2_SC_1#subjects)

Spring (2025)

Bankstown City

On-site

Subject Contact Craig Gonsalvez ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Craig Gonsalvez/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Craig%20Gonsalvez/))

View timetable (https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=BEHV3002_25-SPR_BK_1#subjects)

Penrith (Kingswood)

On-site

Subject Contact Craig Gonsalvez ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Craig Gonsalvez/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Craig%20Gonsalvez/))

View timetable (https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=BEHV3002_25-SPR_KW_1#subjects)

Parramatta - Victoria Rd

On-site

Subject Contact Craig Gonsalvez ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Craig Gonsalvez/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Craig%20Gonsalvez/))

View timetable (https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=BEHV3002_25-SPR_PS_1#subjects)