

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**Graduate School of Education and Human Development**

**Diagnosis and Treatment Planning**  
**for Mental Health Professionals (EDCD 656-001)**

**Instructor:** Emily Massey, Psy.D.

**Email:** [ecundiff@me.com](mailto:ecundiff@me.com) (best means of contact)

**Phone:** 410-746-5390 (for urgent needs only)

**Office Hours:** by appointment

\*Email is best way to contact professor. Use phone only for urgent needs.

**Semester:** Spring 2010

**Times:** Thursdays 7:20-10pm

**Location:** CRN 10956

**Credit Hrs:** 3

**Prerequisites:**

Admission to CNDV Program

EDCD 603

**Course Description:**

This course involves the study of both normal and abnormal behavior, with special emphasis upon the identification and assessment of mental disorders included in the Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR). Instruction will be devoted to the study of how the DSM-IV-TR mental disorders compare to and contrast with normal behavior, the criteria for mental disorders, and standard diagnostic and assessment procedures. Descriptions of mental disorders as well as of normal, developmental behavior of both children and adults will be included in the course. The course includes an explicit focus on ways in which diagnostic practices may be biased due to cultural variables, so that the counselor-in-training can avoid related errors in judgment that would interfere with effective treatment planning. The course is designed to meet the psychopathology requirement for licensure as a Professional Counselor in the state of Virginia.

A variety of instructional approaches will be used, including:

1. Lecture – although there will be lecturing in class, it is expected that all students will have read the assignments prior to each class meeting, and thus major portions of class time will be devoted to class demonstrations of assessment procedures, case studies, class discussion, role-playing exercises, audio-visual materials, etc.
2. Audio-Visual – film media will be used to present examples of the characteristics of various mental disorders and assessment techniques. Although reading about mental disorders and various assessment techniques is important, actually seeing them is essential to using and understanding them in practice.
3. Case Studies – there will also be emphasis upon the use of case studies to acquire and perfect skills in the diagnosis of the various mental disorders. Some of the case studies will be considered in small discussion groups, while others will be completed individually as out-of-class assignments, and then discussed in class. Both print and videotaped case studies will be used.

### **Course Objectives:**

The general objective of this course is to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to differentiate abnormal from normal behavior in both children and adults. More specifically, upon the completion of this course, students will have:

1. Knowledge of the characteristics of both normal, developmental problems and abnormal behavior for children and adults.
2. A working knowledge of potential influences of cultural variables (differentially affecting client and clinician) in the diagnosis of mental illness.
3. Knowledge of the criteria necessary for the diagnosis of the various mental disorders included in the DSM-IV-TR.
4. Knowledge of and skills in the multi-axial diagnosis of mental disorders, including appropriate use of psychological testing, mental status examinations, structured intake interview procedures, and clinical interviewing.
5. Experience conducting comprehensive initial clinical interviews.
6. Knowledge of standard treatment approaches for the major mental disorders and developmental concerns of children and adults.
7. Knowledge of procedures for writing treatment plans and completing other documentation in work with clients. Such treatment plans include general objectives, measurable goals, and relevant cultural considerations.
8. The ability to effectively communicate (orally and in written form) and coordinate a client's care with multiple other providers.
9. Knowledge of social, ethical, and legal implications in using the DSM-IV-TR.

### **Relationship to Professional & Program Related Goals:**

The syllabi of all courses taught at the university are designed to meet the specifications of a specialty professional association. The professional association used for the development of this course is the American Counseling Association (ACA). The Code of Ethics and Standards of Care for ACA delineates ethical practice and the following section demonstrates the basis for this course.

#### *Section E. Evaluation, Assessment, and Interpretation*

##### *E.5. Proper Diagnosis of Mental Disorder*

- a. Proper Diagnosis: Counselors take special care to provide proper diagnosis of mental disorders. Assessment techniques (including personal interviews) used to determine client care (i.e. - locus of treatment, type of treatment, or recommended follow-up) are carefully selected and appropriately used (See A.3.a. and C.5.c).*
- b. Cultural Sensitivity. Counselors recognize that culture affects the manner in which clients' problems are defined. Clients' socioeconomic and cultural experiences are considered when diagnosing mental disorders.*

### **Required Texts:**

American Psychiatric Association. (2004). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., text revision). Washington, DC: Author.

Castillo, Richard J. (1997). *Culture and mental illness: A client-centered approach*. Boston, MA: Brooks/Cole.

Morrison, J. (2008). *The first interview*. New York, NY: Guilford.

Seligman, Linda. (2004). *Diagnosis and treatment planning in counseling*. New York, NY: Springer.

### **Recommended Texts:**

Jongsma, A. E. & Peterson, L. M. (2006). *The complete psychotherapy treatment planner*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Kaplan, H.I., & Sadock, B.J. (2007). *Synopsis of psychiatry: Behavioral sciences/clinical psychiatry* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Spitzer, R. L., Gibbon, M., Skodol, A.E., Williams, J.B.W., & First, M.B. (2002). *DSM-IV-TR casebook: A learning companion to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed, Text Revision*. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric.

### **Assignments:**

Students are expected to attend every session for which the course is scheduled, unless otherwise agreed to in advance by professor and student. Punctuality and attendance are important factors in achievement in this class. Frequent tardiness and/or more than two absences may result in failure of the class.

Students are expected to be critical thinkers and readers. Assigned materials are to be read using the skills of analysis, synthesis, and application.

Written assignments will be graded not only in terms of content and accuracy, but also writing ability. Writing style must reflect correct grammar and spelling, proper word usage and vocabulary, accurate sentence structure and syntax, clarity, and fully developed ideas and concepts. All papers must be written using A.P.A. style.

The following assignments are designed to guide students in accomplishing the course objectives. Late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day not submitted. Students may submit assignments via e-mail if they are unable to attend class on the due date.

- 1 Class Participation:** Students are expected to attend each class on time and remain for the duration of class. Students who are absent (excused and/or unexcused) for two or more classes will receive a reduction in letter grade. Three or more absences (excused or unexcused) will result in a failing grade or request to withdraw from the course. A make-up assignment will be given for each absence. You will also be graded on regular participation in class discussions, readings, and activities.

- 2 **Case Study:** Each student will view a movie/television series and analyze one of the characters. Case study will consist of a case conceptualization, diagnosis, and treatment plan. Be sure to note what other information is needed to establish a more solid diagnosis as well as what questions a clinician should ask to gather this information. The paper should be 5-7 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font, title page/section not included in page count).

Suggestions for Television Shows:

Big Love  
Boston Legal  
Desperate Housewives  
Grey's Anatomy  
House, M.D.  
In Treatment (Seasons 2 or 3 Only)  
Seinfeld  
The Office

Suggestions for Movies:

A Beautiful Mind  
Forrest Gump  
Girl, Interrupted  
Monster  
Slumdog Millionaire  
The Wrestler

- 3 **“Social Justice” Group Presentation:** Along with a group of 5-6 students, deliver a brief (10 min) presentation and lead a class discussion on a topic pertinent to *“diagnosis, mental health, and social justice.”* Please provide relevant handouts for the class. The use of multi-media and innovative presentation styles is also encouraged. Each group will need to submit for approval a brief outline of its plans for the presentation. I will then provide suggestions to further shape your topic. These **proposals are due by 2/4**, but topics and presentation dates are approved on a “first come, first serve” basis.

Possible topics include:

- Poverty and Mental Health
- Managed Care, Ethics and Diagnosis
- Client advocacy and Mental Health;
- Public Policy and Mental Health.

- 4 **“Definition of Mental Health” Paper:** This paper is designed to encourage you to reflect upon your beliefs about what factors or personal characteristics constitute mental health. Because this is somewhat of an opinion paper, it may be written from a first-person perspective. The paper should be 5-7 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font, title page/section and reference page not included in page count) and should include all of the following:

- A detailed description of the various components in your definition of mental health and how you have constructed that definition. You are encouraged to utilize knowledge gained from academic training, on-the-job experience as a counselor, and/or personal intuition.
- The influence of at least one of your reference group identities (an ADDRESSING characteristic) upon your conception of mental health

- How you would utilize your definition of mental health in conducting or structuring a clinical interview, establishing a diagnosis, treatment planning, and developing working relationship with clients

**5 Midterm & Final Exams:** The midterm and final exam will consist of multiple choice and brief essay questions. The exams will draw from class lectures and discussions as well assigned readings.

**Student Evaluation:**

Class Participation.....	(10%)
Case Study.....	(20%)
Group Presentation.....	(10%)
Paper.....	(15%)
Midterm Exam.....	(20%)
Final Exam.....	(25%)

**Grading**

In accordance with the George Mason University Grading Policy, the following grades may be achieved:

- A 96-100 points
- A- 91-95 points
- B+ 87-90 points
- B 83-86 points
- B- 80-82 points
- C 76-79 points
- F 75 and below

The grade for any individual assignment turned in late will be reduced one letter grade per day it is late. Assignments are due *at the beginning* of the class session.

**HONOR CODE**

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of George Mason University and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the members of George Mason University, have set forth the following code of honor. Any individual who is caught in the act of cheating, attempting to cheat, plagiarizing, or stealing will be brought forth before a council of their peers. In the event that the individual is found guilty, he or she will be punished accordingly. For further information, please refer to the University Catalog or Website at [www.gmu.edu](http://www.gmu.edu).

**Tentative Course Schedule:**

January 21

- Introductions
- Review Syllabus
- Definitions of Mental Illness
- Purpose of Diagnosis

January 28

- Race and Culture as Psychological Constructs

Political and Professional Aspects of Diagnosis

History of the DSM-IV-TR

Multiaxial Diagnosis

**Readings Due:** DSM pp. 27-38, Seligman, Ch 3; Castillo, Ch 1 & 2

February 4

Basic Assessment/Interviewing Techniques

Culturally-Sensitive Diagnosis

Substance-Related Disorders

Mental Disorders Due to Medical Conditions

**Readings Due:** DSM pp. 191-296, & 181-190; Castillo, Ch 4

February 11

Axis I:

Mood Disorders

Anxiety Disorders

Adjustment Disorders

**Readings Due:** DSM pp. 345-428, 429-484, 679-684; Castillo, Ch 10 & 12

February 18

Axis I:

Psychotic Disorders

Dissociative Disorders

**Readings Due:** DSM pp. 297-344, 519-534; Castillo, Ch 13

February 25

Axis I:

Somatoform & Factitious Disorders

Eating Disorders

Impulse Control Disorders

**Readings Due:** DSM pp. 485-518, 583-596, 663-678

March 4

Axis I:

Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders

Sleep Disorders

Cognitive Disorders

**Readings Due:** DSM pp. 535-582, 597-662, 135-180; Castillo, Ch 7

(No Class March 11)

March 11

**\*\*Midterm Exam\*\***

March 18

Axis II:

History & Theory of Personality Disorders

Personality Disorders

**Readings Due:** DSM pp. 685-728; Castillo, Ch 3 & 6

March 25

Axes I & II:

Childhood Disorders, Mental Retardation, & Pervasive Developmental Disorders

Axis III

Axis IV

V Codes

**Group Presentation 1**

**Readings Due:** DSM pp. 39-134, 731-744

April 1

The Initial Interview

**Group Presentation 2**

**Readings Due:** Morrison, Ch 1-17, Appendices A & C

April 8

Assessment of Psychopathology

Documentation/Treatment Plans

**Group Presentation 3**

**Readings Due:** Morrison Ch, 18-20, Appendices B & C; DSM 745-758; Seligman, Ch 4 & 5

April 15

Treatment Planning – Axis I Disorders

**Group Presentation 4**

**\*Case Study Due\***

**Readings Due:** Seligman, Ch 6

April 22

Treatment Planning – Axis I Disorders (cont'd)

Treatment Planning – Personality Disorders

**Group Presentation 5**

**Readings Due:** Seligman, Ch 11

April 29

Treatment Planning – Personality Disorders (cont'd)

Strengths-Based Assessment & Treatment Planning

**\*Paper Due\***

**Readings Due:** Castillo, Ch 15

May 6

**\*\*Final Exam\*\***