

Introduction |

This is the introductory course in abnormal psychology. As such, it is the 'gateway' to the discipline of abnormal psychology. In this course you are introduced to the spectrum of abnormal psychology and are given the opportunity to sample both the wide variety of topics in psychopathology studied by psychologists as well as the ways in which psychologists conduct research in this field. From this course you will gain an understanding of what modern-day abnormal psychology is all about as well as some insight into your own and others' behavior.

As a result of taking this course, you will be prepared to venture further into the field of psychopathology. Because this course covers the breadth of abnormal psychology, you should be able to take any further course in psychopathology and be well grounded in the basic concepts and issues of the topics covered by those courses. However, even if this is the only course in abnormal psychology that you take, you will still find that as a result of this course, you will have a basic understanding of a field of knowledge that will be useful throughout the rest of your life.

The course itself is divided into seventeen lessons, corresponding to the seventeen chapters in your textbook. The course will basically require that you (1) read the text, (2) answer the assigned questions, (3) test your learning by taking the self-test on the chapter in the study guide, (4) after Lesson 9, take the midterm examination (which covers the first nine chapters), and (5) after Lesson 17, take the final examination (which covers the last eight chapters).

About Your Instructor | James F. Calhoun, Ph.D.

Dr. Calhoun earned bachelor's degrees in psychology and theology, and went on to earn the Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Illinois, Urbana, in 1969. He taught for seven years at the State University of New York at Stony Brook before becoming a professor of clinical psychology at the University of Georgia, a post he held until his retirement in 2005. He has instructed distance-learning courses for IDL for most of his three decades in Athens and still maintains a small private practice.

Required materials |

- Butcher, James N., Mineka, Susan, Hooley, Jill M. *Abnormal Psychology (14th ed.)*. Allyn & Bacon, 2010.
- Butcher, James N., Mineka, Susan, Hooley, Jill M. *Study Guide for Abnormal Psychology (14th ed.)*. Allyn & Bacon, 2010.

Preparing Written Assignments |

Your answers for the Written Assignments should be concise but thorough. Read the question carefully to be certain that you understand what is required. Try to extract the important points relevant to the question. In some cases, the questions will simply require that you organize and present these points, whereas in other instances you will be asked to go beyond the statement of facts by illustrating their implications or drawing conclusions from them. Don't hesitate to include your personal point of view,

but back it up with sound reasoning, illustrating how it follows from the facts. As the lesson questions are representative of the important topics in your textbook, the best preparation for the midterm and final examinations will be careful attention to each lesson.

Write carefully, with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. It is important that the answers be written in your own words. This practice helps to assure that you have a grasp of the material. This is essential, since you will have access to neither books nor notes when taking the midterm and final examinations. A good study strategy to avoid too heavy a dependence on the text is to read the assigned portions and then close the book while writing your answers. If you cannot answer a question, review the reading and try again with your textbook closed. Copying from your textbook is, at worst, plagiarism and, at best, a very poor method for learning and retaining material.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria |

Evaluation of your performance on each lesson is designed to provide feedback on your comprehension of the basic principles presented and on your ability to express your understanding of those principles. All of your lesson grades will combine to form half of your course grade; the midterm and final examinations will combine to account for the other half. Preparation for these exams should involve careful review of the text, lessons, and study guide.

The midterm and final examination forms must be received by IDL at least ten days prior to the scheduled date of the examination. Once you have turned in the required lessons and have taken the final examination for your course, you should have your final course grade within thirty days of the examination date.

Be aware that IDL policy requires that you pass the final examination in order to pass the course, regardless of grades earned on lessons or the midterm. You are responsible for knowing and abiding by IDL policies and procedures. See your *Student Handbook* for detailed information.

Concluding Comments |

As the course covers a broad and complex field, certain topics may arise that are of special interest or concern to you. If a personal question arises or if you would like to explore a particular topic in more detail, e-mail me your question. I will be glad to provide replies to problems or suggest supplemental sources of information.