

# **Syllabus**

## **Diagnosis of Mental and Emotional Disorders**

### **CPSY522**

**Instructor:** Dennis Swiercinsky, Ph.D.  
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**Office Hours:** Available by appointment. *Please note: As an adjunct professor, I am typically on campus only during class and briefly before class. However, I am available via email and am happy to make appointments before class.*

**Schedule:** Tuesdays, January 9 through March 13  
5:30 pm – 8:30 pm

#### **Catalogue Course Description**

Introduction to the structure and uses of the DSM-IV and ICD-9 systems for diagnosing mental and emotional disorders. Limits and weaknesses of these approaches—especially with regard to cultural differences—and alternatives to them. How to use these systems effectively in the context of person-centered, psychosocial, and systemic interventions, and in culturally diverse environments. Current knowledge, theory, and issues regarding selected disorders. Use of technology-based research tools to secure and evaluate contemporary knowledge.

**Corequisite:** CPSY 512 or 513 (Counseling Theory)

**Prerequisite:** CPSY 503 (Introduction to Professional Counseling)

**Credit:** 2 semester hours

PLEASE NOTE (Americans with Disabilities Act): Students with specific learning needs and/or disabilities who may need accommodations, who have any medical emergency information the instructor should know of, or who need special arrangements in the event of an evacuation, should inform the instructor as soon as possible, not later than that first week of the term.

#### **Introduction**

This class is designed to help students learn essential concepts, knowledge, procedures, and guidelines necessary for effective and responsible diagnosis of mental, emotional and behavioral disorders in children, adolescents and adults and effective communication (orally and in writing) of diagnostic labels and formulations. The emphasis will be on basic understanding and use of the prevailing diagnostic system, the DSM-IV-TR. Understanding how proper diagnosis plays a constructive role in effective counseling and psychotherapy and building skills in doing so will be emphasized.

Students will be expected to learn how to search the professional literature for critical information about various disorders, how to use this information in diagnosis and prospectively for treatment interventions, and how to effectively communicate information about diagnoses to other clinicians and to family members. Gender and cultural factors affecting disorders, diagnosis and interventions will be included. Discussions will focus on problem solving,

developing skills in using the DSM-IV-TR as a reference, and using the clinical judgment and objective assessment measures needed to use the diagnostic system effectively in evaluation, treatment planning, and communication.

### Learning Objectives

Students completing this course will be able to:

- Understand the intended uses and benefits of the DSM multi-axial system
- Determine appropriate diagnoses on the 5-axis model, using client information and the DSM-IV diagnostic categories and descriptions.
- Describe and explain how DSM-IV diagnoses contribute to good assessment and treatment planning
- Explain and compare the limits/limiting assumptions of the “medical model,” psychosocial models, and the developmental models of human behavior
- Describe, explain, and demonstrate ethically sound uses and limitations of diagnostic judgments, including cultural and gender biases of the diagnostic system
- Develop awareness of the dynamics of diagnostic modifications and changes
- Identify diagnostic categories in the ICD-9/ICD-10 that correspond to selected categories in the DSM-IV system

### Requirements for Credit

1. Regular attendance and active participation in class discussions and workgroups. Since this class is taught substantially as a participatory workshop, active participation is crucial to the learning experience. Missing more than one class will result in an automatic drop of one grade unless appropriate compensatory activities are completed.
2. Analyze four diagnostic vignettes with satisfactory score (total, 60% of grade). You will be given one vignette approximately every other week. After reading the vignette, provide a 5-axis DSM diagnosis and differential diagnosis. Justify your diagnoses based on vignette content and DSM criteria. Considering additional information you might want to obtain (from interviews, documents, tests), formulate possible differential diagnoses. Consider the role/limitation of the medical model and any relevant published research that might modify or enhance your diagnoses. Reports must be printed, not lengthier than three double-spaced pages each. If any documents are references, use strict APA documentation style. (Additional pages allowed for references *only*.) Each report is worth 15% of the course grade.
3. Complete the final exam with satisfactory scores (40% of grade). An open-book, in-class exam will be given on the last day of class, which will include a variety of short answer questions and vignettes.

Course grades	90-100%	A
	80-90%	B
	70-80%	C
	60-70%	D
	<60%	F

### Text Required

American Psychiatric Association (2000). DSM-IV TR. Washington, D.C.

### On-Line Resources

<http://www.dsmivtr.org/>  
<http://www.behavenet.com/capsules/disorders/dsm4tr.htm>  
<http://www.psych.org/research/dor/dsm/index.cfm>  
<http://www.who.int/classifications/apps/icd/icd10online/>  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/otheract/icd9/abtcd10.htm>

### Class Schedule and Assignments

Class	Date	Class Topics and Assignments Due
1	1/9	Introduction to Psychological Disorders DSM-IV Use of the Manual and Classification System DSM Multiaxial Assessment Disorders Usually First Diagnosed in Infancy, Childhood, Adolescence
2	1/16	ICD-10 Diagnostic System Dementia and Mental Disorders Due to a General Medical Condition Anxiety Disorders (complete the in-class vignette) Distribute Vignette #1
3	1/23	Mood Disorders (complete the in-class vignette) Personality Disorders (complete the in-class vignette)
4	1/30	Substance-Related Disorders (complete the in-class vignette) <b>Vignette #1 Diagnosis Due</b> Distribute Vignette #2
5	2/6	Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders
6	2/13	Sleep Disorders (complete the in-class vignette) <b>Vignette #2 Diagnosis Due</b> Distribute Vignette #3
7	2/20	Adjustment Disorders (complete the in-class vignette) Other Conditions a Focus of Clinical Attention Factitious Disorders (complete the in-class vignette)
8	2/27	Somatoform Disorders Dissociative Disorders <b>Vignette #3 Diagnosis Due</b> Distribute Vignette #4
9	3/6	Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders (complete the in-class vignette) Eating Disorders and Impulse-Control Disorders
10	3/13	<b>Vignette #4 Diagnosis Due</b> <b>Final Exam</b>