

SS5782: PSYCHOPATHOLOGY AND DIAGNOSIS OF MENTAL DISORDER

Effective Term

Semester B 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Psychopathology and Diagnosis of Mental Disorder

Subject Code

SS - Social and Behavioural Sciences

Course Number

5782

Academic Unit

Social and Behavioural Sciences (SS)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

SS5757 Personality Theories and Assessment

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

SS5803 Psychopathology

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to provide students with a comprehensive and advanced understanding of psychopathology and psychiatric diagnosis. First, common assessment methods including the mental status examination, psychological inventories, and clinical structured interview will be introduced. Second, legal and ethical standards, and etiologies of psychological disorders will be covered. Third, the DSM-5 as a system of classification of psychiatric disorders will be introduced. Fourth, the majority of the course will focus on in-depth discussion of common psychiatric disorders using the DSM system as framework so that students can develop differential diagnosis skills as well as understand appropriate evidence-based treatments of each psychiatric disorder. Finally, cultural factors, theoretical controversies, and professional issues are explored.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Understand the complexity of psychological disorders and to identify the characteristics of major psychiatric disorders with current classification system.	40		x	
2	Conceptualize development of and clinical work with major mental disorders through integration of theoretical models, clinical practice and research findings.	30	x	x	
3	Apply knowledge to identify needs of assessment and appropriate handling in clinical practitioners.	30		x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Concepts and theories that relate to maladaptive behaviour and psychological disorders will be introduced. Students will be guided to apply the theories in order to explain psychopathology.	1, 2, 3	

2	In-class case illustration and discussion	Real-life clinical cases of various mental disorders will be discussed in class to enhance students' understanding of case formulation and assessment.	1, 2, 3	
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Term essay	1, 2, 3	60	- For this assessment task, students could use GenAI to conduct proof-reading and editing of the language. The use of GenAI for this purpose should be declared properly.	Yes
2	Case study	1, 2, 3	40	- For this assessment task, students could use GenAI to conduct proof-reading and editing of the language. The use of GenAI for this purpose should be declared properly.	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Term essay. Each student will be required to write a critical review and discussion on a mental disorder covered in the course (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

The following evaluation criteria will apply: (1) diagnostic criteria (5%); (2) conceptualization based on established theoretical perspective(s) (5%); (3) special concerns from the legal/ethical issues (5%); (4) assessment and treatment issues (10%); (5) current research related to diagnosis and assessment of the disorder (10%); and (6) future trend (5%). [References: 8%; APA format: 4%; Overall writing style: 8%]

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Student demonstrates a deep and thorough knowledge of the selected disorders and provide a critical evaluation on the diagnosis, conceptualization, and issues based on current scientific research and evidences

Good

(B+, B, B-) Student demonstrates an adequate knowledge of the selected disorder and provides a good evaluation on the diagnosis, conceptualization, and issues based on current scientific research and evidences.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Student demonstrates an adequate knowledge of the selected disorder but cannot provide an evaluation on the diagnosis, conceptualization, and issues based on current scientific research and evidences.

Marginal

(D) Student demonstrates minimal knowledge of the selected disorder and cannot provide an evaluation on the diagnosis, conceptualization, and issues based on current scientific research and evidences.

Failure

(F) Student demonstrates inadequate or no knowledge of the selected disorder.

Assessment Task

Case Study. Each student will be required to conduct a clinical analysis of a case provided by the course leader. (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

The following evaluation criteria will apply: (1) Describe the primary symptoms of the case (9%); (2) Discuss possible diagnoses with reasons (10%); (3) Identify special or controversial issues related to the diagnosis and treatment of the case (9%); (4) Explore possible underlying causes (6%) [References (3%); APA format and writing style (3%)]

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Student demonstrates a deep and thorough knowledge on diagnostic criteria and differential diagnoses based on DSM, and provides a critical discussion on the controversial issues related to the diagnosis and treatment of the case.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Student demonstrates an adequate knowledge on diagnostic criteria and differential diagnoses based on DSM, and provides a discussion on the controversial issues related to the diagnosis and treatment of the case.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Student demonstrates an adequate knowledge on diagnostic criteria and differential diagnoses based on DSM, but cannot provide a good discussion on the controversial issues related to the diagnosis and treatment of the case.

Marginal

(D) Student demonstrates minimal knowledge on the diagnostic criteria based on DSM, and provide minimal discussion on possible alternative diagnoses of the case.

Failure

(F) Student demonstrates little or no knowledge on the diagnostic criteria based on DSM, and lack awareness on the possible alternative diagnoses.

Assessment Task

Term essay. Each student will be required to write a critical review and discussion on a mental disorder covered in the course (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

The following evaluation criteria will apply: (1) diagnostic criteria (5%); (2) conceptualization based on established theoretical perspective(s) (5%); (3) special concerns from the legal/ethical issues (5%); (4) assessment and treatment issues (10%); (5) current research related to diagnosis and assessment of the disorder (10%); and (6) future trend (5%). [References: 8%; APA format: 4%; Overall writing style: 8%]

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Student demonstrates a deep and thorough knowledge of the selected disorders and provide a critical evaluation on the diagnosis, conceptualization, and issues based on current scientific research and evidences

Good

(B+, B) Student demonstrates an adequate knowledge of the selected disorder and provides a good evaluation on the diagnosis, conceptualization, and issues based on current scientific research and evidences.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Student demonstrates an adequate knowledge of the selected disorder but cannot provide an evaluation on the diagnosis, conceptualization, and issues based on current scientific research and evidences.

Failure

(F) Student demonstrates inadequate or no knowledge of the selected disorder.

Assessment Task

Case Study. Each student will be required to conduct a clinical analysis of a case provided by the course leader. (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

The following evaluation criteria will apply: (1) Describe the primary symptoms of the case (9%); (2) Discuss possible diagnoses with reasons (10%); (3) Identify special or controversial issues related to the diagnosis and treatment of the case (9%); (4) Explore possible underlying causes (6%) [References (3%); APA format and writing style (3%)]

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Student demonstrates a deep and thorough knowledge on diagnostic criteria and differential diagnoses based on DSM, and provides a critical discussion on the controversial issues related to the diagnosis and treatment of the case.

Good

(B+, B) Student demonstrates an adequate knowledge on diagnostic criteria and differential diagnoses based on DSM, and provides a discussion on the controversial issues related to the diagnosis and treatment of the case.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Student demonstrates an adequate knowledge on diagnostic criteria and differential diagnoses based on DSM, but cannot provide a good discussion on the controversial issues related to the diagnosis and treatment of the case.

Failure

(F) Student demonstrates little or no knowledge on the diagnostic criteria based on DSM, and lack awareness on the possible alternative diagnoses.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

psychiatric diagnosis, conceptualization of psychiatric disorders, differential diagnosis, Diagnosis and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), culture issues, abnormal psychology.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Durand, V.M. & Barlow, D.H. (2019) (8thed). Essentials of abnormal psychology. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Fifth Edition. Text Revision. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.
2	Barlow, D.H., Duran, V.M. (2018). Abnormal psychology. An integrative approach. (8th edition). Australia; Belmont, Calif. : Wadsworth Cengage Learning.