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**Psychology 412  
Developmental Psychopathology**

***Instructor***

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***Prerequisites***

The prerequisites for this class are Psychology 304 (Child Development) or Psychology 337 (Intro to Abnormal Psychology I).

***Meetings and Format***

We will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:35 to 9:55 in Stewart Biological Sciences, Rm. S1/4. Course meetings will be primarily lecture format, although there will be demonstrations and video examples of abnormal child behavior and treatment techniques. Material will be presented in class that is not covered in the textbook or readings. In order to do well on the exams, it will be necessary to attend class diligently.

***Course Description and Learning Objectives***

This course provides an overview of the psychological disorders of childhood and adolescence, including their diagnosis, evaluation, and treatment. Emphasis is on empirical research methods and findings, although case examples and general theoretical perspectives are covered as background.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- 1) Broadly define and classify abnormal behavior in youth according to categorical and dimensional assessment systems.
- 2) Discuss developmental trends in the onset, course, and form of psychopathology in children and adolescents.

- 3) Describe the diathesis-stress model of psychopathology and apply this general conceptual framework to the major psychological disorders of children and adolescents.
- 4) Discuss etiological and maintenance models of the major psychological disorders of youth.
- 5) Define “evidence-based treatment” in youth mental health and identify whether specific therapies meet these criteria for scientific support.

### **Required Reading**

The required textbook for this course is Mash, E. J. & Wolfe, D. A. (2009). *Abnormal child psychology* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. ISBN 13: 9780495506270.

There are several published versions of this book. Please make sure you have the correct edition, as there are important differences between the versions. Four copies of the textbook will be put on reserve in the library.

Handouts and review articles may be used on occasion to supplement the text. These materials will be distributed in lecture.

Please read the required textbook chapters and any supplementary materials provided BEFORE the corresponding lecture, as the material presented in the lectures will assume familiarity with the material presented in the readings.

Note that there may be minor changes to the schedule and content of readings in this course, as additional data become available in the youth mental health literature. Any changes that impact exam dates or content will be announced at least one week prior to the administration of the exam.

### **Grading**

The final grade in this course will be based primarily on exam performance. There will be two in-class exams and one final exam. Dates of the in-class exams are provided in the course schedule. The date of the final exam will be set by the university. Your scores on the in-class exams will each be worth 25% of your final grade. Your score on the cumulative final exam will be worth 50%.

Exams will consist of multiple-choice questions. Students will have the opportunity to supplement each of in-class exam grades by completing an optional writing assignment. Each paper will consist of a three page review and methodological critique of one of four research articles assigned by the instructor. These assignments are optional, and designed to help students who wish to improve their grades. Each paper is *due one week* after the date grades for the in-class exams are returned. For students who complete papers, the paper grade will count for 10% of the final grade and the midterm exam will count for 15%.

Students who wish to challenge their grade on the paper assignment may re-submit their paper, with a justification for why they think they should have received a higher grade, to

the instructor. The instructor will re-grade the entire paper. Note that this re-grading may result in a lower grade. Papers will only be accepted for re-grading within one week of the date that they were returned to students.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

*Midterm 1: 25% or Midterm 1: 15% and Optional Paper 1: 10%*

*Midterm 2: 25% or Midterm 2: 15% and Optional Paper 2: 10%*

Final Exam: 50%

*Extra Credit.* In addition, you can receive up to 2% bonus credit (which will be added to your final grade) for participating in psychological research through the Participant Pool. To receive the 2% credit, you must complete 2 hours of participation (2 x 1 hour experiments, 4 x 30 minute experiments). If you prefer, you can submit 2 written reports based on journal articles provided by the administrator of the Participant Pool.

Final letter grades will be assigned according to the following scheme:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	F (Fail)
100-85	84-80	79-75	74-70	69-65	64-60	59-55	54-50	49-0

Rounding of percentages will follow standard scientific conventions to one decimal place. For example, a score of 84.5 would be rounded up to 85 and receive a grade of "A." A score of 84.4 would round to 84 and receive an A-.

In the event of circumstances beyond the instructor's control, the evaluation scheme as set out in this syllabus might require change. Should that happen, we will notify you at least one week in advance of any exam.

### ***Exam Procedures***

*Rescheduling or make-ups.* There will be no make-up exams given. If you miss an in-class exam for a valid and officially documented reason, your final exam will count for 75% of your final grade. You may also write the optional paper associated with that in-class exam, in which case your paper would count for 10% of your grade and the final exam would count for 65%. You must provide Prof. Dirks with written, verifiable documentation of the reason for your absence. Please print your name, your id number, and the name of the doctor at the top of the document. Keep a copy of the note for your own records. Note that having three in-class exams on the same calendar day will be considered a valid excuse for missing an exam. You must provide proof that you have three exams (e.g., the courses' syllabi). If you miss the final exam for a valid and officially documented reason, you must receive permission to apply for a deferred exam. Permission is granted only by the Associate Dean (Student Affairs) of your faculty.

*Review sessions and lecture notes.* Three one-hour review sessions – one with the instructor and one with each of the teaching assistants – will be scheduled prior to each exam. These review sessions will be held in a chat room on WebCT. Date and times will

be announced in class at least one week prior to each exam. Preliminary lecture notes will be posted on WebCT 24 hours prior to each class. Note that these notes may differ slightly from those presented in lecture. Final lecture notes will be posted after each class.

*Use of notes.* No books or notes will be allowed at any time during the exam. You may have a translation dictionary; however, the individual(s) administering the exam reserve(s) the right to inspect your dictionary. Laptops, cell phones, and electronic devices must be stowed and remain off during the exam. If you need to ask a question, please stay in your seat and raise your hand, and I or one of the teaching assistants will come and assist you.

*Plagiarism/cheating.* McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequence of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/hones/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/hones/) for more information). Cases of suspected cheating will be reported to the Disciplinary Officer for your faculty and may result in a score of 0 on the exam, failure of the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university.

*Challenges to exam grades.* Exams can be reviewed during scheduled exam review sessions. If there was a clerical error adding up your exam, please submit a form requesting a correction. Similarly, if you believe that one of the answers is incorrect, you may submit a request to have the question reviewed. You must provide empirical evidence supporting your claim. This evidence may include citation from the textbook or data from an article published in a peer-reviewed journal. Any challenges to exam grades must be made within two weeks of the return of the exam.

### ***Other Issues***

*Audio and video recording.* All lectures will be audio and video recorded and made available on WebCT. Please note that recordings of lectures will be available for streaming only. It is not possible to enable downloading of the lectures due to the inclusion of copyrighted materials in the lecture notes. Please note that there may be occasional technical difficulties that result in recordings of particular lectures not being available. For this reason, please have an alternate plan for obtaining lecture notes if you plan to be absent from class.

*Discussion board on WebCT.* A discussion board for this course will be enabled on WebCT. Please note that this board will be disabled shortly before the final exam. When making comments on the discussion board, please be respectful and courteous towards your classmates, as well as the teaching assistants and the instructor.

*Confidentiality and respect.* This course focuses on the scientific discussion of ethically sensitive material. All data presented on example cases have been collected in accordance with relevant international and federal law, and the ethical principles of the Canadian Psychological Association and/or the American Psychological Association (e.g., by seeking informed consent from research participants, changing or removing personally identifying information, etc.).

When videotapes are shown, participants in those videotapes have consented to their use in educational forums. In this course, we will strive to treat these data with respect in our discussion and analysis. In addition, students are expected to respect each other and the learning environment by refraining from conversation or non-course related activity during class (e.g., checking e-mail). Please turn off all cell phones and electronic communication programs on laptops during class.

*Empiricism.* This class is a scientific examination of youth psychopathology and its treatment. Many individuals will have personal experience (themselves, their friends, or their family) with emotional and behavioral difficulties and the mental health system. This experience may provide the impetus for taking this class, or may (usefully) be the basis of general questions and hypotheses. However, the goal of this course is not the processing of personal experience in a public forum. Please contact Prof. Dirks if you find the course content personally upsetting, or if you would like more information about mental health treatment at McGill or in the community more broadly.

*Written work.* In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. Exams will be multiple-choice; however, optional papers may submit your answers in either English or French.

## Course Schedule

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
<b>1</b>	Jan 4	Overview/ What is abnormal child behavior?	Chapters 1, 2
	Jan 6	Research methods	Chapters 3, 4
<b>2</b>	Jan 11	Research methods	Chapters 3, 4
	Jan 13	ADHD	Chapter 5
<b>3</b>	Jan 18	ADHD	Chapter 5
	Jan 20	Peer victimization	
<b>4</b>	Jan 25	Conduct problems	Chapter 6
	Jan 27	Conduct problems	Chapter 6
<b>5</b>	Feb 1	Conduct problems	Chapter 6
	Feb 3	Substance use	Chapter 12 (pp. 389-394)
<b>6</b>	Feb 8	<i>In-Class Exam 1</i>	
	Feb 10	Anxiety disorders	Chapter 7
<b>7</b>	Feb 15	Anxiety disorders	Chapter 7
	Feb 17	Anxiety disorders	Chapter 7
<b>8</b>	Feb 22	No class (February Break)	
	Feb 24	No class (February Break)	
<b>9</b>	Mar 1	Child maltreatment	Chapter 14
	Mar 3	Depression	Chapter 8, (pp 231-261)
<b>10</b>	Mar 8	Depression	Chapter 8, (pp 231-261)
	Mar 10	Depression	Chapter 8, (pp 231-261)
<b>11</b>	Mar 15	<i>In-Class Exam 2</i>	
	Mar 17	Bipolar disorder	Chapter 8 (262-268)
<b>12</b>	Mar 22	Mental retardation	Chapter 9
	Mar 24	Autism/Pervasive developmental disorders	Chapter 10 (pp. 299-328)
<b>13</b>	Mar 29	Autism/Pervasive developmental disorders	Chapter 10 (pp. 299-328)
	Mar 31	Eating disorders	Chapter 13
<b>14</b>	April 5	Eating disorders	Chapter 13
	April 7	What can we do to improve children's mental health?	