



Course Syllabus

Foundations of Abnormal Psychology

CLP 2140 -WEB / 85043 / FALL 2026

Session A: 8/17/2026 – 12/10/2026

3 Credit Hours, 3 Contact Hours

Prerequisite: PSY2012 General Psychology

Instructor Contact Information

Name: Melanie Deckert Pelton, Ed.D.
Title: Professor
Email: mpelton@gulfcoast.edu
Phone Number: 850-769-1551 ext. 2825

Office Location: Social Sciences, Rm 217
Office Hours: TBA
Response Time: 48 hours

Division Chair

Name: Dr. Bob Saunders
Title: Division Chair
Email: rsaunders2@gulfcoast.edu
Phone Number: (850) 872-3826

Division Administrative Assistant

Name: Ms. Jody Walton, BAS
Title: Division Administrative Assistant
Email: tvlabel@gulfcoast.edu
Phone Number: (850) 872-3825

Course Information

Catalog Description:

Prerequisite: PSY2012 General Psychology

In this course students will concentrate on the comprehensive explanation of psychopathology, including the role of the current DSM in considering symptomatic patterns, causation, and treatment approaches of psychological disorders. Moreover, students will identify and organize several types of psychological disturbances and adaptive behaviors, as well as the various diagnostic categories and criteria, terminology, and therapeutic approaches associated with each type.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify and classify the types of venues and practices in which therapy occurs, including but not limited to types of settings, educational levels of practitioners, and issues involved in different levels of licensure.
2. Describe the current DSM, including the changes involved since its inception, and explain its multiple uses as a diagnostic tool in the mental health field.
3. Describe the current explanations of the causation of, criteria for, and introductory treatment issues and therapies involved in deviant patterns of behavior and psychopathology including, but not limited to, diagnostic criteria and treatment methods applicable to psychological disorders. [List measurable course-level objectives (QM 2.1)]

Course Materials & Resources: The textbook is a Free, Online Resource

Title: *Abnormal Psychology*

Textbook linked here: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-abnormalpsych/>

Publication date: Post 2022

Publisher: Lumen Learning

Licensing: Creative Commons – Attribution

Primary Author: Sonja Ann Miller, et al.

Delivery Method: Online

This course is offered in an asynchronous online format and is delivered through Canvas, the College's learning management system. All course materials, assignments, assessments, grades, and announcements will be accessed through Canvas. Because there are no scheduled class meeting times, students are expected to log in regularly and complete coursework according to the deadlines outlined in the course schedule.

Students are responsible for maintaining reliable access to a computer, internet service, and a webcam. Access to these resources is essential for successful participation in the course and may be required if changes in course delivery occur or if online meetings, proctored activities, or other course-related requirements become necessary.

Student Expectations

In this course, communication and feedback will occur through various channels, including GCSC email, Canvas Inbox, Canvas Announcements, Canvas Discussions, Microsoft Teams or Zoom, assignment feedback, and instructor office hours. Review the statements below so that you understand the expectations for communication.

As a student at Gulf Coast State College, you are expected to:

- **Adhere to Course Guidelines:** Follow the guidelines detailed in the course syllabus, along with any additional instructions provided by the instructor. This includes understanding and complying with the course objectives, grading criteria, and academic policies.
- **Maintain Regular Contact:** Keep in touch with your instructor and classmates via your GCSC email or other designated communication channels. Regular contact helps clarify doubts, share ideas, and foster a collaborative learning environment.
- **Ensure that your GCSC student email account** is activated and that you check it regularly. You can call GCSC ITS Help Desk (850-913-3303) at any time if you have any technical problems or problems with your email account OR eLearning (Canvas).
- **Active Participation (See also Engagement and Participation Policy):** Engage actively in class discussions and submit assignments on time. Your active participation is crucial for your academic success and contributes to a vibrant learning community.

As your instructor, my commitment to you is to:

- **Provide Timely Feedback:** I will review and provide feedback on your assignments and submissions. My goal is to help you understand your strengths and areas for improvement, which is crucial for your academic growth.
- **Respond Via Canvas Inbox:** I understand the importance of clear and timely communication in addressing your questions and concerns. Therefore, I will respond to your emails or messages within 24-48 hours during scheduled workdays, barring illness or emergencies. I also may not check email during holidays or weekends.
- **Post Regular Announcements:** To keep you updated and help you manage your time effectively, I will send out weekly reminders via announcements. These reminders will include important dates, upcoming assignments, and any changes to the course schedule.
- **Maintain Weekly Office Hours:** I will maintain regular weekly office hours, but I can also be available by appointment in person or via Zoom. This is to ensure I'm available for any questions or concerns that may come up.



Figure 1: College cat attending GCSC

Course Schedule (May be revised as needed)

Week	Dates	Topics	Course Activities
1	Aug. 17–23	Chapter 1: Understanding Abnormal Behavior	See Canvas Module
2	Aug. 24–30	Chapter 2: Research and Ethics in Abnormal Psychology	See Canvas Module
3	Aug. 31–Sept. 6	Chapter 3: Etiology and Treatment of Mental Disorders	See Canvas Module
4	Sept. 7–13	Chapter 4: Anxiety Disorders	See Canvas Module
5	Sept. 14–20	Chapter 4: Anxiety Disorders, Continued	See Canvas Module
6	Sept. 21–27	Chapter 5: Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and Stress-Related Disorders	See Canvas Module
7	Sept. 28–Oct. 4	Chapter 6: Somatic Symptom Disorders and Dissociative Disorders	See Canvas Module
8	Oct. 5–11	Chapter 7: Mood Disorders	See Canvas Module
9	Oct. 12–18	Chapter 7: Mood Disorders, Continued	See Canvas Module
10	Oct. 19–25	Chapter 9: Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders	See Canvas Module
11	Oct. 26–Nov. 1	Chapter 11: Schizophrenia	See Canvas Module
12	Nov. 2–8	Chapter 11: Schizophrenia, continued	See Canvas Module
13	Nov. 9–15	Chapter 12: Personality Disorders	See Canvas Module
14	Nov. 16–22	Chapter 12: Personality Disorders, continued	See Canvas Module
15	Nov. 23–29	Chapter 14: Neurocognitive Disorders	See Canvas Module
16	Nov. 30–Dec. 2	Integration, Reflection, and Course Wrap-Up	See Canvas Module



Grading

GCSC Grading Scale

The following grading standards will be used in preparing the end-of-semester grades for this class:

Grade	Range
A	90% to 100%
B	80% to < 90%
C	70% to < 80%
D	60% to < 70%
F	0.01% to < 60%
I	0% to < 0.01%

Calculation of Grades

Coursework (specific content may be revised) will be calculated as follows:

- Chapter Quizzes 10%
- Writing, Journals, & Other Assignments 50%
- Discussion Boards 15%
- Final Exam (cannot be dropped) 25%
- Total 100%

Incomplete Grades

Grades of Incomplete in any Social Sciences course can only be assigned to students who have an emergency arise during the last two weeks of the course.

To receive an Incomplete, students must:

- Submit a **written request** to the instructor before the last face-to-face class meeting. For online courses, a written Incomplete request must be received no later than the week before the Final Exam period begins.
- Have completed no less than 60 percent of the course requirements and be passing the course at the time the request for an Incomplete is submitted.

Important Note: The Incomplete option provides 30 days from the date grades are due to make up any missing work; if work is not submitted during this period, the grade will automatically change to an “F.”

Course Policies

Accessibility Statement

Gulf Coast State College supports an inclusive learning environment for all students. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that hinder your full participation, reasonable accommodations can be arranged. Prior to receiving accommodations, you must register with Student Accessibility Resources. Appropriate academic accommodations will be determined based on the documented needs of the student. Please visit [GCSC's Student Accessibility Resource \(SAR\) webpage](#) to learn more. For information regarding the registration process, email sar@gulfcoast.edu or call 850-747-3243.

Guidelines for Learning Success in an Online Course

Online courses often have a reputation for being easier than traditional face-to-face classes. In reality, successful online learning requires a high degree of self-motivation, personal responsibility, time management, and comfort with technology. While online courses provide flexibility in when and where you complete your work, they also require students to take greater ownership of their learning.

One of the greatest advantages of an online course is the ability to work at times that fit your schedule. However, this flexibility can also become a challenge if you procrastinate or lose track of deadlines. Successful students establish a regular study routine and engage with course materials throughout the week rather than attempting to complete everything at the last minute.

You should expect to spend several hours each week reading, studying, reviewing course materials, and completing assignments. Waiting until the due date to begin your work often leads to unnecessary stress and leaves little time to address questions, technical issues, or unexpected life events that arise.

It is also important to check Canvas, your student email, and course announcements regularly. Course updates, clarifications, reminders, and important information will be communicated through these channels. Staying informed is a critical component of success in an online learning environment.

If you encounter difficulties with course content, technology, time management, or personal circumstances that may affect your performance, contact your instructor as soon as possible. Early communication allows us to discuss potential solutions and available resources. It is often difficult, and sometimes impossible, to address problems effectively after they have already resulted in missed assignments or poor performance.

Active participation is another key component of online learning. In many online courses, Discussion Boards (DBs) serve as the primary substitute for the interactions that occur naturally in face-to-face classrooms. Discussion activities provide an opportunity to exchange ideas, learn from others, and deepen your understanding of course concepts.

Discussion Board postings should go beyond simply expressing agreement with a classmate's comments. High-quality posts demonstrate critical thinking, incorporate relevant concepts and terminology from the course materials, and contribute meaningfully to the conversation. Strong responses build upon the ideas presented by classmates, ask thoughtful questions, provide additional insight, or connect course concepts to real-world situations.

For example, a response such as “I agree. My experience was similar” contributes little to the discussion and will not receive full credit. A stronger response might state, “I can understand why you interpreted the situation that way. Based on Piaget’s theory, adolescents in the formal operational stage develop the ability to think hypothetically and consider multiple possibilities. How might Vygotsky’s emphasis on social interaction and cultural influences also help explain your experience?” This type of response demonstrates understanding of the course material while advancing the discussion.

Finally, remember that learning is an active process. Reading assignments, lectures, videos, discussions, and written assignments are designed to work together to help you master the course content. Students who engage consistently, ask questions when needed, and remain actively involved in the learning process are far more likely to achieve success in the course.

Engagement and Participation Policy

Active engagement is essential to learning in this online course and to the development of a meaningful academic community. We know that regular class attendance and participation in F2F courses are significant factors that help to promote success in college. **Accordingly, attendance in an online CANVAS class is defined as logging in, reading course materials, and submitting completed written assignments, quizzes, or discussion posts.** Simply logging on to a CANVAS class is not sufficient for attendance purposes. All assignments in an online course will have a posted due date.

IMPORTANT! Students MUST log in and complete at least one assignment, for example, but not limited to posting an introduction within the first week of the semester to be “counted” as present in the course. Students NOT adhering to this policy will be reported as a “No Show” on the course roster, which can have a negative impact on a student’s academic record, in addition to problems with any grants or loans one has acquired. A student email expressing intent to participate does not count as “participation”. Please contact me via email with any questions or concerns about this policy.

Participation in this online course includes contributing to discussions, engaging in activities, asking questions of your classmates and the instructor, and demonstrating thoughtful involvement with course material by completing assigned coursework.

Consistent engagement and participation also include submitting assignments by the posted deadlines. Timely submission demonstrates preparedness, accountability, and respect for the shared learning process.

Assignment Guidelines

Each new module will “open” on Monday, 1200 am and will “close” on Sunday 1159 pm. All new, weekly content will be available when the modules open, and any assignments are all due no later than the following Sunday by midnight, unless otherwise stated.

Assignments MUST be typed (unless otherwise noted) and must be uploaded using one of these four file types: .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf. Pictures of assignments OR handwritten assignments **will not be**

accepted or graded. Moreover, submissions and files generated from a phone or from a device that uses a program not listed above will also not be accepted or graded.

All writing assignments requiring original work that is uploaded into a Canvas drop box will automatically be processed through the plagiarism software called Turnitin. Turnitin (TII) provides a score that indicates the degree to which the information in the submission matches information from millions of available sources. High TII scores indicate large amounts of material have been taken from other sources. All TII scores are checked to ensure that proper and appropriate citations are used for material taken from another's ideas, writings, theories, media, etc. In the event an assignment is found to not be properly cited, it will receive a zero. It is critical that students review their TII scores for each submission and make corrections or revisions. Canvas allows for multiple uploads into a drop box, so feel free to upload as many revisions as needed to address the problem.

There will be **no "individual-only" extra credit offered**; occasionally, I will offer extra credit opportunities for all students in a class. Extra credit **MUST** be submitted on time; there are no late submissions accepted for extra credit, and there are no exceptions.

However, on another important note, there is always an opportunity for any student to obtain additional points for an especially excellent, comprehensive, or insightful discussion post or written assignment.

Late Work Policies

I do accept late work (see below for semester test rules), but only within 4 weeks of the original due date; late work in the last month of the course must be turned in within 1 week of the due date to be eligible for credit. There are No Exceptions to this rule.

Additionally, late assignments will be penalized 5 points per day. However, there is always an opportunity for any student to obtain additional extra credit points for an especially excellent, comprehensive, or insightful discussion post or writing assignment.

Withdrawal Policy

Two withdrawals are permitted per credit course. For a third attempt, a grade will be assigned, regardless of the final outcome. Please be concerned about withdrawals. When admitting students into certain programs, some universities may calculate withdrawals as grades. Withdrawal from a course may also have implications for financial aid. Subsequently, it is your responsibility to verify the effects of enrollment and/or withdrawal upon your financial assistance (financial aid, scholarships, grants, etc.). Within the first two weeks, text me the phrase I will not plagiarize for bonus points on your final exam. Please know that there are two kinds of withdrawals: student and administrative.

- *Student Withdrawal (W1)* - Students wishing to withdraw must complete the online Student Withdrawal Form before the scheduled withdrawal deadline as published in the College catalog. Student withdrawals initiated prior to the scheduled withdrawal deadline will be recorded as a grade of "W." The withdrawal deadline for an off-term or condensed term is one week after midterm.
- *Administrative Withdrawal (W2)* – A faculty member may withdraw a student up to the published withdrawal deadline for violation of the class attendance policy, in which case the

student will receive a grade of "W." The withdrawal deadline for an off-term or condensed term is one week after midterm.

- Students cannot withdraw from developmental studies courses (college-preparatory classes) after the drop/add period without written permission from their instructor and/or their academic advisor.

Academic Integrity

Honest participation in academic endeavors fosters an environment in which optimal learning can take place and is consistent with the college's mission. Academic misconduct, including cheating or plagiarism, is destructive to the spirit of an educational environment. GCSC professors report every instance of student academic misconduct to the college for inclusion on the student's records. Most course syllabi include an academic honesty policy and the consequences for violating this policy. Familiarize yourself with course policies regarding authorized or unauthorized use of AI to avoid the pitfalls of academic dishonesty.

The following definitions will apply:

"Cheating"

includes but is not limited to use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; the acquisition without permission of tests or other academic materials belonging to a member of the College's faculty.

"Plagiarism"

includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment, as well as the purchase of papers or projects. It can also include overuse of an editing program like Grammarly or submitting work written by an Artificial Intelligence (AI) generator like ChatGPT. Make certain to consult this course syllabus for your instructor's guidelines on AI material.

"Self-plagiarism"

occurs when a student submits the same or considerably similar document to fulfill requirements in different classes. For example, if a student submits a term paper in Religion that they originally wrote for an English class, this is self-plagiarism. Once a paper receives a grade in one class, it cannot be submitted again for another class.

"Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)"

is technology that uses machine learning to create new content, such as text, images, or code, based on user input. These systems are trained on vast amounts of data, including large language models and image or code generators. Common examples include ChatGPT, GitHub, Copilot, Google Gemini, Perplexity, and the Grammarly AI function.

Sanctions for incidents of academic misconduct, depending on the severity of the incident and/or its repetition, may range from receiving an F grade (or 0) for the test, assignment, or activity to failure of the course, to suspension or dismissal from the college.

Academic Integrity Policies

All written work submitted in this course must be the student's own original work.

1. **Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, submitting work created by another person or technology, falsifying information, or any other violation of academic integrity standards.

2. **Proper Citation Required**

Any ideas, facts, information, or wording obtained from another source must be properly cited using an accepted academic format such as APA or MLA. Any assignment containing in-text citations must also include a corresponding reference page (bibliography).

3. **Turnitin Similarity Scores**

Students are responsible for reviewing their Turnitin Similarity Report before submitting assignments. Any submission with a Turnitin similarity score above 20% may not be graded until revised and resubmitted.

5. **Sanctions**

Violations of this policy may result in penalties ranging from a zero on the assignment, test, or activity to failure of the course. Repeated or serious violations may result in additional disciplinary action, including suspension or dismissal from the program or college.

6. **Reporting**

As noted in the above section, all suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Chair of Social Sciences and the Dean of Student Affairs in accordance with college policy.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Prohibited Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use of AI-generated content is **strictly prohibited** in this course. This includes the use of AI tools for brainstorming, outlining, drafting, rewriting, paraphrasing, or generating responses. Examples include, but are not limited to, ChatGPT, Copilot, Grammarly AI, and similar technologies for assignments, research, and other coursework. Use of AI tools will be treated as a violation of academic integrity and will result in penalties, including a zero on the assignment and additional disciplinary actions as outlined in the college's academic integrity policy.

Why, You May Ask...

This policy is in place in these psychology courses because psychology emphasizes critical thinking, self-reflection, and the application of course concepts to personal experiences and real-life situations. Students are expected to demonstrate their own understanding of the material. Assignments are designed to evaluate your individual insights, interpretations, and growth as a learner. The use of AI-generated content bypasses this learning process and is therefore not permitted.

See the student handbook for further information. Students with questions about acceptable use should consult their instructor.

Classroom Recording

In accordance with federal and state privacy laws, students may record class lectures for their own personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the college, or as evidence in internal or external legal proceedings. Students may not publish or upload the recordings or any components thereof without the knowledge and written permission of the faculty member. Failure to obtain permission to publish could lead to the students' having to pay damages, attorney fees, and court costs. For more information about what can be recorded, please see the guidelines in the GCSC Student Handbook.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Gulf Coast State College does not discriminate against any person in its programs, activities, policies or procedures on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, marital status, religion, age, gender, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability, or veteran status. All questions or inquiries regarding compliance with laws relating to non-discrimination and all complaints regarding sexual misconduct or discrimination may be directed to Amanda Reed, Executive Director of Human Resources/Title II/504/Title IX Coordinator and Employment Equity Officer, Gulf Coast State College, 5230 W. US Highway 98, Panama City, FL 32401; 850-769-1551, ext. 3516. Rules, policies, fees, and courses described in this catalog are subject to change without notice.

Syllabus Policy

For any syllabus posted prior to the beginning of the term, the instructor reserves the right to make minor changes prior to or during the term. The instructor will notify students via e-mail and Canvas announcement when changes are made in the requirements, dates, or assignment points in the course.

Student Support Resources

Gulf Coast State College is committed to providing you with the resources you need for success as a student and beyond. View all the academic and student support resources provided at GCSC on the [Student Services web page](#).

Course Technology & Support

To successfully participate in this online course, students must have basic computer and digital information literacy skills and meet the following technology requirements:

- **Computer:** Up-to-date web browser that supports the Canvas learning management system; please refer to the system requirements for compatibility and information on using the Canvas app on mobile devices.
- **Internet Speed:** Minimum bandwidth of 8 Mbps upload/download speed to effectively engage in online activities and access multimedia.
- **Office 365 software:** Available for free download through GCSC Information Technology Services (ITS).

In the event a student encounters a problem with technology (for example, their computer breaks down), there are several places on campus where students have access to computers and printers, namely the library and the ATC.

If a scanned document is required for an assignment, scanning services are available through both the Library and the ATC. Because these resources are readily accessible, technical issues related to scanning or document preparation are not acceptable reasons for submitting work late.

If you need technical support, contact the ITS Help Desk, available 24/7 at (850) 913-3303.