



**University of Massachusetts Boston  
College of Education and Human Development  
School for Global Inclusion and Social Development  
Rehabilitation Counseling**

**COU 608: Psychopathology and Diagnosis**

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

**Instructor:**

**Email:**

**Office Hours:**

**CLASS LOCATION/TIME:**

**Location:** class meets online through Blackboard

**Course Description:**

This course provides students with information relevant to the diagnosis, etiology, and treatment of mental illness. Psychopharmacological interventions are addressed. The epistemological assumptions that ground traditional theories of psychopathology and diagnostic systems such as the DSM are discussed, and avoiding bias in psychiatric diagnosis is a major focus of the course. The following DSM categories are covered: mood disorders, anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders including schizoprenias, disorders usually first evident in childhood, and personality disorders.

**Course Objectives:**

1. This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the general tenets and assumptions that ground the medical model. In-class discussions, multiple choice exams, and papers will serve as the domains through which students will demonstrate their understanding of the medical model.
2. Students will learn how to use the DSM 5 in an ethical and responsible manner. This skill will be demonstrated by diagnosing hypothetical 'cases' during class exercises and on exams and by identifying the limitations and advantages of making particular diagnoses. Although school counselors do not conduct DSM 5 diagnoses, having the knowledge of what is involved in using the DSM 5 informs students' understanding of the process employed by mental health professionals.
3. This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of contemporary theories regarding the etiology and treatment of emotional distress. Students will demonstrate their competence in this area by identifying (on exams, in papers and during class discussions) relevant biological, behavioral, cognitive, and psychodynamic explanations of mental illness. Students also will also learn about behavioral, cognitive and psychodynamically informed treatment strategies and psychopharmacological

interventions.

4. Students will develop an understanding of the socio-political grounding of concepts like 'mental illness' and they will develop an appreciation for the ways in which sexism, classism, and racism are inscribed in contemporary diagnostic systems. Students will demonstrate this understanding by constructively critiquing the biopsychiatric discourse evidenced in class readings (e.g., in the *DSM-5*).
5. Students will develop an appreciation for the truism "the most dangerous assumptions are those we don't know we're making." Students will identify their personal, ideological, and theoretical assumptions regarding the cause and management of 'mental illness' and how these assumptions inform (and sometimes impede) their diagnostic and counseling work. Toward this end, students will be encouraged to develop structural as well as individually-oriented change strategies for the clients with whom they work.

### Required Texts:

**Note** Please check with instructor before purchasing the text

American Psychiatric Association (2013). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5*

Gilman, C. P. (1993). *The Yellow Wallpaper*. New York: Orchises Press (Originally published 1892)

Whitaker, R. and Cosgrove, L. (2015). *Psychiatry under the influence: Institutional corruption, social injury and prescriptions for reform*. Palgrave MacMillan

### Required Assignments

1. Case Analysis: Students will diagnose the main character in the short story, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, using the *DSM-5* (2 points). In section one of your analysis, please provide support/evidence for your diagnosis – linking between the story and the *DSM-5* (8 points). In section two of your analysis, please provide a paragraph in which you critique your diagnosis. In your critique, reflect on what you have been learning in the course (5 points). Your case analysis should not exceed 3 double-spaced pages.

2. Exam #1: Questions will be based on the readings, lecture, and discussions. The exam will be available in Blackboard under the Assignments tab from 10/25-10/31. Students will have 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete the exam. More information on the exam format will be provided.

3. Group Project: You are to select one of the following movies or come up with another movie by the date of the midterm exam and email your choice of movie to the instructor. You are to watch the movie in its entirety and then you are to write an eight (8) page minimum APA style paper (double-spaced). You are to write a case study on one of the major characters in the movie. You are to complete this assignment in groups of 3-4 students.

4. Exam #2: Questions will be based on the readings, lecture, and discussions and cover the second half of course.
5. Synchronous Zoom Classroom Participation: Due to the experiential nature of this course, your presence (using video at all times) and participation are vital and essential to the success of the class!
6. Threaded Discussions: Threaded discussions are an opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue with your colleagues. Participation requires reviewing the class lecture for the week, completing required readings, videos, etc., and posting and responding to weekly discussion questions.

### SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS

(All assignments must be APA formatted)

Assignments	Points
Case Analysis	15
Exam 1	20
Group Project	20
Exam 2	20
Threaded Discussions	20
Zoom Class Participation	5

UMass Boston Graduate Grading Policy		
Letter		Quality points
A	93-100%	4.00
A-	90-92%	3.75
B+	87-89%	3.25
B	83-86%	3.00
B-	80-82%	2.75
C+	77-79%	2.25
C	73-76%	2.00
F	0-72%	0.0

INC	Given under very restricted terms and only when satisfactory work has been accomplished in majority of coursework. Contract of completion terms is required.	N/A
IF	Received for failure to comply with contracted completion terms.	N/A
W	Received if withdrawal occurs before the withdrawal deadline.	N/A
AU	Audit (only permitted on space-available basis)	N/A
NA	Not Attending (student appeared on roster, but never attended class. Student is still responsible for tuition and fee charges unless withdrawal form is submitted before deadline. NA has no effect on cumulative GPA.)	N/A

### **Accommodations:**

UMass Boston is committed to creating learning environments that are inclusive and accessible. If you have a personal circumstance that will impact your learning and performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible, so we can discuss the best ways to meet your needs and the requirements of the course. If you have a documented disability, or would like guidance about navigating support services, contact the Ross Center for Disability Services by email ([ross.center@umb.edu](mailto:ross.center@umb.edu)), phone (617-287-7430), or in person (Campus Center, UL Room 211). To receive accommodations, students must be registered with the Ross Center and must request accommodations each semester that they are in attendance at UMass Boston. For more information visit: [www.rosscenter.umb.edu](http://www.rosscenter.umb.edu). Please note that the Ross Center will provide a letter for your instructor with information about your accommodation only and not about your specific disability.

### **Health, Wellbeing, and Success**

UMass Boston is a vibrant, multi-cultural, and inclusive institution committed to ensuring that all members of our diverse campus community are able to thrive and succeed. The university provides a wide variety of resources to support students' overall success.

- Are you in emotional distress? Call 617.287.5690 to speak with a licensed clinician 24/7 who can offer support, crisis recommendations, and assistance with finding resources.
- Have a campus question or issue? Use [Current Students - UMass Boston \(umb.edu\)](http://www.umb.edu)
- Want advice in navigating a university or life situation? Contact the Dean of Students Office at [www.umb.edu/deanofstudents](http://www.umb.edu/deanofstudents).