

Syllabus
PY 298 Honors – Movies and Mental Disorders

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Class Time:	F 12:20-2:55	TBA
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Texts:	<p>APA, (2000). <i>Quick Reference to the Diagnostic Criteria from DSM-IV-TR</i>.</p> <p>Wedding, D., Boyd, M., & Niemiec, R.M. (2005). <i>Movies and Mental Disorders: Using Films to Understand Psychopathology</i>.</p> <p>Cox, M. (2007). <i>What Every Student Should Know About Preparing Effective Oral Presentations</i>, Pearson,.</p>
Online Material	<i>Resources under Blackboard. You will need to register.</i>

Meetings can also be arranged with the instructor by appointment.

This is a speaking intensive course building on the academic skills and habits introduced in the First Year Seminar. Movies are a major source of conceptions that the lay public have about mental disorders. Unfortunately, in the service of sensationalistic impact and entertainment value, popular movies typically promote a myriad of misconceptions about mental illness. Students will investigate the validity of the portrayals of mental disorders in several films by reviewing empirical research.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Understand the complexity involved in defining "normal" and "abnormal" behavior.
- 2) Apply critical thinking skills in order to understand how films influence perceptions of mental disorders.
- 3) Conduct investigative research in order to differentiate between accurate and inaccurate portrayals of the causes, symptoms, and treatment of mental disorders.
- 4) Gain knowledge of how the social context influences what is considered a mental disorder and how it is treated.
- 5) Enhanced ability to speak clearly and effectively.

Active participation in class will be expected. The objectives of class participation include: 1) developing informed opinions, 2) comprehending, formulating, and

critically evaluating ideas, and 3) identifying problems and finding solutions to those problems. Effective problem solving involves a variety of skills including research, analysis, interpretation, and creativity

Attendance Policy from the BSC Handbook: *Students are responsible for satisfactory attendance in each course for which they are registered. Students will be excused without penalty for reasons such as illness, participation in official college events, personal emergencies and religious holidays. Students should contact faculty members in advance of any absence whenever feasible or upon their return to classes, to determine the impact of the absence on academic requirements.*

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY FROM THE BSC HANDBOOK: AT BRIDGEWATER STATE COLLEGE, ACADEMIC HONESTY IS EXPECTED OF ALL STUDENTS. PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING ARE NOT CONDONED AND ARE SUBJECT TO ACADEMIC PENALTY THAT MAY RESULT IN A FAILURE FOR THE COURSE IN WHICH THE VIOLATION TOOK PLACE. A RECORD OF THE VIOLATION IS KEPT AND MAY RESULT IN SUSPENSION OR DISMISSAL FROM THE COLLEGE.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, disruption of teaching or research, dishonest practices in connection with examinations and disruptive classroom behaviors.

ASSIGNMENTS TO EVALUATE YOUR LEARNING:

Response papers: You will prepare a brief (one page typed) response paper on the assigned readings. The paper will include (1) the question you would like to research for your presentation, (2) a selected quotation for discussion and (3) comments for discussion.

Film Analyses (scoring rubric attached): When you watch a film make notes regarding the disorder presented. Pay particular attention to the symptoms and behaviors expressed. How do they coincide with the descriptions in the DSM? How would the portrayal of the disorder influence the public's perspective of mental disorders? For each film you will give a presentation that describes the disorder portrayed, the validity of this portrayal, and how this portrayal would impact the public's perception of mental disorders? You will also be assigned a particular question to answer through independent research. You will need to cite at least three outside sources to back up the claims in your presentation. Research logs will need to be completed for each citation. Further information on how to complete a research log is provided on pg. 6.

Please note: The films will be rated pg-13 or more typically R. The films are disturbing. Mental disorders are disturbing. If you do not feel comfortable viewing disturbing content please consider taking a different second year seminar.

BSC Undergraduate Research Symposium Presentation: This group presentation will require you to articulate and critically examine the progression of your ideas and to

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discuss the issues and/or questions you found to be the most compelling, citing specific articles that were influential.

Discussion points: everyone in the class including yourself will evaluate your contribution to the discussion. Participation will be graded on how prepared you were for the discussion, how much you contributed to the discussion, as well as active listening (are you paying attention to your classmates when they are speaking)? You have to be present to earn discussion points.

The weekly response papers are due **in class** on the date indicated in the course schedule. I will not accept emailed assignments. Failure to submit on time will result in a 10% penalty for each class period that the assignment is past due.

The final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Weekly Response Papers: 25% of total grade (125 pts)
Film Analysis and Presentation: 30% of total grade (150 pts)
Group Presentation: 20% of total grade (100 points)
Discussion: 25% of total grade (125 points)

Grade = total points earned as a % of total possible points (500 pts.)

A = 93-100% A- = 90-92 %
B+ = 87-89 % B = 83-86 % B- = 80-82 %
C+ = 77-79 % C = 73-76 % C- = 70-72 %
D+ = 67-69 % D = 63-66 % D- = 60-62 %
F = < 60 %

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Class Schedule

Week 1: What is a Mental Disorder? Wedding Chapter 1; Rosenhan, D.L. (1973). On being sane in insane places. *Science*, 179, 250-258. Spiegel, A. (2005). The dictionary of disorder. *The New Yorker*; DSM pg. 1-7;

Week 2: Anxiety Disorders; Wedding ch. 2 ; DSM
Born on the 4th of July

Week 3: Mood disorders; Wedding ch 5; DSM pg.167-178.
House of Sand and Fog

Week 4: Substance Abuse; Wedding Chapter 7; DSM pg. 105-117.
Leaving Las Vegas

Week 5: Dissociative Disorders; Wedding Chapter 3; Piper, A., & Merskey, H. (2004). The persistence of folly: a critical examination of dissociative identity disorder. Part I & Part II. The excesses of an improbable concept. *Canadian Journal Of Psychiatry*. DSM 239-244.
Fight Club

Week 6: Schizophrenia; Wedding Chapter 9; DSM 153-158. **A Beautiful Mind**

Week 7: Sexual Disorders. Wedding Chapter 8; DSM 245-262; Bower H. The gender identity disorder in the DSM-IV classification: a critical evaluation. *The Australian And New Zealand Journal Of Psychiatry* [serial online]. 2001;35(1):1-8. **Transamerica**

Week 8: Personality Disorders. Wedding Ch. 6; DSM ; **In the Company of Men.**

Week 9: Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence. Wedding Ch. 11; DSM ;
Thumbsucker

Week 10: Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence. Wedding Ch. 11; DSM ; **Elephant**

Week 11: Mental Retardation and Autism. Wedding Ch 12; DSM ; **Rain Man**

Week 12: Eating Disorders. Wedding Ch. 13; **The Best Little Girl in the World**

Week 13-BSC Undergraduate Research Symposium

Week 14 Treatment; Wedding ch. 15; Gabbard, G., & Gabbard, G. (2001). Psychotherapy in Hollywood cinema. *Australasian Psychiatry*, 9(4), 365-369. **What about Bob?**

Week 15 FINAL EXAM

Film Analysis Score sheet

Film: _____ Date: _____ Student: _____

Score Criterion

- 0 1 2 3 1. Elocution: Good, clear, coherent speaking style.
- 0 1 2 3 2. Delivery: maintains eye contact; movements and gestures aid delivery rather than distract.
- 0 1 2 3 3. Organization: logical flow of thought and expression of ideas.
- 0 1 2 3 4. Summary of Portrayals: Brief summary of the film and how the disorder is portrayed or presented.
- 0 1 2 3 5. Description of the Disorder: based on the film describe what the disorder seems to be: causes, symptoms, how is it treated if applicable.
- 0 1 2 3 6. Connection with the Readings: how do the ideas from the readings fit with the perceptions of mental illness portrayed in the film? Compare and contrast what you observe in the film with the information provided in the assigned readings.
- 0 1 2 3 7. Investigative research: How well is the research question answered? Does the student appear to have a clear understanding of the research question? Were the sources for the information appropriately cited?
- 0 1 2 3 8. Personal Reaction and Impressions: Your personal perspective on the portrayals. Do they seem accurate/realistic? Why? What impact did they have on you? What impact would they have on people with the disorder, their families, their friends? What impact might they have on public policy, mental health programs, etc.?
- 0 1 2 3 9. Research Log: To be turned in with each presentation and graded by the instructor.
- 0 1 2 3 10. Self-evaluation: After listening to your presentation, discuss your strengths and weaknesses and strategies for improving your speaking ability. To be turned in one week after each presentation. Graded by the instructor.

Score: _____

Comments: _____

The Research Log

From Bruce Ballenger's *The Curious Researcher 4th ed*, 154-6

This note-taking strategy allows you to keep track of key information from a source—such as bibliographic information, direct quotes, and summaries—while also giving you the space to start writing about the source and processing the information. When writing a research log, use the following format:

Bibliographic Citation: Take down the full bibliographic information on the source.

What Strikes Me Most: In this section, freewrite in response to the reading. You could take the following stances or pose the following questions to guide this writing:

- Begin by playing the “believing game,” exploring how the author’s ideas, arguments or findings are sensible. Then shift to the “doubting game,” looking for gaps, questions, and doubts you have about what the sources say.
- What strikes you as the most important thing the author was trying to say?
- What surprised you most?
- What do you remember best?
- What seemed most convincing? Least convincing?
- How has it changed your thinking on the topic?
- How does it compare to other things you’ve read?
- What other research possibilities does it suggest?

Source Notes: Mine the source for nuggets. This section is for quotations, summaries, paraphrases, and key facts that you collect from the reading. No need to comment or contextualize in this section – simply copy in direct quotes (using quotation marks and noting page numbers), or write summaries, paraphrases, and key facts, also noting the page numbers.

The Source Reconsidered: Follow up with one more freewrite. This is a second, *more focused* look at the source in which you freewrite about what stands out in the notes you took. Which facts, findings, claims, or arguments that you jotted down shape your thinking now? How might you use this source in your essay? If the writing stalls, skip a line, take another look at your source notes, and seize on something else to write about.