

CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY

PSYCH 545

SPRING 2019

DR. NORA NOEL

Class times: Tuesdays, 5:00 - 7:45 pm Office Hours: M W 2 - 3

Class Meeting Room: TL2018

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OVERVIEW

This course is designed as an advanced consideration of theories of addiction from a bio-psycho-social perspective. We will be reading and discussing ideas about how processes interact to produce dependence on and abuse of psychoactive substances. The class format will be seminar style. There will be weekly readings, reaction papers and group discussions. The prerequisites for this course are Drugs and Behavior (Psych 245) and admission to the graduate program.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will have:

1. Read and discussed reviews and primary source material regarding a variety of the traditional and empirically-derived theories of chemical dependency.
2. Used the knowledge, skills and abilities learned in this and other courses to understand the basic tenets of each theory, how they can be integrated or where they differ fundamentally, and how each can be applied to understanding the development of substance use, misuse, abuse and dependence.
3. Articulated their views, with supporting evidence based on research, both in a seminar setting and in a written format (on the midterm and final examinations).
4. Led a well-integrated and research-supported discussion of at least one of these theories in the seminar setting.
5. Communicated how these theories can be integrated into the assessment and treatment of future clients with alcohol and drug problems.

READINGS

The required readings for the course will be listed from week to week. They are a mixture of "classic" articles, recent reviews and recent research reports. I will give you an overview of the next week's topic at the end of each class, so that you can think about some of the important issues while you are reading. Each week there will be one or two central readings that everyone is assigned to read and summarize in a paragraph or two. Additionally, each person will be given a reading to summarize for the rest of the class, again in one or two paragraphs, so that we will have a variety of articles on that week's topic. In class, I will randomly choose a person to read his/her summary of the base article(s) and the other class members can chime in to supplement the material. After that, we will go over summaries of the other articles.

Additionally, each student will choose a week and lead the discussion of the readings for that week. You must read and integrate the material for a coherent presentation. This will also involve doing some extra reading for that week and preparing a presentation of at least one extra paper in a way that facilitates discussion of the other work. Obviously, you will need to meet with me ahead of time. This is

to give you the experience of leading a seminar discussion. Note that this does not relieve the other class members of their duty to read all the class material assigned and before the class and come prepared to discuss it.

SEMINAR PARTICIPATION

If you have not taken a seminar before, it might be helpful to know what to expect. A seminar is defined as, "a small group of students in college or graduate school engaged in original research or intensive study under the guidance of a professor." It is from the Latin word seminarium which means "seed plot" or a place where new ideas are grown. Originally, for the Romans and the Greeks, seminars were small informal "wine and cheese" gatherings of learned men (before affirmative action) to discuss important and new ideas. It gradually changed to refer to a class, but retained the idea of discussion, so, ironically, in this class we have a seminar to discuss wine (if not cheese).

Because this is a seminar, class attendance and participation are required. If you miss a class, I will have to deduct points from your participation grade. You cannot participate in a seminar that you do not attend. As a rule of thumb, students who miss two or more classes will lose a whole grade, for example, going from A to a B, or worse, a B to a C. Each week there will be at least one recent research paper among the readings. You should be able to discuss how the more theoretical papers relate to the research presented. These reactions will serve to promote discussion and focus our work each week. Be prepared. Your participation grade will be based, in part, on the quality of your in-class discussion. Note that you cannot "react" if you have not read and thought about the material before class so you might even want to prepare a reaction before each class.

Overview: In order to provide an understanding of addictive behaviors, a theory has to address four important questions: 1) Why do people in general use psychoactive substances?; 2) Why do some people use more than others?; 3) Why do some people become dependent/ addicted/ abusers/whatever?; and 4) What can be done to alleviate this dependence/ addiction/abuse/whatever? You should think about how each reading answers these questions, and how effectively the reading answers the questions (e.g. do the authors have good data or other evidence to back up their hypotheses? Do they provide a good description or definition of the phenomenon they discuss? Is the theory plausible?)

Class Discussions: Examples of some discussion from past classes include: 1) How do 12-Step treatment approaches relate to disease models of alcohol and drug addiction? 2) Are all people with addictions physically dependent on a substance? If not, how does one decide if they are dependent? What are the important issues influencing this decision? Is there such a thing as psychological dependence without physical dependence? 3) Should drug laws be changed based on the actions or the consequences of the drugs? Should drugs be banned? Should (some) drugs be openly available? 4) Can we predict the development of alcoholism on the basis of genetic or personality factors? 5) How do Cultural factors, Ethnicity and Gender influence substance use? Does knowledge of this influence lead to stereotyping?

GRADING

Your grade will be determined by your seminar participation including your reaction papers and participation in the class discussions (50 %), your performance on the midterm (20 %), and your performance on the final exam (30 %). Requirements for participation are discussed above. The midterm and the final will be essay exams, so be prepared to write. The final exam will be comprehensive for the course.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Week 1; January 15:

Introduction

Nature of class (What is a seminar?)

How the class will be conducted

What will be covered in the class

Short assessment of your current knowledge

Week 2; January 22:

Defining and Addressing The Problems of Substance Abuse

Week 3; January 29:

Some Examples of Very Negative Consequences of Substance Use

Week 4; February 5:

Why Do People (Ab)Use Psychoactive Substances? "Traditional" Formulations and Models

Week 5; February 12:

Why Do People (Ab)Use Psychoactive Substances? Neuroscience and Genetics

Week 6; February 19:

Why Do People (Ab)Use Psychoactive Substances? Developmental Hypotheses

Week 7; February 26:

Why Do People (Ab)Use Psychoactive Substances? Learning Theory Approaches

Week 8; March 5: Midterm

Weeks 9 & 10: March 19 and March 26

Why Do People (Ab)Use Psychoactive Substances? Cognitive and Social Learning Theories

Week 11: April 2

Why Do People (Ab)Use Psychoactive Substances? Family Issues

Week 11: April 9

Ethnic, Cultural and Social Issues Associated with Psychoactive Substance Use

Weeks 12 & 13: April 16 & 23

Paths to Recovery: Treatment, Self-Help Groups & Natural Recovery

Week 14: April 30

Evidence-Based Treatment (What does that mean?)

Exam Week: FINAL EXAM