

## Psychology 4550 – Schizophrenia

Fall 2019

Dr. Jennifer Mather

**Phone:** 403-329-2423

**Office Hours:** MW 1330-1430

**Class Time:** MW 1500-1615

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**Text:** Shean: Understanding and Treating Schizophrenia

### **Purposes of the Course:**

This is a Capstone course, giving an overview of this common and devastating mental illness and covering most areas of psychology, from genetics, neural development and language/communication to the influence of the family, history of the disease and impact on the community. Thus this is somewhat of an overview on psychology. The wide range of topic areas will allow you to decide whether to commit most of your energy to the social or experimental side of the problems and take this as a BA or BSc course. But you are still expected to learn and appreciate all aspects. By focusing narrowly on one disease you should learn not only about the disease itself but also about the inter-relatedness of all areas of psychology.

Because this is a **seminar** course, the classroom is yours to present and discuss, rather than mine to tell you what's important. As this is an individual-based experience, each person will accumulate ideas and viewpoints differently. I would like everyone to demonstrate this learning by gathering information and ideas in a *Portfolio*, which you will hand in to me at the end of the course to demonstrate your learning. The Portfolio will include information about your Presentation (including my feedback), Chapter Summaries, your Essay and the Journal you keep during the course, but it should also include some aspect of skills learned. We will discuss potential Portfolio components during the first class. Note that a self-evaluation is the final Journal entry. What are the components worth? We can discuss this in the first class. In the past, class members have chosen to make an individual allocation of grades for the four components and signed a Contract to that effect with me; this has worked well.

A Portfolio organizes and presents your information. It will help you get organized, will help me understand what you have learned and, if well done, can be used in the future as a concrete demonstration of what you learned in one of your courses.

1. Presentation: Each student in the class will present us with a one-class presentation of his/her chosen topic area. Since this means that you, not me, are the presenters of information for the course, this must be taken seriously. Each of you will make at least two **appointments** with me before your presentation to discuss your material and how to convey it. The Schizophrenia Society has many resources and you can consult them if you like. Consider, as you must educate us, the use of overheads, film (if short) and handouts--anything that works. At the end of the semester, each student will present an assessment of what the future holds for his/her topic area. The class will research Community (it is a collective issue) as a collective and report to me.
2. The text is wide-ranging and sometimes controversial but is also heavy and full of jargon. To ensure that you read it and also to give you practice in thinking about the issues, I would like you to generate a substantive **question** for each chapter and then answer it in at least two pages, with at least one reference each. These should be straightforward and jargon-free, aimed at a Psychology major who has no special knowledge of schizophrenia. I will expect to see your collection of questions and answers so far at the same time as I see your Journal, October 30<sup>th</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup>. Note that doing one or two a week is a wise idea, a last-minute set of six will be a big job.
3. Essay: Each person will hand in an essay (over 15 pages, APA format) on a different topic area than that he or she has chosen for the presentation. It will be at least partly a critical evaluation of the research area. I would like you to form pairs-- one doing a presentation and another the essay on one topic. The topics must be from different areas. This cooperation will be discussed IN THE FIRST CLASS. Should the essay-writer help the presenter? Give him/her critical comments? Should the presenter help the essay writer learn how to present the same material differently?

The first draft of paper is due November 18<sup>th</sup> and will be returned November 25<sup>th</sup>. I expect a final draft as part of the Portfolio.

4. Journal: Each person will keep personal reactions during the semester. Opinions, attitudes and beliefs belong in here. As you move through the course, I hope to see how you perceive schizophrenia, how you see its impact on its victims and on all of us, what you learn as you go along. There should be at least one thoughtful entry per week, and

by recording your thoughts, you should be able to see your learning (see the diagram for how this might work). A good first entry would be what you would like to learn during the course. I expect you to interview a person with schizophrenia and include your reaction to this in your Journal (if you need their contact, the Schizophrenia Society can set this up). The Journal will be handed in once on October 30<sup>th</sup> and again on November 30<sup>th</sup>, and I will give you feedback about its completeness but no grade. The journal should unify the course for you and at the end, please include a **self-evaluation** of the progress of your learning.

The final Portfolio with self-evaluation is due December 9<sup>th</sup>, fairly early into the exam period.

As a result of a unique cooperation with the Schizophrenia Society of Lethbridge, you will have a chance to meet people affected by the disease. For this semester, all of you are temporary members of the Society. Contact the Society's coordinator at [KJames-Hussey@schizophrenia.ab.ca](mailto:KJames-Hussey@schizophrenia.ab.ca) if you need an appointment to meet one-on-one with someone who has the disease and talk about what it's like, or we can arrange a group meeting. I should hear about your experiences in the Journal.

Since everyone will be presenting at a different time and essays are due late, it's difficult to give feedback about "expected grade" as required by the Calendar. I will read all the Journals twice before November. If you want/need an expected grade, email or make an appointment with me and I'll provide you with one. Every presenter will get a one-page feedback about his/her presentation, but it's difficult to attach a grade to these without the comparison that comes as the semester unfolds. The final grade will be heavily dependent on the evidence produced by your Portfolio, the self-evaluation and my assessment of it all.

Attendance at class is EXPECTED, although I will not take attendance. In your self-evaluation, I expect you will discuss your pattern of attendance and participation. Everyone should come to nearly all the classes.

### Tentative Schedule

September	4	Organization
	9	Presentation and topics choices
	11	Partnership program visit
	16	History
	18	Definition
	23	Genetics
	25	Early environment
October	2	Neural development Journals and Chapters in
	7	Brain anatomy/physiology
	9	Perception
	16	Thinking/language
	21	Ethics
	23	Families
	28	Community organization
	30	Affect and negative symptoms
November	4	Community presentation
	6	Coping 1
	18	Coping 2 Essay first draft
	20	Cross cultural
	25	Disease course Essay back
	27	Social definition of madness
December	2	Models of illness
	4	Future discussion
	17	Hand in Portfolio [1:00 to 4:00 pm]

### Chapter Summaries as Reading to match Presentations:

Week 1	--
2	None
3	Chapters 1 and 2
4	Chapters 7 and 12
5	Chapters 8 and 10
6	Chapters 4 and 13
7	Chapter 3
8	None
9	Chapters 9 and 11
10	Chapters 12 and 14
11	Chapter 15
	Chapter 5

## JOURNAL WRITING

What is a journal? It is a “tool for connecting thought, feeling and action.” Meaning comes out of the writing itself, not out of what one writes about, and that meaning should be the basis for further thought and action. It is also a private place to take a chance—these are words unsaid that might have been incorrect, chains of ideas that are free to go nowhere but might end up somewhere and emotions that you might not feel comfortable expressing.

When do you do a Journal? First, before learning something new. You can speculate, set your guidelines, work on a problem before you have to confront it, make decisions about what you want to learn (such as doing a Presentation). Second, you write a Journal while learning. It is a place for crystallizing ideas, mapping out what could be shared, thinking about where a train of thought went and might go in the future, reflecting on others' reactions to ideas. Last, it can be after learning. Having grasped an idea you can see where you used to be, notice the paths not taken, reflect on how to communicate to others, perhaps even plan how to sharpen your future Journal construction.

What kinds of writing can appear in a Journal? Almost anything. You can engage in reflection, thinking about something, such as the Partnership Program presentation, that went before. You can free associate, just write down a train of thought. You can have an imaginary conversation or construct a dialogue. You can describe how an activity or a presentation made you feel, then examine the feeling and see why and what they got you. You can describe your activities outside the classroom that now seem relevant to the topic, such as explaining what schizophrenia is to a family member or having better insight into the problems of mental illness. Think about how what you learn in other classes is linked to what you are learning here. You can reflect on what others think or feel, and why. You can examine your search for information—is literature on schizophrenia or neural development or the meaning of Madness hard to get, biased or too specialized, and why? You can (and should) reflect on your presentation. What went well, and what didn't? How could you have done it better, and how can you use Dr. Mather's feedback to do the job better yet next time. What do you see others doing in their presentations that you can use? You can end up thinking about where all this is taking you....

Does it have to be grammatically correct? Heavens, no! If it is all correct spelling, carefully constructed phrases and well-set-out paragraphs, it's become self-conscious and isn't a Journal any more. It should just come out. Of course it has to make sense somehow, maybe when you read over later you want to add something or reflect on what you wrote so fast and feelingly. But it's not an Essay.

Luzinsky, J. 1990. Reflective withdrawal through journal writing. In J. Mezirow, *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood*, 213-234. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

# Learning Cycle

DURING

CLASSES

(Monitor ideas,  
conversations)

BEFORE  
Anticipate

(Prepare to be a  
participating  
class member)

AFTER  
Reflect (in Journal)

INTERIM  
Re vise

(Think about ideas)

## PSYCHOLOGY 4550: WHAT MAKES A GOOD ESSAY?

A good essay (or newspaper article, or lab report, or funding proposal or even exam question) is organized, clear, thoughtful, and (hopefully) interesting.

**ORGANIZED:** Any written paper should first tell the reader where it is going and what point or points it wants to make. Then it should flow through in a logical sequence with clear change points indicated (use an Outline or Headings to indicate sections if you need to). Each paragraph should be a separate thought carried out fully, and each new one should start a different idea. References used for background should be acknowledged; APA format is simple for text references eg (Mather, 1999). Any body of information that's useful and yet can't really be put in the text can end up as a diagram, a table or an Appendix. A reference list, which is really a courtesy to the reader, needs to be put at the end and include all articles referenced (cross-check it).

**CLEAR:** Clear flows from organized. Writers who want to be clear have to cultivate the dual art of figuring out how to say exactly what they want to say, and then getting down to say it. Make each sentence count, be sure it says something. Get the grammar and spelling and word choice right. Then put the sentences together in paragraphs that express one idea, and go on to the next. Use examples and direct quotes if they enhance your ideas, and they often will. Again APA format is simple, "Using direct quotes helps" (Mather, 1999, p1), but don't turn your paper over to others' quotes; it's YOUR paper. Cultivate or bribe or exchange the favour with a critic. This person has to be conscientious, but is the one who reads it through and says "What are you trying to say on Page 4?" or "How come you don't use this example at the beginning where it'll have most impact?" or "How did your idea get from A to B"?

**THOUGHTFUL:** Papers are written to convey ideas. Within your area, choose something you want to say: early environment is complex but critical, North American communities stigmatize those with mental illness, social and cognitive treatment are the keys to recovery, for instance. Having chosen where you will go, marshal your information to get you there. Choose a logical sequence, include opposing views so you can rebut them or prove they are minor. Remember to state what you want to get across at first, then tell the reader what you said at the end.

**INTERESTING:** With any luck, this flows from the first three aspects. Dig a little deeper and go back to the basics, point out hallucinations show us our reality isn't far from abnormality, that community responses to PWS reveal fundamental issues of Social Psychology, how culture dominates social life. Point out the challenges your topic gives us, resolve paradoxes of seemingly opposing information, tell the reader where we need to go next to solve these problems.