Psychology 442: Psychology of Exceptionality  
University of Rhode Island  
Winter 2018

Instructor: Allyson Marsh, M.S.

This is a hybrid class with 25% of the instruction hours being delivered in person and 75% being delivered online.

In person classes will meet on:
Tuesday, 1/2
Tuesday, 1/16

Start Time-End Time: 5pm-9:30pm
Online Assignments are due: 1/3, 1/4, 1/7, 1/8, 1/9, 1/10, 1/11, 1/17, 1/19

Room: Swan Hall
Email: Allyson.E.Marsh@gmail.com
Office Hours: Contact me to set up a time to meet

Course Description:
Welcome to Psychology 442—Psychology of Exceptionality! In this course, we will examine exceptionality as it relates to the contemporary context that we live in through the use of film. This includes looking at exceptionality throughout history, including legislation surrounding civil rights for individuals with exceptionalities, as well as present day issues surrounding exceptionality. We will also discuss many different areas of exceptionality and how these exceptionalities are perceived by the exceptional individuals, their friends and family, and society in general. My biggest hope is that you will leave this class with the knowledge and desire to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

Course Objectives:
Specific learning objectives include:
-Develop an understanding of:
  -What the term “exceptionality” encompasses
  -Exceptionality as a social construct
  -The impact of labeling
  -Legislation and history of educational equality for exceptional students
  -Educational placements/accommodations for exceptional students and transitioning services
  -Specific Exceptionalities:
    Orthopedic/Physical Disabilities
    Communication Disorders
    Visual/hearing impairments
    Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
    Behavioral Exceptionalities – Emotional Disturbed Students
    Autism Spectrum Disorders
    Learning Disabilities
    Intellectual Disabilities
    Gifted and Talented Individuals
  -Exceptionality and the Family
  -Stigma and Exceptionality
Beyond the specific goals for the course, I have a number of overarching learning outcomes for us. These include:

- **Effective Oral and Written Communication**: facilitated through our class discussions (both collectively and in small groups) and through analytical and reflective essays. *Students will be able to present a well-researched description of a specific disability.*

- **Critical Thinking**: facilitated through written assignments, class discussions, and practical application of course material. *Students will constantly look for deeper meaning and new ways of thinking about topics covered both in and out of class.*

- **Multicultural Perspective**: facilitated through readings and discussions about perceptions of exceptionalities across diverse communities: *Students will be knowledgeable and keep an open mind concerning views and beliefs of different economic, geographic, and ethnic cultures.*

- **Advocating for others**: facilitated through class activities and presentations: *Students will apply the knowledge learned in this class to advocating for those whose rights are not being respected/are not being treated the way they should be.*

**Readings:**
There is no textbook for this class. All readings are provided through links on the syllabus or on SAKAI (https://sakai.uri.edu/). However, you will need to watch several films at home and these films will need to be purchased. The films can all be rented through Amazon for $2.99 or less. All powerpoint lecture slides for the entire semester are available on Sakai under Resources.

**Course Organization:**
We have a number of advantages that promise to make this an exciting and valuable learning experience for all of us. As upper level students, you are coming to this course with a background in psychology and with some knowledge of and interest in the subject matter. Given that exceptionality is a daily presence in our environment, we are also coming to this course with a set of experiences, beliefs, and values that will inform and enrich our discussions. I have selected readings and films that I think are interesting and that will provide a solid groundwork for learning about exceptionalities.

**Policies and Procedures:**

*Academic Accommodations:*
Any student with a documented disability is welcome to contact me as early in the semester as possible so that we may arrange reasonable accommodations. Students with disabilities, who need accommodations, call the Academic Skills Center at 277-5221.

*Academic Honesty:*
Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student’s name on any written work, quiz or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student’s own independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student’s own words, properly attributed to its source. Students have an obligation to know how to quote, paraphrase, summarize, cite and reference the work of others with integrity. The following are examples of academic dishonesty.

- Using material, directly or paraphrasing, from published sources (print or electronic) without appropriate citation
- Claiming disproportionate credit for work not done independently
- Unauthorized possession or access to exams
- Unauthorized communication during exams
- Unauthorized use of another’s work or preparing work for another student
- Taking an exam for another student
ALTERING OR ATTEMPTING TO ALTER GRADES
• The use of notes or electronic devices to gain an unauthorized advantage during exams
• Fabricating or falsifying facts, data or references
• Facilitating or aiding another’s academic dishonesty
• Submitting the same paper for more than one course without prior approval from the instructors.

**Academic Skills Center:**
This is a challenging course. Success requires that you keep pace with the work, understand course concepts, and study effectively. The Academic Skills Center, located in Room 239, offers a variety of services to students who wish to develop and sharpen their learning skills and improve their performance. Students should stop by the Center for further information and assistance or call 401-277-5221. All services provided by the Center are free and available in the following areas:

**Bias Response Team:**
Each member of the University community has the responsibility to foster an environment of acceptance, mutual respect, and understanding. If you are a target or a witness of a bias incident, you are encouraged to contact the URI Bias Response Team http://www.uri.edu/brt/ where you will find people and resources to help.

**URI Email**
Throughout the semester, I will send emails with updates related to the course. It is your responsibility to check your URI email at least once every day for course messages. “I didn’t check my email” is not an acceptable excuse for missing important course information.

**Attendance Policy**
Attendance at all seminars is expected. If you miss either class, you will not receive credit for the course.

**Grading (based on points):**
- 315-350 **A range**
- 280-314.9 **B range**
- 245-279.9 **C range**
- 210-244.9 **D range**
- 209.9 and below **F range**
Assignments & Grading:

1.) **Assignments and Postings (9 x 20 points = 180 points)**

Student are expected to watch the assignment films then post a response to questions and respond to at least two posts from fellow course participants using the Sakai online course Forum Tool.

The postings should answer the questions listed, but participants are welcome to include additional information to their posts, including relevant personal experiences. The quality, quantity and understanding of the material will be considered as part of the assessment process for postings.

*Remember - Participation alone is not enough; a thoughtful and meaningful approach in your posts is required.* Summarizing the films will result in a significant reduction in points.

**Minimum Criteria for Posts:**
Your post includes...
- Reflective, thoughtful, and relevant answers to all assigned questions (Avoid Summarizing)
- Understanding of the film
- Connections to the course readings and discussions
- Correct use of terminology
- Organized thoughts and ideas
- Minimum Length - ½ a page to 1 page in length if typed into a word processing program (Times New Roman Font, Double Spaced, Size 12, Double Space)
- No grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors

**Minimum Criteria for Responses:**
Your responses...
- Extend discussions already taking place or poses new possibilities or opinions not previously voiced (Avoid just agreeing or disagreeing and other posts that do not enrich the discussion)
- Quantity - Response to 2+ other participants
- Minimum Length - ¼ of a page to a ½ page in length if typed into a word processing program (Times New Roman Font, Double Spaced, Size 12, Double Space).
- Exhibit respect for all students

2.) **Research Paper/ Presentation (90 points)**

Each student will complete a Research Paper about a topic that will be randomly assigned. You will also complete a PowerPoint presentation aimed at disseminating information about the specific disability to the class.

**Presentation**

You need to present an overview of the disability using a PowerPoint presentation. The information in the presentation should come solely from the information in peer-reviewed articles/books or approved* research based websites (WebMD and Wikipedia should NOT be used). I am not going to give you a min/max number of slides but your presentation should be 5 minutes in length. Please turn in a paper
copy of your PowerPoint presentation on the day of your presentation and pass out handouts of the presentation to each student in the class. Your presentation needs to include a list of references. If I do not receive a paper copy of the presentation or the list of references, you will receive a 0 for the assignment.

Research Paper
You need to present your findings about the topic in a 5 page APA or MLA style paper (the title page and reference page do not count towards the page number).

Minimum Criteria for Research Paper
Your research paper includes:
- Summary of the key points of your topic of interest
- Introduction and Conclusion
- Information obtained from three peer-reviewed journal articles or approved* research based websites (WebMD and Wikipedia should not be used).
- 5 pages (not including the title page and reference page)
- Title page
- Reference Page
- APA or MLA Style
- Page numbers
- Citations within the text (all information obtained from references should be cited, not just quotes)
- No personal pronouns (“I” or me”)
- Use of correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar
- Transitions from one topic to the next
- One-inch margins on each side of the paper
- Times New Roman Size Twelve Font
- Double Spaced

*If you are going to use a website, you need to email me the link so that I can approve it.

Website to access the DSM-V on the URI Library website. ->

3.) **Final Take Home Exam (80 points)**

The Final Take Home Exam is an essay exam that relates to the class lectures, readings, and films.