

Muhlenberg College - Department of Psychology
Advanced Lab: Clinical Research
Course Syllabus (Spring, 2011)

Instructor: Mark J. Sciotto, Ph.D.

Class Meetings: W – F; 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Moyer 26

Office Hours T 3:00-4:00, Th 11:00 – 12:00, WF 1:00-2:00, or by appointment.
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Required Texts: Hinshaw, S. P. (2007). *The mark of shame: Stigma of mental illness and an agenda for change*. Oxford University Press: New York.

Recommended Texts: American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

(2 copies are available in the Library) Strongly recommended for students pursuing graduate study in psychology.

Additional Readings: Additional readings will be placed on reserve in the Trexler Library.

Course News, Documents etc. Moodle (<http://moodle.muhlenberg.edu/>).

Course Objectives

- To develop an understanding of the key principles and logic of research design as they relate to clinical research (i.e., investigations of the origins, prevention, and amelioration of psychological problems).
- To cultivate the fundamental skills used by researchers in psychology, including the following: synthesis and analysis of existing research, critical analysis of methodological and statistical arguments, use of information resources in the research process, written and oral presentation of research findings, and collaboration with peers.
- To develop a greater understanding of the ethical issues and methodological challenges inherent in clinical research.

Focus on Stigma

Like all sections of Advanced Lab at Muhlenberg, this course will place a heavy emphasis on the development of students' knowledge and skills related to research methodology. However, the particular focus of this section will be on health-related stigma, with an emphasis on stigma related to mental disorders. Weiss and colleagues (2006) provided a working definition of health-related stigma:

Stigma is typically a social process, experienced or anticipated, characterized by exclusion, rejection, blame or devaluation that results from experience, perception or reasonable anticipation of an adverse social judgment about a person or a group. This judgment is based on an enduring feature of identity conferred by a health problem or health-related condition, and the judgment is in some essential way medically unwarranted... (Weiss et al., 2006, p. 280)

All of the assigned readings, class assignments, and research projects will be directly or indirectly related to the area of health-related stigma. By focusing on a common core body of knowledge, students will be better prepared to develop sophisticated research questions on their own and provide constructive feedback for others' research projects.

Course Requirements and Grading Policy

The final course grade will be determined as follows:

Exam 1 (Take Home)	15%
Mid-Term Exam	15%
Cumulative Final Exam:	20%
Brief Assignments:	15%
Group Research Project:	30%
Leading Discussions:	5%

Individual exam and assignment grades will be assigned according to the following numerical equivalents:

93 - 100	A	77 - 79	C+
90 - 92	A-	73 - 76	C
87 - 89	B+	70 - 72	C-
83 - 86	B	65 - 69	D
80 - 82	B-	Below 65	F

Examinations: (50%) One take-home and two in-class examinations (including the final) will be administered. The exam format will be primarily essay questions that focus on analysis and application. If you have a conflict with any exam, you must notify me at least 48 hours in advance. Make-up exams will only be given for the following reasons, (1) sickness—you must bring me a note from the health center verifying your illness, (2) a family emergency/crisis/death—must be verified by the Dean of Students. If an exam is missed for reasons other than those listed above and I am not notified ahead of time, you will receive a zero for that exam. You must take the final exam during the designated final period. *If you have to miss the final, you will receive an "Incomplete" for the class. You are then subjected to College procedures regarding an incomplete grade (see student handbook).*

Group Research Project (30%): Groups of 3 or 4 students will research, design, and conduct an original psychological experiment on a topic of their choice. The completed project will include a written report in APA format and an oral presentation of the project on Psychology Day (date TBD). Preliminary drafts of each section of the paper are due throughout the semester. These preliminary drafts will not be graded, but are meant to provide valuable feedback. **You are strongly encouraged to seek feedback frequently throughout the semester.** Although the design and data collection phases of this project are

collaborative, the writing of the final paper is an individual assignment. A portion of the grade will be equal for all group members, but final papers will be graded individually.

Brief Assignments (15%): In addition to the major research project, you will also engage in a series of brief practice assignments, mini-experiments, and computer tasks. The purpose of these assignments is to reinforce key concepts and skills introduced in class lectures and discussions. In some cases, the assignments will be completed in class. In other cases, students will begin assignments in class but complete them outside of class. In most cases, the final product will be a brief paper describing the outcomes related to the assignment. Because these assignments are tied so closely to class material, it is essential that you attend class and actively monitor Moodle for guidelines and clarification of the assignments.

Leading Discussion/Presentation (5%): Throughout the semester, we will use contemporary research on health-related stigma to illustrate important methodological concepts and encourage critical analysis. To promote active engagement in this process, groups of students will be assigned to lead at least one discussion of a particular reading related to their group project. More specific guidelines and suggestions will be distributed early in the semester.

Research Participation: One of the barriers to obtaining meaningful data for class projects is a shortage of resources – primarily in terms of sample size. During a typical semester, students in this class and students in the Research Methods classes collect data on their own research projects. In addition to these projects, there are various faculty research projects and student independent research projects for which participants are sought. To ease the pressure on the LOC participant pool, we have moved toward a cooperative arrangement between the Advanced Lab and Research Methods courses that will ensure that all student class projects obtain a reasonable sample while not diluting the pool of participants available for faculty and student independent research. Specifically, as a class requirement, **you must participate in at least 2 studies being conducted by the Research Methods students** (these projects will not be posted on the LOC board). In return, Research Methods students will participate in your study. Failure to complete this requirement will result in a 2 point deduction from your final course grade

Attendance: Although attendance is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged. Attendance records will be used in determining borderline courses grades (e.g., Johnny has a 92.9 average and has only missed one class--he gets an A; Jimmy also has a 92.9 average and he has missed 10 classes--he gets an A-). A word of caution: In the past, students who have missed multiple classes have not done very well. Your presence and active participation are essential to learning in this course.

Late Assignments: Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day late (including weekend days).

Academic Integrity. You are expected to conduct yourself in accordance with the Academic Behavior Code of Muhlenberg College (<http://www.muhlenberg.edu/main/aboutus/dean-academic/integrity/>). Honesty is an essential aspect of academic integrity. Individual students are responsible for doing their own work and for not taking credit for the effort and ideas of others. This includes plagiarism, cheating and not contributing to group projects. This obligation is based on mutual trust and is essential to meeting the goals of this course. Academic dishonesty of any type on exams, quizzes or other graded work will not be tolerated.

Some important points about academic integrity:

1. Unless collaboration is explicitly permitted, you should assume that every course assignment or assessment (i.e., exams) is to be completed individually. This means that you are to work on course assignments by yourself – not with your friend, roommate or anyone else. Any violation of this restriction will be considered a violation of the Academic Behavior Code and will result in an automatic failure for the assignment. If you are struggling with an assignment, you should consult with me during office hours or make an appointment.
2. You are responsible for keeping drafts, references/sources, disk copies, and backup copies of all of your written assignments, to turn in upon my request until final grades are completed.
3. You should begin your work early. An unforeseen event arising the night before a paper is due is not a legitimate reason for a paper extension. When submitting assignments electronically, you should request confirmation that your assignment has been received or you should save some form of confirmation that your e-mail was sent (each e-mail program differs in how to do this).
4. You are responsible for taking precautions that your work (especially written work that paraphrases another written source). If I determine that you have copied all or part of an exam or paper from another source (including another student, a web page, a textbook, or other published source), you will receive a failing grade in this course. If your written work includes material that is paraphrased unacceptably from the original source, I will ask you to re-submit the written work and I will lower the assignment grade by 10%.
5. On all work submitted for a grade, you must write and sign the following pledge: “I pledge that I have complied with the Academic Behavior Code in this work.”

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requesting classroom or course accommodations must complete a multi-faceted application/approval process through the Office of Disability Services prior to the development and implementation of an Accommodation Plan. Each Plan is individually and collaboratively developed with the directors or other staff of the following Departments, as appropriate: Academic Resource Center, Counseling Services, Student Health Services, and the Office of Disability Services. If you have not already done so, please contact the appropriate Department to begin a dialogue regarding your academic needs and recommended accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. Students with disabilities who may need disability-related accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me during the first two weeks of class.

Important Note about Information Technology:

In this course, you will be required to make extensive use of the information technology available at Muhlenberg. You will be using a software program called Moodle © to exchange documents electronically, communicate outside of class, and stay updated on class events. Students who are less comfortable with information technology should schedule an appointment with me so that I can help orient you to the various tools we will be using.

Class Schedule

Date	Class Topic	Readings	Tentative Group Project Timeline
I. Conceptualizing Stigma			
1/19 (W)	Introduction: Defining Mental Illness and Stigma	Hinshaw: Chpt. 1	Post Topic Interests to Blackboard
1/21 (F)	↓	Weiss et al. (2006)	Form Groups, Generate List of Potential Topic Areas
1/26 (W)	Perspectives from Social Psychology, Sociology, and Evolutionary Psychology	Hinshaw: Chpt. 2	Begin Library Work
1/28 (F)	Historical and Modern Conceptions of Stigma; Library Instruction (Zotero)	Hinshaw: Chpts. 3, 4 Pescosolido et al. (2010)	Choose General Topic Area and Continue Library Work
2/2 (W)	Evidence from Scientific Investigations; Group Project Time	Hinshaw: Chpt. 5	Continue Library Research; Begin to Outline and Organize Introduction Section
2/4 (F)	Indicators from Everyday Life; Group Project Time	Hinshaw: Chpt. 6	<i>Submit a 1-page Description of Proposed Research Question and Rationale</i>
II. Studying Stigma			
2/9 (W)	Research Directions and Priorities; Selecting Measures and Designs	Hinshaw: Chpt. 8 Link et al. (2004)	Continue to Expand Outline/Introduction; Construct hypotheses
2/11 (F)	Measurement: Surveys; Reliability and Validity (Survey Construction Assignment) Take Home Exam 1 Due.	Pelham & Blanton (2007)	Identify General Research Strategy; Refine Hypotheses
2/16 (W)	Measurement: Factor Analysis (Student-led discussion)	Mertler & Vannatta (2001)	Identify Relevant Measures of Constructs
2/18 (F)	Group Project Time (Student-led discussion)		<i>Submit Draft of Introduction Section</i>
2/23 (W)	Survey Construction (cont.) (Student-led discussion)		Begin to Outline Proposed Methodology
2/25 (F)	Explicit vs. Implicit Measures (Student-led discussion)	Stier & Hinshaw (2007)	Refine Experimental Materials; Pilot Test
3/2 (W)	Designs: Experimental Approaches (Student-led discussion)	Corrigan & Watson (2007) Holmes et al. (1999)	↓
3/4 (F)	Designs: Qualitative Approaches	Koro-Ljungberg & Bussing (2009)	Refine Experimental Materials; Submit Ethics Proposal
3/5 – 3/13	SPRING BREAK		

3/16 (W)	Media Influences; Group Project Time	Stout et al., 2004	↓
3/18 (F)	Exam 2		<i>Submit Draft of Method Section</i>
3/23 (W)	Ethics in Psychological Research; Group Project Time		Begin Data Collection
3/25 (F)	Group Project Time		Data Collection
3/30 (W)	Review of Statistical Inference; Effect Size and Power,	Handouts	Data Collection

III. Overcoming Stigma

4/1 (F)	Overview of Strategies and Interventions	Heijnders & Van Der Meij (2006)	Data Entry and Analysis
4/6 (W)	Legislation, Policy and Community Efforts	Hinshaw: Chpt. 9 Kelly (2006)	Data Analysis
4/8 (F)	Overcoming Stigma: Media and Mental Health Professionals	Hinshaw: Chpt. 10	Data Analysis; Organize Results Section
4/13 (W)	Overcoming Stigma: Families and Individuals	Hinshaw: Chpt. 11	<i>Submit Draft of Results Section</i>
4/15 (F)	Meta-Analysis Group Project Time	Pascoe & Richman (2009)	Outline Discussion Section
4/20 (W)	Group Project Time		Discussion Section: The Finer Points of APA Format
4/27 (W)	Group Project Time		↓
5/3 (T)*	***PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH DAY (4:20 – 6:30)***		↓
5/4 (W)	Group Project Time		<i>Final Paper Due</i>
5/9 – 5/13	Final Exam (TBD)		

**This schedule is tentative. We may find it necessary to alter the schedule slightly as the semester progresses. Check regularly for announcements posted on Moodle.