

CO 5550 Psychopathology
Reformed Theological Seminary
Fall 2026
3 Credit Hours

Instructor

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Contact Information

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Class meeting time

Thursday 9:00 am–12:00 pm

Office Hours

By appointment

Course Description

An introduction to mental health disorders and their criteria based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition, text revision (DSM-5-TR). Students learn the vocabulary and taxonomy used in contextual dimensions of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling field. Etiology of disorders and treatment approaches are considered.

Course Objectives (Knowledge and Skill Outcomes)

Students will demonstrate comprehension of the following CACREP standards:

- CO1.** Treatment of Mental and Emotional Disorders - etiology, nomenclature, treatment, referral, and prevention of mental and emotional disorders, as well as the neurobiological and medical foundation and etiology of addiction and co-occurring disorders (5.C.2.b, 5.C.1.d)
- CO2.** Diagnostic Procedures - diagnostic process, including differential diagnosis and the use of current diagnostic classification systems, including the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD). Students will also consider the potential for substance use disorders to mimic and/or co-occur with a variety of neurological, medical, and psychological disorders (5.C.2.d, 5.C.2.e)
- CO3.** Psychopharmacology Considerations – overview of classifications, indications, and contraindications of commonly prescribed psychopharmacological medications for appropriate medical referral and consultation (5.C.2.h)
- CO4.** Neurological Impact - impact of biological and neurological mechanisms on mental health (5.C.2.g)

Methods of Instruction

This course will be taught online in a live synchronous format.

Assignments (Student Performance Evaluation Criteria)

A1. Quizzes. 20% of grade

There will be quizzes per the course schedule. The quizzes will be based on the required reading for the lecture topic being covered in class that day, and the material previously covered in class. There is no makeup for missed quizzes.

A2. Case Studies. 20% of grade

There will be case studies given per the course schedule. The case studies will be based on the DSM-5-TR diagnoses and issues discussed in class, and will consist of one or more case histories and associated questions. The case studies will be available to take on Canvas. Students will be assigned to **groups** of three or four to complete this assignment. One person from each group will be responsible for uploading the **group consensus-reached answers** to the assignment page on Canvas. Case studies must be completed by the due date. There is no makeup for missed case studies.

A3. Exams. 50% of grade

There will be two (2) take-home exams and a take-home final. Each exam will cover the assigned readings and class lectures and will be cumulative. You are free to use your lecture notes, the DSM-5-TR, and any other written or online resources you deem helpful. However, this is an **individual** project—you may not consult with any other person. The exams will consist of case studies from which you will make appropriate DSM-5-TR diagnoses.

A4. In-Class Discussion (10% of grade)

There will be in-class discussion of issues regarding the diagnosis and treatment of mental health disorders. Please be prepared to discuss each week's mental health disorder.

A5. Course Evaluation (0% of grade but required for course completion). Course evaluations are crucial for assessing and improving the MAC program. Therefore, each MAC course includes an assignment to complete an anonymous online course evaluation. You will verify whether you have completed the evaluation through a Canvas quiz. This will not count toward your grade but is necessary for successful completion of the course.

Required Course Materials (Texts, Readings, Videos, etc.):

- M1. American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed., text rev.; DSM-5-TR). American Psychiatric Publishing. ISBN: 978-0890425756 (hardback); ISBN: 978-0890425763 (paperback); ISBN 978-0-89042-577-0 (eBook)
- M2. Beidel, D. C., Hudson, D. L., & Whisenhunt, B. L. (2023). *Psychological disorders: A scientist-practitioner approach* (5th ed.). Pearson. ISBN-13: 9780137833535
- M3. Oltmanns, T. F., Martin, M. T., Neale, J. M., & Davison, G. C. (2019). *Case studies in abnormal psychology* (10th ed.). Hoboken, NJ, Wiley. ISBN-13: 978-1118836293
- M4. Keller, T. (2013). *Walking with God through pain and suffering*. NY: Riverhead. Read chapter 12. Available on Canvas.
- M5. Ressler, K. [TEDx Talks]. (2012, November 13). *The neuroscience of emotion: Kerry Ressler at TEDxPeachtree 2012* [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9LjXHtLvIY>
- M6. Johnson, E., & Watson, W. (2019, January). *Still saints: Caring for Christians with personality disorders*. Retrieved from <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/still-saints>. Available on Canvas.
- M7. Preston, J. (2019). Quick reference to psychiatric medications. Retrieved from <http://psyd-fx.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Quick-Reference-Guide-April-2019.pdf>. Available on Canvas.
- M8. Emlet, M. R. (2019, August 24). Prozac and the Promises of God: The Christian Use of Psychoactive Medication. Retrieved from <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/prozac-and-the-promises-of-god>

Course Process and Schedule

Lecture ID	Date	Topic	Reading Due	Assignments Due	CACREP 2016 Standards
L1	8/27	Introduction to the DSM-5-TR; Diagnosis	M2. <i>Psychological D/O's</i> Ch. 1, Mod. 1.1-1.3, 3:12 Ch. 3, Mod. 3:13-3:15 M4. <i>Keller</i> Ch. 12		5.C.2.b 5.C.2.d
L2	9/3	Mood Disorders	M1. <i>DSM-5-TR</i> pp. 139-175, 177-214 M2. <i>Psychological D/O's</i> Ch. 7 M3. <i>Case Studies</i> Ch. 5, 6	Quiz 1	5.C.2.b 5.C.2.d 5.C.2.e 5.C.2.g
				Case study 1 due 9/4	
L3	9/10	Anxiety Disorders	M1. <i>DSM-5-TR</i> pp. 215-261 M2. <i>Psychological D/O's</i> Ch. 4 M3. <i>Case Studies</i> Ch. 7 M5. <i>Ressler</i>	Quiz 2	5.C.2.b 5.C.2.d 5.C.2.e 5.C.2.g
L4	9/17	Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders; Trauma- and Stress-related Disorders; Z-codes	M1. <i>DSM-5-TR</i> pp. 263-328 M2. <i>Psychological D/O's</i> Ch. 5 M3. <i>Case Studies</i> Ch. 8, 9, 10	Quiz 3	5.C.2.b 5.C.2.d 5.C.2.e 5.C.2.g
				Case study 2 due 9/18	
				Case study 3 due 9/21	
				Exam 1 due 9/23	
L5	9/24	Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders; Dissociative Disorders	M1. <i>DSM-5-TR</i> pp. 329-370 M2. <i>Psychological D/O's</i> Ch. 6 M3. <i>Case Studies</i> Ch. 11, 12	Quiz 4	5.C.2.b 5.C.2.d 5.C.2.e 5.C.2.g
L6	10/1	Feeding and Eating Disorders	M1. <i>DSM-5-TR</i> pp. 371-405 M2. <i>Psychological D/O's</i> Ch. 8 M3. <i>Case Studies</i> Ch. 13, 14	Quiz 5	5.C.2.b 5.C.2.d 5.C.2.e 5.C.2.g
				Case study 4 due 10/2	
	10/8	Reading Week			
				Case study 5 due 10/14	
L7	10/15	Paraphilic Disorders; Sexual Dysfunctions; Gender Dysphoria	M1. <i>DSM-5-TR</i> pp. 511-520; 779-801 M2. <i>Psychological D/O's</i> Ch. 9 M3. <i>Case Studies</i> Ch. 16, 17, 22	Quiz 6	5.C.2.b 5.C.2.d 5.C.2.e 5.C.2.g
L8	10/22	Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders	M1. <i>DSM-5-TR</i> pp. 101-138 M2. <i>Psychological D/O's</i> Ch. 11 M3. <i>Case Studies</i> Ch. 3	Quiz 7	5.C.2.b 5.C.2.d 5.C.2.e 5.C.2.g
				Case study 6 due 10/23	

				Case study 7 due 10/26	
				Exam 2 due 10/28	
L9	10/29	Personality Disorders	M1. <i>DSM-5-TR</i> pp. 733-757 M2. <i>Psychological D/O's</i> Ch. 12 M3. <i>Case Studies</i> Ch 20, 23	Quiz 8	5.C.2.b 5.C.2.d 5.C.2.e 5.C.2.g
L10	11/5	Personality Disorders	M1. <i>DSM-5-TR</i> pp. 757-778 M3. <i>Case Studies</i> Ch 21 M6. <i>Johnson & Watson</i>	Quiz 9	5.C.2.b 5.C.2.d 5.C.2.e 5.C.2.g
				Case study 8 due 11/6	
				Case study 9 due 11/9	
L11	11/12	Childhood and Adolescent Disorders; ADHD; Disruptive Behavior Disorders	M1. <i>DSM-5-TR</i> pp. 56-76; 521-541 M2. <i>Psychological D/O's</i> Ch. 13 M3. <i>Case Studies</i> Ch 1, 2	Quiz 10	5.C.2.b 5.C.2.d 5.C.2.e 5.C.2.g
L12	11/19	Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders	M1. <i>DSM-5-TR</i> pp. 543-665 M2. <i>Psychological D/O's</i> Ch. 10 M3. <i>Case Studies</i> Ch 4, 18, 19	Quiz 11	5.C.1.d 5.C.2.b 5.C.2.d 5.C.2.e 5.C.2.g
				Case study 10 due 11/20	
				Case study 11 due 11/24	
	11/26-27	Thanksgiving Holiday			
L13	12/3	Psychopharmacology for Counselors	M7. <i>Preston</i> M8. <i>Emlet</i>	Quiz 12	5.C.2.g 5.C.2.h
				Final exam due 12/10	

Policies and Important Information

All written work must conform to American Psychological Association (APA) style. If a student does not have a copy of the APA manual, one should be purchased, or students may use one of the many APA style websites available online (e.g., <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). Assessment will include how well students represent their thoughts on paper, craftsmanship in writing, and organization of all written work.

Disability Accommodation Policy. If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor prior to the start of this course. You must provide a letter from the Dean of Students that verifies your disabled status. The instructor and student will discuss the available accommodations for the course. If the student with a disability does not disclose that s/he has a disability, then the student is agreeing to take full responsibility for any related consequences that may occur.

Access to Research Database. RTS provides the Jackson and Orlando MAC students access to the APA PsycARTICLES and the EBSCO Psychology & Behavioral Science Collection full text journal databases. You can access these databases in the library and from any device with an Internet connection. Remote access instructions are provided at <https://rts.edu/academics/library/databases/>.

Use of Artificial Intelligence. You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. You may use AI programs (e.g. ChatGPT) to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, be aware that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). Any plagiarism or other form of cheating will be dealt with severely under relevant RTS policies. Of course, there are many cases where I may not be able to tell if you cheated or not. Note however that, for any reason, including doubts about whether the assignment was written with external help, any student can be required to come in for an oral examination on their assignment. In such a case, a grade for the oral examination will replace that for the assignment.

Submission of work. All assignments are to be completed on the Canvas course webpage.

Late work. All assignments are due as scheduled regardless of attendance, unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor. Assignments turned in late will be deducted 1 percentage point for each late day.

Return of work. All work will be graded on Canvas.

Grading Scale:

A (97-100)	B- (86-87)	D+ (75-77)
A- (94-96)	C+ (83-85)	D (72-74)
B+ (91-93)	C (80-82)	D- (70-71)
B (88-90)	C- (78-79)	F (Below 70)

Attendance Policy. Regular attendance is expected and required. Excessive absences will result in a failing grade for the class. If serious illness or an emergency prevents a student from attending any class, please notify the instructor before the class begins. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain any materials handed out or presented during the missed class from a classmate.

Class Participation. Students are expected to participate in all components of the class. Each student is expected to read all of the assigned materials in advance for each class. Contributions should reflect knowledge of the reading assignments or other sources.

Student Learning Outcome Table

The table below shows how the objectives of this course will be met, and how they relate to CACREP Standards. Details about specific course objectives, assignments, and evaluation methods can be found in later sections of this syllabus.

CACREP Standard(s)	Course Objective	Material	Lecture	Assignment / Evaluation
5.C.2.b	CO1. Treatment of Mental and Emotional Disorders - etiology, nomenclature, treatment, referral,	M1. (all noted pages) M2. (Chs. 1, 3-13)	L1-13	A1. Weekly quizzes A2. Weekly case studies

	and prevention of mental and emotional disorders.	M3. (Chs. 1-14, 16-20; 22-23) M5. (all)		A3. Exams
5.C.1.d	CO1. The neurobiological and medical foundation and etiology of addiction and co-occurring disorders	M1. (pp. 543-665) M2. (Ch. 10) M3. (Chs. 4, 18, 19)	L12	A1. Weekly quiz A2. Weekly case study A3. Final exam
5.C.2.d	CO2. Diagnostic Procedures - diagnostic process, including differential diagnosis and the use of current diagnostic classification systems, including the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD).	M1. (all noted pages) M2. (Chs. 1, 3-13) M3. (Chs. 1-14, 16-20; 22-23) M7. (all)	L1-13	A1. Weekly quizzes A2. Weekly case studies A3. Exams
5.C.2.e	CO2. Students will also consider the potential for substance use disorders to mimic and/or co-occur with a variety of neurological, medical, and psychological disorders	M1. (pp. 543-665) M2. (Ch. 10) M3. (Chs. 4, 18, 19)	L12	A1. Weekly quiz A2. Weekly case study A3. Final exam
5.C.2.h	CO3. Psychopharmacology Considerations – overview of classifications, indications, and contraindications of commonly prescribed psychopharmacological medications for appropriate medical referral and consultation	M7. (all) M8. (all)	L13	A1. Weekly quiz
5.C.2.g	CO4. Neurological Impact - impact of biological and neurological mechanisms on mental health (5.C.2.g)	M1. (all note pages) M2. (Chs. 1, 3-13) M3. (Chs. 1-14, 16-20, 22-23) M6. (all) M7. (all) M8. (all)	L1-13	A1. Weekly quizzes A2. Weekly case studies A3. Exams

Course Objectives Related to MAC* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: CO 5550 Psychopathology
 Professor: Katie Majeste, PhD, LPC-S
 Campus: Jackson
 Date: 2026

MAC* Student Learning Outcomes <i>In order to measure the success of the MAC curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MAC outcomes.</i>		Rubric • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None	Mini-Justification
Professional Counseling Orientation & Ethical Practice	Understands and applies the basic knowledge needed to be an effective counselor including: the history and philosophy of counseling, ethical standards of practice, personal career development, advocacy for clients, consultation & collaboration, and a Reformed, biblical and theological framework for counseling.	Strong	Provides important knowledge needed to be an effective counselor. Proper diagnosis of client disorders is foundational to ethical practice.
Social & Cultural Diversity	Understands and demonstrates how living in a cultural/global society affects clients who are seeking counseling and clinical mental health services, as well as the effects of sin such as racism, discrimination, sexism, and oppression on one's own life and career and those of the client.	Minimal	Cultural aspects to various disorders, as well as possible over diagnosis for minority populations is covered.
Human Growth & Development	Understands and applies knowledge of various theories of individual and family development, and factors affecting human development. To include biological, neurological, physiological, systemic, and environmental factors, addiction, and effects of crisis, disasters, and traumas.	Minimal	Disorders specific to minors are covered.
Career Development	Understands and applies theories and models of career development, counseling, and decision making.	None	None
Counseling & Helping Relationships	Understands and applies theories and models of counseling, strategies for understanding and practicing consultation, and developing relevant counseling treatment and intervention plans.	Moderate	Proper diagnosis is foundational to competent treatment and intervention planning.
Group Counseling & Group Work	Understands and applies theories and models of group counseling and group work, dynamics of the group process and development, and therapeutic factors that contribute to group effectiveness.	None	None
Assessment & Testing	Understands and applies clinical knowledge effectively, including various models and approaches to clinical evaluation and their appropriate uses. To include diagnostic interviews, mental status examinations, symptom inventories, and psychoeducational and personality assessments, and is sensitive to the complications of diagnosis and interpretation of formal and informal evaluation.	Minimal	Assessments for common disorders are discussed.
Research & Program Evaluation	Demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate research through a biblical worldview and integrate it into counseling practice. Understands the process of program evaluation and its integration into the practice of counseling and clinical mental health counseling.	None	None
Clinical Mental Health Counseling	Demonstrates the knowledge and skills necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the context of clinical mental health counseling.	Strong	Knowledge of disorders and skill in proper diagnosis foundational to clinical mental health counseling.
Integration (Biblical/Theological)	Knowledge of and integration of Reformed, biblical and theological concepts with counseling practices.	Minimal	Implications of suffering and mental disorders on faith is discussed.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the triune God.	Minimal	The necessity of a grounded faith when working with people suffering mental disorders is discussed.