

# YORK UNIVERSITY

## PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

### SEMINAR IN ATYPICAL DEVELOPMENT 4460 6.0 A

2013-14

#### Section A: Monday 4PM, MC 109

**Course Director:** Dr. Ehud E. Avitzur  
Webpage: [www.psych.yorku.ca/eavitzur](http://www.psych.yorku.ca/eavitzur)

*Office:* 256 BSB

*Office Hours:* Monday 3:00-3:50 PM, or by appointment.

Phone Messages: (416) 736-2100 x 6115

E-mail address: [eavitzur@yorku.ca](mailto:eavitzur@yorku.ca) use it for urgent and important matters only. PLEASE WRITE "4460 /A" in the subject line. E-mail without such a subject line would be considered "a spam" and will be deleted.

**Secretary:** Mrs. Judy Manners, Office 280 BSB, Tel. (416) 736-2100 x 6115

**Teaching Assistant and Practicum Coordinator:** Nicole Racine, MA.

Email: [psyc4460@yorku.ca](mailto:psyc4460@yorku.ca)

Office: 2004 Sherman Health Science Centre

Office hours: Wednesday 9am-10am by appointment

Telephone number (for emergencies only): (416)-884-7869.

**Prerequisites:** Prerequisites: PSYC 1010 6.0 OR 2410 6.0 with a minimum grade of C; PSYCH 2030 3.0, or PSYC 2530 3.0 or substitute; one of PSYC 2020 6.0, PSYC 2021 3.0 or PSYC 2510 3.0 or substitute; PSYCH 2110 3.0 OR 3240 3.0. Students must be in an Honours Program in Psychology and have completed 84 credits (excluding education courses).

#### Course Description and Objectives

This seminar aims at deepening the knowledge and understanding of developmental processes that may lead to psychopathology in childhood, adolescence and possibly in adulthood as well as to resilience. Classes will focus on

1. Theories that offer insight regarding pathogenic processes and resilience during childhood.
2. Childhood psychopathology: Focus on the most prevalent disorders.
3. Specific life situations during childhood and their pathogenic potential.
4. Students' experiences in volunteering placement.

Active involvement of students in constructive class discussions is of major importance.

**The structure of the course:**

During the first classes in the fall semester we will mainly explore various developmental theories and their contribution to the understanding of pathogenic development. Later, we will explore some of the core concepts in psychopathology in general and childhood psychopathology in particular. The last classes in the fall semester and the first classes in the winter semester will be devoted to most prevalent childhood disorders and to pathogenic stressors during childhood. While most of the first semester will be lectures and discussions, the second semester will be mainly students' presentations on either a disorder (such as ADHD) or a critical life situation (such as poverty). The seminar final academic paper will follow the presentation and will focus on the same topic.

Note: The classes do not follow a textbook. For a relaxed time management students are expected to read the chapters in the textbook according to a suggested schedule, however textbook-chapters are not covered in class.

**Practicum / Case study:** Students are expected to become involved in a volunteer practicum activity one day (1-3 hours) a week for approximately 16 weeks, ideally beginning in October and lasting into March or June. This class activity is designed to give students the experience of following and coming to understand a child as he/she functions in the context of the setting, and relating to theories and applications studied in class. Students may arrange their own volunteer placement, provided it is first approved by the course director, or participate in the course group program. The latter involves volunteering in one of several local public schools that are partnering with our program. There will be an information session led by the practicum coordinator early in the academic year. While there is flexibility in choosing a placement, studying a child of friends or family members will not be considered an option.

Please note: In order to participate in any volunteer activity involving children, you will be required to obtain a Police Check from the your local community police department. Please arrange for this as quickly as possible as it may take several weeks to receive your clearance.

**Required Reading:**

Understanding Abnormal Child Psychology, 2nd Edition, Vicky Phares, 2008, Wiley.

**Evaluation**

Your final grade will be calculated based on:

A tentative-outline's presentation (10%); final presentation (15%); constructive contribution in class (15%); paper (20%); two exams (2X 15%); practicum/case study (10%).

Your grade for the course will be based on the following scale: A+ 90-100; A 80-89; B+ 75-79; B 70-74; C+ 65-69; C 60-64; D+ 55-59; D 50-54;

Senate approved the following grading schemes for the Faculties of Administrative Studies, Arts, Atkinson College, Education, Fine Arts, Science and Glendon College:

- A+. 9. Exceptional Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques and exceptional skill or great originality in the use of those concepts, techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.
- A. 8. Excellent Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques with a high degree of skill and/or some elements of originality in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.
- B+. 7. Very Good Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques with a fairly high degree of skill in the use of those concepts, techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.
- B. 6. Good Good level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with considerable skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.
- C+. 5. Competent Acceptable level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with considerable skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.
- C. 4. Fairly Competent Acceptable level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with some skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.
- D+. 3. Passing Slightly better than minimal knowledge of required concepts and/or techniques together with some ability to use them in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.
- D. 2. Barely Passing Minimum knowledge of concepts and/or techniques needed to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.
- E. 1. Marginally Failing
- F. 0. Failing.

### **Academic Honesty:**

The Department of Psychology, Faculty of Health, operates according to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty, which is available electronically through the following <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69>

### **Presentation and paper**

Basically, the presentation and paper are similar in terms of content and structure. The paper is due on the first class in January. The **maximum time frame for the presentation is 30 minutes**, not including discussion. After the presentation, before the discussion, the presenter will distribute a summary handout to the class.

**Topics for the presentation:** some of the most prevalent childhood disorders (check the detailed list on the plan for the winter semester). Another option relates to the following list of life stressors or critical life situations that may become pathogenic: Maltreatment (physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, exploitation); moving to a new place; immigration; sickness in the family (physical, mental); death in the family; parents' conflicts; divorce; poverty; excessive wealth ("*affluenza*"); adoption; childhood in foster homes; parent's unemployment; atypical family structures; atypical sexual or gender behaviour. Other ideas are welcome: Please consult with the course director.

**Tentative outline of paper and presentation:** One double-space printed page of the rough draft of your paper and presentation's outline + annotated bibliography (check on the web "APA annotated bibliography". I found, for example, [http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~genzuk/APA\\_Format\\_Annotated\\_Bibliography.pdf](http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~genzuk/APA_Format_Annotated_Bibliography.pdf)). The student will present her/his research and thoughts in front of the class. The outline-presentation will be graded, according to manifested effort in reading and thinking, as Good effort (A level), Satisfactory effort (C level) or Unsatisfactory effort (F level). Feedback on your outline will be given during the following class.

**Criteria of final presentation evaluation:** Good structure; ability to describe the topic as complex, multi faceted psychological phenomenon; correct usage of theoretical concepts; demonstrating ability to integrate knowledge in developmental psychology and psychopathology; sufficient addressing methodological issues when

relevant; originality; critical thinking; depth; demonstration of constructive approach to relevant questions, criticism and contributions of class members.

### **Final Paper:**

The paper will require to integrate minimum one theoretical perspectives learnt in class and at least one theoretical model or an empirical research independently studied, and to apply them to the topic. The final paper will be written in accordance with the APA tradition (Please consult <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). The recommended length of the paper is 8 double spaced pages (not including bibliography). Maximum length is 10 double-space pages (not including bibliography). Appendix at any length is accepted.

The paper will include: APA style title; abstract; the core of the paper will be in free-style; summary; APA style reference list; appendix. Suggested space allocation: Abstract ½ page; introduction of the phenomenon 1-2 pages; developing the understanding of the phenomenon in terms of theories studied in class and other theories, etiology, pathogenesis and impact 4-6 pages; summary will include the author's own thoughts, ideas 1 page.

**Criteria for paper evaluation:** Are similar to the criteria for presentation evaluation. In addition: Reference list of *original* sources, demonstration of independent academic library research. **Penalties:** referring to a textbook, class' lectures or a website. Papers are to be handed in by the due date. Students handing in the paper in a delay will be penalized (3% per day). Students presenting their work during the last two weeks of classes will be automatically granted with a seven-day extension.

### **Practicum/Case Study:**

An up to 5 pages double spaced summary of your practicum experience will be handed in at last class of the winter semester. The goal is to share with me some your insights from this experience and integrate those with the some of the knowledge in psychology in general and in developmental psychology and psychopathology in particular. If you wish, this paper may be written informally as *a letter* to me. **Ethics:** Make sure to mask all identifying details about the child who is on focus of that experience.

If a free format letter isn't your preferred style, for your convenience, please find a suggested structure for this assignment:

1. Tell me about the child that you mentored (age, describe the child and his/her behavior). *Length: One page long.*
2. Tell me about typical interactions and some of the significant incidences that you have had with this child. Feel free to share your thoughts and emotions about the interaction with this child. *Length: Two pages long.*
3. What did you learn from your experience in this practicum? Here you may connect with psychological knowledge that you have gained through your four years of study of psychology. Here you are expected to refer to a reference list. *Length: 1-2 pages long.*
4. What did you learn about the education system? *Length: One page long.*
5. What is/are your personal conclusion/s from this experience? *Length: Half page long.*

This report will be graded according to depth of description and the manifested psychological understanding of the child and the interaction with the child. As always, academic writing skill is an important factor in the evaluation of every written work. Evaluation: Clarity and style 50%; Content 50%. Penalties: Ethics (identifying information).

**Important dates:**

Fall Semester begins September 9, 2013; ends December 6, 2013.

Winter semester starts January 6, 2014; ends April 4, 2014.

Last date to enroll without permission of course instructor: September 22, 2013

Last date to drop the course without receiving a grade: February 14, 2014 (Make sure you have enough feedback on your performance prior to this date).

**Final papers due date: Last class.**

**No class on:**

Fall Cocurricular Days: October 30- November 3, 2013

Winter Reading week: February 15-21, 2014

### Course Outline: Section A

Lesson #	Topic	Reading assignment	Assignment/presentations
<b>Fall Term</b>			
1 Sep. 9	Introduction to the seminar: TA presentation on the practicum		
2	Principle of OD. Bronfenbrenner.	Chapter 15	
3	1. Basic concepts in psychopathology 2. Pathogenic biological factors: Heredity, biophysical individuality, temperament	Chapter 1	
4	Pathogenic biological factors -Cont. Pathogenic Experiences: S. Freud	Chapter 2	
5 Oct. 7	Pathogenic Experiences: 1. M. Klein 2. M. Mahler	Chapter 3	
6	Pathogenic Experiences: H. Kohut	Chapter 4	
7	Pathogenic Experiences: Pavlov, Skinner, Bandura <b>Outline presentations</b>	Chapters 5	Each student presents 5-10 minutes. Hand in the outline and an annotated bibliography.
8	Feedback		
9	Risk and resilience	Chapter 6	
10	Anxiety and its impact	Chapter 8	
11	EXAM 1	<b>Chapter 1-6, 8, 15, and classes</b>	Hand in the title page and the first paragraph of your paper
12 Dec. 3	Feedback on the title page and the first paragraph of your paper.		

Winter term

1 Jan. 7	Behavioural disorders	Chapters 9, 10	<b>Papers are due</b> ADHD CD
2	Anxiety disorders 1	Reread chapter 8	GAD Phobia Social anxiety
3	Anxiety disorders 2		Panic OCD PTSD
4	Mood disorders	Chapter 7	Depression Suicide and suicide attempts
5 Feb. 4	Pervasive Disorders	Chapter 12	Autistic disorders Schizophrenia
6 Feb. 11	Learning Disorders	Chapter 13	Dyslexia Dyscalculia Dysgraphia
7 Feb. 25	Alcohol and Substance	Chapter 11	Alcohol use and abuse Substance use and abuse
8 Mar. 4	Eating disorders	Chapter 14	Obesity Anorexia Nervosa Bulimia Nervosa
9	Life stressors		1. 2. 3.
10	Life stressors		1. 2. 3.
11	Life stressors		1. 2. 3.
12 Apr 1 Last class	<b>Exam 2</b>	<b>Chapters 7, 9-14, And Classes</b>	

\*Make sure you have enough feedback on your performance prior to the last date to drop the course without receiving a grade (Please check “important dates” on previous pages).

**Have a good spring and summer!**