



McMaster Divinity
College

MS 3P1210

When Something Goes Wrong: Understanding Trauma and Psychopathology

Specializations: [CC/CS/CW]

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Mon 9:00am to 10:50am

COURSE SYLLABUS

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will survey the broad categories and most common faces of psychological distress and dysfunction, with an emphasis on tracing the common theme and effects of trauma physiologically, behaviorally, emotionally, cognitively, relationally, and spiritually. Major diagnoses of mental illness will be reviewed, along with the current understandings of etiology and contemporary treatment approaches, including pharmacology. An additional emphasis will be on understanding the brain-behavior connection in human psychological distress, as well as exploring the perspectives from diverse cultures, including integration with Christian Scripture and theology. The goal of the course is to understand ourselves and others better as we grapple with the consequences of “when something goes wrong” in life and in relationships and deepen compassion for ourselves and others as we try to heal those consequences through relationship and faith, in contexts of professional and pastoral counseling, chaplaincy, and wider church ministry. A final exam will ensure mastery of material in preparation for professional examination standards.

Trigger Alert: By necessity, this course will include discussions of some very graphic traumatic situations. Since we cannot hope to help others, if we are not in a healing journey ourselves, this course will also encourage self-disclosure at the level of comfort of the participant through reflection papers and other activities. Some self-surveys will not be handed in to the instructor, and do not need to be shared with anyone else unless the student wishes. The aim is to encourage self-evaluation consistent with the themes of the course. If any student has concerns about this course, please contact the instructor privately.

Core/Required Course for: MACSC, MDiv Specialization in Counseling and Spiritual Care

Elective for: Students outside the above programs

Advanced Research and Doctoral Students: 5- or 6-unit students needing to enroll in the course must obtain a separate set of course requirements from the instructor.

2. COURSE FORMAT

This online course is offered as an in person, on campus class which is live-streamed for distance learners, scheduled once a week, to allow maximum time for direct interaction with the instructor, as well as interaction with other students. Course objectives will also be met through reading, written assignments, chapter quizzes, a major paper and a final exam, as well as asynchronous (on your own time) online activities, including watching videos/podcasts. Class sessions will include didactic instruction, class discussion and other experiential activities as time allows. Assignments are formulated to master the content of the diagnostic categories, etiological theories, and treatment approaches reviewed and to be able to apply this content to actual contexts in counselling and ministry through case examples in class and case illustration in the texts.

3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*These learning objectives are coordinated with the expected competencies for CASC/ACSS certified chaplains and pastoral counsellors and the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (*CRPO competency number is listed. See full text of relevant competencies on A2L for reference).*

Knowing

1. To describe psychopathology and mental illness through a bio-psycho-social-spiritual lens (CRPO 1.7)
2. To explain how psychopathology and mental illness are related to adaptation to various types of trauma, especially developmental trauma (CRPO 1.4, 5.1)
3. To distinguish the most frequent major diagnoses in mental health, their etiology, and contemporary treatment approaches (CRPO 1.3, 1.3a), including psychopharmacology (CRPO 1.3.3, 1.3.4)
4. To understand the strengths and limitations of diagnostic classifications and their application in practice (CRPO 1.3b)

Being

1. To engage in self-reflection to understand one's own values and biases around issues of mental health and emotional dysfunction (CRPO 1.2)
2. To increase comfort with self-disclosure, within one's own sense of safety and boundaries and as appropriate to the assignments and class discussion, to support self-development and growth (CRPO 1.3)
3. To practice empathic and respectful listening, reflection and communication during class discussions (CRPO 3.1)
4. To increase tolerance in hearing others' pain and being open to the experience of one's own pain (CRPO 1.3)

Doing

1. To read about contemporary descriptions and categories of psychopathology, and discuss perspectives on how psychopathology might be understood through a Scriptural lens, as well as other cultural lenses (CRPO 1.6, 4.2)
2. To become familiar with professional journal articles related to the secular study of psychopathology, and demonstrate competence in appropriate psychology research and professional writing (CRPO competencies 1.8, 5.4; Ethical Standard 5.3)

3. To be able to identify possible symptoms of mental illness that may need referral to and intervention by a medical or other mental health professional (CRPO 3.1, 3.1a, 3.1b, 3.2.1, 3.2.2)
4. To reflect on and discuss how we can promote compassionate awareness of and dialogue with the mentally ill in our congregations and communities
5. To reflect on and discuss how our own Christian world view, culture, and personal experiences have influenced our views of mental illness (CRPO 1.2, 1.5)
6. To develop a beginning “working theory” of the relationship of mental illness to sin, evil, and demonic activity, and how it might interact with faith

4. COURSE TEXTS and REQUIRED READING

The first textbook for this class is available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at books@readon.ca. The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours. The second textbook is only available digitally through the link below.

A. **Required Textbooks:**

McRay, B.W., Yarhouse, M.A., and Butman, R.E. *Modern Psychopathologies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal*, 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016. (486 pp)

Nevid, J.S., Greene, B.S., and Knight, L. *Essentials of Abnormal Psychology*, Canadian Edition, 5th ed. Pearson Canada, 2023 update.

*You must purchase the Revel Edition, available digitally with learning resources at the following link from the publisher:

https://www.pearson.com/en-us/subject-catalog/p/essentials-of-abnormal-psychology-canadian-edition/P200000007502/9780136774563?utm_source=copystudentlink&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=XXLEGP0423PCOM

This can be read and accessed through the publisher’s website or their free downloaded app.

B. **Recommended:**

American Psychiatric Association. *Desk Reference to the DSM V-TR*. APA, 2022.

For some weird reason, you can find this at half the Amazon price at Walmart Canada:

https://www.walmart.ca/en/ip/Desk-Reference-to-the-Diagnostic-Criteria-From-DSM-5-TR-TM/2IK6GUUH6JJE?offerId=280BA99399863DF9B4BB2A274AF48AD9&cmpid=SEM_CA_402_Q6O4XED59F_7170000106038225_58700008258163163&utm_id=SEM_CA_402_Q6O4XED59F_7170000106038225_58700008258163163&utm_medium=paid_search&utm_source=google&utm_campaign=always_on&gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCCQjw05i4Bh

[DiARIsAB_2wfdIeGM6_UHVJcloyZD9cyYYhqOV2CbDnvsscKLhzm501Vww0PiOVR4aAkMIEALw_wcB&gclid=aw.ds](https://diarisab.2wfdiegm6.uhvjcloyzd9cyyyhqov2cbdnvsscKLhzm501Vww0PiOVR4aAkMIEALw_wcB&gclid=aw.ds)

- C. Other recommended supplementary texts and articles will be posted as bibliographic resources on A2L for further exploration and interest.

5. INSTRUCTOR

Biography: Cathryn Harris, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor (part time Associate) at McMaster Divinity College. She is a Registered Psychologist (CPO) with competencies in both Clinical and Counselling Psychology, a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist and Approved Supervisor in Marriage and Family Therapy with CAMFT, and a Certified EMDR Therapist. For over 35 years, and currently fulltime, she has provided psychotherapy and psychological assessments to individuals, couples, families, children and adolescents in outpatient private practice. She has also worked in inpatient and day treatment programs, and provided consultation to pastors, teachers, and business professionals on individual and organizational issues. She has been continuously involved in the training and supervision of Christian mental health professionals for over 35 years as well, beginning as Adjunct Professor at Rosemead School of Psychology, and Fuller Graduate Seminary for a short while, and for the longest time as Clinical Supervisor for a Christian counselling ministry that placed counselling interns in churches throughout Southern California. She considers it a privilege on to provide counselling skills training specifically to Pastors, as she did previously in California and continues to do at MDC. Dr. Harris has also been married for over 35 years to another psychologist and has one adult daughter who has managed to survive that experience.

Contact and Availability: Dr. Harris is available for one-on-one consultation after class during office hours 11:15am to 12:30pm on Mondays. Please email ahead of time, if possible, for an appointment. Otherwise, students may contact her at drCathrynHarris@gmail.com. Please put "Psychopathology class" in the subject so your correspondence can be quickly identified.

6. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Class Participation and Asynchronous Activities - 20% of grade

Included in the Participation grade are: Attendance, participation in class discussions, and participation in asynchronous activities. The latter includes watching related media content for Nevid et al on the Revel platform online, self-surveys on A2L (2-3), online group discussions (6) and personal reflection papers (4 total, 2-3 pages each). Asynchronous activities are designed to supplement and elucidate course content, prepare for in-class lectures (Goal K1, K2, K3), apply course content to concrete case examples, help the student explore and discuss how their own experiences and theology interact with their understanding of mental illness (Goals B1, D4, D5, D6), and practice self-disclosure and respect for others in their interactions (Goals B2, B3, B4). Interactive activities on Revel are monitored by the instructor and contribute to this part of the student's grade. A checklist of Asynchronous Activities assigned will provided for the student to keep track from week to week.

B. Chapter Quizzes – 10%

These prepare you in part for the final exam, to make sure that you are mastering the objective content areas of the course (although they are not necessarily the same questions as on the final exam) (Knowing Goals). They coincide with the assigned readings in Nevid et al, can be found as self-scored quizzes within the online Revel platform for the text, and are due at the BEGINNING of almost EVERY class. Quizzes in Revel are monitored by the course instructor and entered into your grade here. See class schedule and A2L.

**C. Written Assignment: Literature Review on a Psychological Disorder: - 35% of grade
DUE MARCH 14th FRIDAY 8AM**

Requirements: 12-15 pages, double spaced, not including references. Use at least 10 professional sources (books, book chapters, peer reviewed journal articles – NOT web blogs) in addition to relevant chapters in your textbook. Primary sources are preferred. You must use MDC style in formatting all aspects of your paper, including footnotes and bibliography.

- A. **Assign a relevant title to your paper.** Your discussion should remain focused on this topic. Make it specific. If possible, give a hint at your conclusions.
- B. **Literature Review:** Choose one disorder to research and review in depth, including characteristics of the disorder, demographics and epidemiology, proposed etiologies, and common treatment methods. In each of these areas, you will summarize and integrate the current empirical research and other literature you have read, giving appropriate citations as necessary, to thoroughly explain the disorder and the current issues pertaining to it. (See Dr. Mutter's paper and other resources on A2L regarding how to write a literature review).
- C. **Conclusions:** *What are the major themes, issues, current controversies, relevant treatment and cultural considerations etcetera concerning this psychological diagnosis? What stands out?*
- D. **Theological Integration:** Include consideration of Biblical texts and other theological sources that might be relevant to understanding and addressing this disorder and/or its treatment.
- E. **Ministry Application:** Conclude your paper with implications and considerations relevant to your specialization, as below:

Counselling and Spiritual Care students:

Discuss how this disorder has some personal relevance for you and/or your ministerial community or counselees and describe how your experiences compare to your research. Then, discuss how you will incorporate your research

into a plan to address your personal needs or the needs of your community or counselees. Use references as necessary to support your plan if possible.

Other students: Choose one of the following options -

A. Evaluate how this disorder might be evident in and/or impacting your ministry communities, including how cultures within your ministry communities define and attempt to address this disorder. Then, discuss how you would translate your research into a culturally relevant plan to meet the needs of those cultural communities. Use references as necessary to support your hypothesis and plan.

OR

B. Evaluate and discuss how different secular views of this disorder compare or contrast to a Christian view of the behaviors involved in this disorder. Can these views be integrated? Are there issues that can't be reconciled? Use references as possible to support your perspective.

OR

C. How does your research on this disorder inform your perspective on the relationship between "Sin" and "Psychopathology"? Are these independent, parallel, overlapping, synonymous, or conflicting constructs? Use references as possible to support your perspective.

D. Final Exam: 35%

It has two parts:

1. **Open book, essay question** to be prepared before the day of the exam and handed in by the beginning of the in-class exam. Worth 20% of your final exam grade, maximum 5 pages double spaced. It is not necessary to use footnotes or give a bibliography, since this is an essay question for the exam, but you must support your view with specifically relevant authors, research, theology and/or Scriptures. Participation in the Discussion threads for this course should substantially stimulate your thinking and writing in this area.

As a result of your research, your studies so far, and at this point in your professional development, what is your conclusion or "working theory" on how to understand mental illness in the context of Scripture, and how it might be related to sin, demonic activity and evil. How might mental health/illness also interact with a person's faith? Support your conclusion with Biblical texts as appropriate. (Goal D6)

2. **Multiple choice exam during the final class** (100 questions, 120 minutes). This prepares you in part for the professional exams that you will need to write if you are registering with CRPO and makes sure that you have mastered the objective content areas of the course (Knowing goals). This will be a proctored, closed book, exam during class, whether synchronous online or in-person.

7. COURSE ADMINISTRATION

College Style for Submission of Written Work: All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses <http://mcmasterdivinity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/mdcstyleguide.pdf>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production, including AI) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

A special note about AI: You are expected to do your own thinking and to write your own papers, etc., and not to have AI do this work for you. There may be value in using an AI tool to help you locate and collate resources or to help you "tidy up" your English grammar, usage, and mechanics, especially if English is not your native language. However, using AI to create content for you and then submitting that content as if you created it is considered plagiarism (i.e., submitting work that is not one's own as if it is one's own) and is a violation of the academic honesty policy.

AODA: In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

Gender Inclusive Language: McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as, for example, the following: NRSVue (2022),

TEV/GNB/GNT (1976), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

Submission of Written Work: A digital copy of all written materials in **MICROSOFT WORD** format must be submitted online through Avenue to Learn by their due dates (do NOT send by email). ***Late submission of assignments may be deducted points for every late day (each 24 hours or portion thereof after due date).***

Length: Students are expected to adhere to the page range for written assignments. See Grading Rubric for penalties for papers that are under/over the expected length.

Cell Phone/Computer Policy: Students are to refrain from texting or conducting cell phone conversations while class is in session. Should you need to maintain contact with family members and/or your church or ministry, please turn off the ringer so as to avoid disturbing others; upon receipt of an urgent call, you may discretely excuse yourself from the classroom or video conference. The same policy applies to all computer generated sound schemes or other electronic annunciation systems. If joining on livestream, it is expected that your camera is on at all times, just as if you were in the classroom. As a result, please make sure you are in a private, quiet place, free from distractions. Please mute your microphone when others are speaking unless directed differently by your instructor.

Copyright: ***This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.***

8. COURSE OUTLINE - see next page

8. COURSE OUTLINE - READINGS AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

(Due on class date indicated)

WEEK 1: Monday, Jan 6th *Introductions and Introduction*

* **Reading Due by First Class** McRay et al - Chs. 1, 2, 6 (70pp). Nevid et al – Chs. 1 & 2

* **Reflection Paper 1 Due** (2-3pp): How do you define “mental illness”? What up until now has led you to that definition? What relevance does that have for ministry?

* **Asynchronous Assignment 1 Due by First Class:** Myths and Facts of Mental Illness
Warm Up Quiz (on A2L)

Lecture 1 Topics: Structure and Expectations of the Course

Themes of the Course

Etiological Theories and the “Problems” of Psychology (Review)

Definitions of Psychopathology & Systems of Diagnosis

Class Discussion: Myths and Facts of Mental Illness

WEEK 2: Monday, Jan 13th *Biological Foundations of Mental Illness I*

Reading: McRay et al - Chs. 3, 13 (47pp). Nevid et al – Ch. 10, and Unit on

Adolescent use of Marijuana

Discussion Thread 1 Due: Are we essentially good, essentially evil, or both? Do we really have free choice? How is your theology of human nature relevant to understanding psychopathology?

Lecture 2 Topics: A Thesis for this Course: Trauma as the Foundation of Psychopathology

Problems of Psychosis

A Glimpse Inside the Brain: SPECT imaging and diagnosis

The Diathesis-Stress Theory

The Effect of Marijuana on the Brain

Treatment and Common Medications for Psychosis

WEEK 3: Monday, Jan 20th *Biological Foundations of Mental Illness II: Trauma and the Brain*

Reading: McRay et al - Chs. 8, 10 (67pp) Nevid et al - Ch. 3, 5

Discussion Thread 2 Due: If some or all of mental illness is biological in nature, how does this impact our understanding of human choice and sin?

Lecture 3 Topics: Problems of Anxiety, Problems of Trauma (PTSD)

The Survival mandate, The “Danger-Danger!” System and “Arousal Mountain”

Defining “Trauma” & Symptoms of PTSD

Adaptive Information Processing and the Brain - How we remember
Dissociation

Types of Anxiety Disorders in the DSM V

Treatments for Anxiety Disorders and PTSD - including

Common Medications for Anxiety and PTSD

WEEK 4: Monday, Jan 27th *Sociocultural Foundations of Mental Illness*

Reading: McRay et al - Chs. 4, 16 (33pp) Nevid et al – Ch. 8

Discussion Thread 3 Due: How is our culture and society creating mental illness from your point of view? How has the culture of the church typically responded to mental illness? How has the culture of the church created mental illness?

Lecture 4 Topics: Problems Stemming from Societal Pathology

Family Systems Theories

Multicultural Theories

“Post-Modernism” Systems Theories

Eg. **Eating Disorders**, Revisiting Psychotic Disorders

WEEK 5: Monday Feb 3rd *Cognitive and Behavioral Foundations of Mental Illness*

Reading: McRay et al - Ch. 9 (36pp) Nevid et al – Ch. 4

Lecture 5 topics: Problems of Mood – Depression, Bipolar Disorder

Biological Theories and Common Medications

Behavioral Theories of Mental Illness

Cognitive Theories of Mental Illness:

Cognitive filters and templates (Adaptation vs. Accommodation),

The effect of Traumatic Experience on Core Beliefs

Differential Diagnosis: Grief, Sadness vs. Depression

WEEK 6: Monday Feb 10th *Developmental Foundations of Mental Illness I*

Reading: Ch. 7 (35pp) Nevid et al – Ch. 11 (pp. xx-xx)

Asynchronous assignment 2: Online Self-Quiz on Personal Attachment Styles (if not done in previous semester or retake it with a different relationship!)

Lecture 6 topics: Problems of Childhood and Adolescence

Biologically driven vs. relationally driven vs. learning driven.

Egs. **Learning Disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorder, Autism**

Treatment and Common Medications for ADD

WEEK 7: Monday Feb 17th *No CLASS! Reading Week and FAMILY DAY*

WEEK 8: Monday Feb 24th *Developmental Foundations of Mental Illness II*

Reading: McRay et al - Ch. 11 (35pp) Nevid et al – Ch. 6

Asynchronous assignment 3: Self-Quiz on Adverse Child Events (on A2L) (don't hand in)

Personal Reaction Paper 2 Due (2-3pp): As you think back to your childhood, and based on your quizzes, what do you identify as your attachment style? How do you think this may have been influenced by any adverse events in your life or other events/relationships? How do you see those factors affecting your life now?

Lecture 7 topics: Problems in the Development of Self

Review: Object Relations Theories: Attachment vs. Separation-Individuation

The importance of Attachment Styles in lifetime mental health

ACES, Types of Trauma and the Continuum of Response

Putting it all together - Developmental Trauma and Personality Types

WEEK 9: Monday March 3rd *Sin and Psychopathology*

Reading: McRay et al - Ch. 5 (28pp)

Discussion Thread 4 Due: Do you agree with McRay et al's view of sin and psychopathology? Why or why not?

Lecture 8 topics: : Thesis on the Relationship of Sin and Psychopathology

A Biblical and Holistic model of Human Nature

Integrating views of Sin and Psychopathology

WEEK 10: Monday March 10th:

When Something Goes Wrong But Its NOT "Mental Illness"? – Part I: Sin or Psychopathology?

Reading: McRay et al - Ch. 12, 14 (57pp) Nevid et al – Ch. 7 & 9

Discussion Thread 5 Due: Do these problems represent sin or mental illness? Why or why not?

Lecture 9 topics: Problems of Addiction, Problems of Sexuality and Gender

FRIDAY MARCH 14TH – LITERATURE REVIEW PAPER DUE

WEEK 11: Monday March 17th

When Something Goes Wrong But Its NOT "Mental Illness"! – Part II: Phase of Life Challenges

Reading: Ch. 15 (34pp) Nevid et al – Ch. 11 (pp. xx-xx)

Asynchronous Assignment 4: Holmes-Rahe Life Events Stress Scale completed (don't hand in)

Personal Reflection Paper 3 Due (2-3pp): Evaluate your Life Events Stress Scale score.

How do you think your score has been affecting your life lately? What phase of life and/or or developmental challenges are you facing right now?

Lecture 10 Topics: Loss and Adjustment throughout the Lifespan

Eg. **Problems of Older Adulthood**, Neurocognitive Disorders

Eg. **"Adjustment Disorders, V-Codes and Z-Codes"**

WEEK 12: Monday March 24th

When Something Goes Wrong But Its NOT "Mental Illness"! – Part III:

Abuse, Violence, and The Problem of Evil

Discussion Thread 6 Due: Has the church historically contributed to the evil of abuse?

What response to abuse should the church have now? How does this fit in with your theology of marriage and the family?

Lecture 11 topics: Types of Abuse

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse – the Violence Wheel

The Cycle of Abuse

WEEK 13: Monday March 31st *Catching up and Wrapping Up*

Read: Lemma Case Study (on A2L)

Personal Reflection Paper 4 Due and Class Discussion: How has your particular Christian world view and culture shaped your view of mental illness until now? Has this view changed as a result of this course, and why or why not? How will what you have learned in this course impact your chosen ministry context? For example, how does your developing perspective impact your dialogue with the mentally ill in your communities or with your counselees?

Class Lecture 12: Anything that is left!

Class Activity

WRAPPING UP - A Case Study (Group Discussion) What symptoms, signs or issues are of concern to you? What would you do about them from a counselling and/or ministry perspective?

WEEK 14: Monday April 7th *FINAL EXAM*

Final Exam Essay Question Due (9 AM)

Class Evaluations Due