

# HON 299E: Psychopathology and the Cinema

## Fundamentals

Class meetings: Tuesdays 6-8:40pm (that's the official time. It'll likely be till around 9) DELA 123

Instructor: Dr. Vogel, [svogel@sbu.edu](mailto:svogel@sbu.edu), DELA 100C

Office hours: M 2-2:30, W 11:30-12, TH 1:30-2:30 and by appointment

## Course objectives

When teaching psychopathology or abnormal behavior, it is often difficult to fully describe some of the symptoms described. For example, students often have problems understanding what “pressured speech” or “disorganized behavior” *looks* like in a mentally ill person. Descriptions that are included in texts and other course content do not fully present the intricacy of behavior that is often seen in a real clinical setting. And so, lacking in the ability to give students a tour of a psychiatric facility, many faculty use film to further their explanation of mental illnesses.

Cinema is a 20<sup>th</sup> century art form that has become not only entertainment but a force in shaping society. In the realm of psychopathology, cinema has been able to inform, and misinform, the general public about mental illness. Cinema has also reflected societal changes in the treatment of, and attitudes toward, the mentally ill. This course will seek to encourage critical thinking not only about what psychopathology is but also how it is portrayed in the powerful medium of film. Specifically, this course will use a variety of films to illustrate both psychopathology and its treatment in order to give the topic a human dimension and added complexity that is not possible in a traditional psychopathology course. In addition, students will be required to evaluate the accuracy of these portrayals and how the time period in which they were written or produced might influence them.

Learning objectives: by the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Accurately identify and understand the criteria of selected psychiatric disorders.
- Differentiate between accurate and inaccurate portrayals of psychopathology in film.
- Identify myths about mental illness that are often reinforced by movies.
- Demonstrate the ability to notice how filmmakers employ certain cinematic devices (e.g. lighting, music, etc) to manipulate viewers' perceptions and ideas about psychiatric disorders.
- Demonstrate competence in written communication by analyzing, synthesizing, and integrating literature relevant to this topic.

## Learning Portfolio

Your portfolio of learning is a collection of all of your work and activities throughout the semester. A submission page for work for which you want feedback is available on Moodle, and you should also save your documents to a file folder on your computer or Google Drive. For example, you may want feedback on a written essay (submit to Moodle), but you do not need feedback on your reading notes (save to a file folder). Learning Portfolio templates are posted on Moodle - Midterm (**DUE Sunday, 10/2**) and Final (**DUE Friday, 12/11**) Learning Portfolios.

## Readings

There is no single text for this course. I will employ a variety of readings relevant to the diagnoses and other issues that will be discussed each week. These readings will be posted on the Moodle class page.

- Reading journals – For each reading, I ask that you write a short reaction paper on the reading – three things that you learned from it? Any areas that need clarification? These will be due on Sundays.

## Films

We will view films together as a class each week. For the most part, the movies required in class will have “PG-13” and “R” ratings and some will have graphic portrayals of disturbing behaviors and situations. If you feel you are unable to watch such movies for personal reasons, I would kindly suggest that you not take this course. Please feel free to contact me if you have concerns along this line. Also be aware that some of the movies may be triggering. My expectation is that you attend every class and participate in the

discussions that follow but I'm a pretty keen observer and can usually pick up when someone is struggling with a topic. Don't hesitate to take a break if you need one and/or talk to me if you are comfortable doing so.

- Film reflections – after viewing each film in class, I will ask that you write a short reflection paper on the film (and the discussion we will have afterwards). I'm especially interested in how your readings informed your viewing of the film and how the film reflected some of the content from the readings. These will be due on Fridays.

## Additional Learning Opportunities

The biggest goal I have in this class is to inspire you to learn – beyond what we cover in class. I want to see you take that interest into life. Maybe you see a TV show or movie (beyond what we view in class) that depicts a mentally ill person. Discussing the mental illness (and maybe accuracy of the portrayal) with your roommate or significant other, going online to find out more about the diagnosis, etc. . . . Maybe one of the topics encourages you to pick up a book about it, or you go online to delve more deeply into how someone with the diagnosis lives with it and how it affects them on a daily basis. Maybe you listen to a podcast about mental illness or about how a movie was made with the intent to make the portrayal of a diagnosis as realistic as possible. The possibilities for additional learning are literally endless.

Now, obviously, I will need some record of your learning. It doesn't need to be elaborate – a short paragraph or two describing the additional learning opportunity and how it contributed to your overall understanding of the topic of the class.

## Evaluation and Grading

This course will focus on reflection, feedback, and growth. You will be building a Learning Portfolio throughout the course and determining your grade through reflections and consultations with me. The required activities for the class are to complete the course reflections, course readings, and papers. See section on "Learning Portfolio" below for more information.

- Students earning a final grade in the D/F range are missing required work or required work was unsatisfactory
- Students earning a final grade in the C range meet course objectives and satisfactorily complete required work
- Students earning a final grade in the B range (in addition to satisfactorily completing required work) completed additional learning opportunities (1-4) and their portfolios show learning and growth
- Students earning a final grade in the A range (in addition to satisfactorily completing the required work) completed significant additional learning opportunities (5+) and their portfolios show substantial learning, growth, and mastery.

## Course Reflections

Course reflections should be submitted on Moodle – in the appropriate dropbox.

- **First Course Reflection (Due Thurs 9/8)**

This first course reflection asks for some introductory information about you, your goals for learning in the course, how you think the material might impact your life and/or career and your expected contribution. This will become your individualized plan for the semester. Future reflections will reference the goals and plans from the first reflection.

- **Second Course Reflection (DUE Thurs 10/2)**

This second course reflection is a mid-semester collection of your portfolio of learning, an explanation of your progress in reaching your goals, and a reflection on your contribution to class. You will suggest a midterm grade and request feedback for reaching your goals by the end of the semester. We will meet individually during this week to discuss your portfolios.

- **Final Course Reflection (DUE Thurs 12/8)**

This final course reflection is over your final portfolio of learning, an explanation of your progress in reaching your goals, a reflection of your contribution to the class, an assessment of your mastery of the course materials, and an evaluation of your overall experience in learning and growing throughout the semester. This final reflection is due before our one-on-one meetings scheduled during finals. In this meeting we will determine your final grade in the course. As the instructor, I reserve the right to determine the final grade.

## Weekly Schedule (Subject to change if necessary)

Each week will follow roughly the same schedule: Reading journals are due by Sunday evening so that I have time to review them before Tuesday's class. Tuesdays we will have lecture, discussion, and viewings of movies. Fridays are when film reflections are due. I anticipate that we won't be able to discuss each movie 'fully' during class. When that happens, I hope that you will be engaged enough in the discussion to carry it onto a discussion board for a few days afterwards so that we can fully flesh out our ideas.

## COVID

- **If we go remote:** If the class or University has to go online at some point during the semester, I plan to hold synchronous classes over Zoom during the regular class time (although I will alert you if a specific synchronous class is not happening). Please make sure that you are aware of and plan for this eventuality in the case of remote learning. Also, I will require that you have your camera ON during class if we have to go online. There is nothing more disheartening to a professor (and a psychologist!) than not being able to at least observe body language and other responses. So again, plan accordingly and wear clothes. 😊

- **Quarantine or Isolation**

If you are placed on mandatory quarantine or in isolation for potential exposure to or contraction of COVID-19 email documentation of that status to me. We can then discuss accommodations.

If you are feeling ill for other reasons or know in advance you have to miss class, please email me to make arrangements.

Students who have symptoms of COVID-19 but are not officially quarantined or isolated should contact Health Services for appropriate testing and treatment, and contact the instructor electronically to discuss any absence from class.

## Papers

### Formatting

All papers in this class should follow APA style for in-text citations, references, and headings. For more information on APA style guidelines see:

- <https://apastyle.apa.org/>
- [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html)

Most papers will take the form of reflections, meaning you will not need to include a title page or abstract. Page limits are included in the paper descriptions on Moodle. Please use Times New Roman 12pt font OR Calibri 12pt font. Papers should be double-spaced. All papers should include your name, the course, the date, and a title (to save on space, these elements may be single-spaced). See below for an example.

Jane Q. Student  
HON 299E  
9/1/2022

Reflection Paper I on the film *Rear Window*

## Feedback and Writing Lab

Writing is one of the main ways you will be expressing your learning and understanding of the material. As such, I will be reading your papers to check for your understanding of the material and your ability to express ideas in a clear and accessible manner. I may refer you to the Writing Lab if I feel you could use some more help in organizing and executing your writing.

The SBU Writing Lab encourages all students working on writing projects to seek help from our knowledgeable tutors. Writing Lab tutors are available for both in-person and remote sessions (via Zoom). Even if you do not have a draft to share, a tutor can help you brainstorm or work through an outline for an upcoming project.

To meet with a writing tutor, stop by the Student Success Center in Plassmann 100 or email the Writing Lab at [writinglab@sbu.edu](mailto:writinglab@sbu.edu) with your request. You may either schedule a tutoring session in advance or simply attend drop-in hours. The Writing Lab's schedule can be found on the Student Success Center page within the Academics section on MySBU.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is taking someone else's work and passing it off as your own. You should only submit papers that you wrote for this class. Submitting someone else's writing, a paper that you wrote for another course, or failing to give credit for ideas within your paper are all forms of plagiarism. Depending on the severity of the plagiarism, it may result in a failing grade in the course. However, I understand that part of learning APA style is learning how to appropriately give credit for ideas using in-text citations. We will be using Turnitin on Moodle for paper submissions. If something is flagged as potential plagiarism, I will schedule a meeting with you to determine whether it's simple learning mistake (i.e. failure to use in-text citations) or a more serious breach of our Academic Honesty Policy (i.e. submitting work that is not your own, or that was written for another course).

## **Academic Dishonesty**

If I suspect you have breached our academic honesty policy then I will meet with you to inform you, present the evidence, and discuss sanctions as per the University's Academic Dishonesty Policy. You will have the chance to accept or refute the charges. After that it either gets reported to the Dean or we meet with the Dean to resolve the dispute.

To see the full Academic Dishonesty Policy go here:

[http://web.sbu.edu/friedsam/governing/academic\\_policies/academic\\_honesty\\_policy\\_2017.pdf](http://web.sbu.edu/friedsam/governing/academic_policies/academic_honesty_policy_2017.pdf)

## **Student Success Center and Learning Disabilities**

If you need extra assistance in this course (or any other course!) do not hesitate to take advantage of the resources at the Student Success Center in Plassmann Hall. Resources include tutoring, writing lab, study skills, and disability support.

## **Title IX**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources at the Health and Wellness Center (<http://www.sbu.edu/life-at-sbu/services-for-students/health-wellness>), or at the Campus Safety Office (<http://www.sbu.edu/life-at-sbu/campus-safety>).

For more information go to <https://www.sbu.edu/life-at-sbu/conduct-at-sbu/gender-based-sexual-misconduct>

**Schedule – note that this is tentative. I may change a film or two (possible) but the topic and reading won't change.**

**Week 1: Intro (8/30)**

- Read – Pirkis et al. (2006), On-Screen Portrayals of Mental Illness: Extent, Nature, and Impacts. *Journal of Health Communication*.
- Reading journal – **DUE Sunday, 9/4**. What were three things you learned from this article? Was there anything that you need clarified?

**Week 2: Hollywood tropes (9/6)**

- View – *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
- Reflect – **Course Reflection I (DUE Thurs 9/8)** See details above
- Write – **Film Reflection I (DUE Friday, 9/9)** What did you think of this film? What did you perceive as the overall 'message' about mental illness from the film? What particularly struck you from the movie? (1-2 pgs.)
- Read – Read the NIMH Overview of Schizophrenia and be familiar with the DSM-5 Criteria for Schizophrenia
- Reading journal – **DUE Sunday, 9/11**. What were three things you learned from this reading? Was there anything that you need clarified?

**Week 3: Schizophrenia (9/13)**

- View – *Canvas*
- Write – **Film Reflection 2 (DUE Friday, 9/16)**. What did you take from this movie? How do you think someone who knows nothing about schizophrenia might react to it?
- Read – Owen, P. R. (2012) Portrayals of Schizophrenia by Entertainment Media: A Content Analysis of Contemporary Movie
- Reading journal – **DUE Sunday, 9/18**. What were three things you learned from this article? Was there anything that you need clarified? Were you surprised by the findings? Why or why not?

**Week 4: Schizophrenia (9/20)**

- View – *Revolution #9*
- Write – **Film Reflection 3 (DUE Friday, 9/23)**. What were your thoughts on this movie? How did the portrayal differ from *Canvas*? How might this movie have affected a person's perception of the diagnosis it portrays?
- Read – OCD overview (CRUFAD.org)
- Reading journal – **DUE Sunday, 9/25**. What were three things you learned from this reading? Was there anything that you need clarified?

**Week 5: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (9/27)**

- View – *Matchstick Men*
- Write – **Film Reflection 4 (DUE Friday, 9/30)**. What was your reaction to this movie? What about the portrayal was accurate based on your understanding of the disorder? What was inaccurate? What do you think the average person would think of someone with these behaviors after viewing this film?

**Week 6: This week we will meet individually and discuss your midterm Learning Portfolio and midterm grade (10/4)**

- Reflect – **Course Reflection 2 (DUE Thurs 10/2)** See details above

**Week 7: No class – Midterm Break (10/11)**

- Read – DSM-5 Clinical Criteria for Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder; OCPD – Description, Treatment, and a Case Study

- Reading journal – **DUE Sunday, 10/16**. What were three things you learned from this reading? Was there anything that you need clarified?

### **Week 8: Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder (10/18)**

- View – *The Odd Couple*
- Write – **Film Reflection 5 (DUE Friday, 10/21)**. What did you think of this film and the character of Felix? Did you think it was an accurate portrayal? OCPD is often portrayed in a comedic way – why do you think this is so?
- Read – Websites – Major Depressive Disorder and DSM-5 Clinical Criteria for MDD; Suicide Risk and Protective Factors
- Reading journal – **DUE Sunday, 10/23**. What were three things you learned from this reading? Was there anything that you need clarified?

### **Week 9: Major Depressive Disorder (10/25)**

- View – *Scent of a Woman*
- Write – **Film Reflection 6 (DUE Friday, 10/28)**. What were your thoughts on this movie? Do you think it accurately portrayed a character with major depression? What did the film get right? Or wrong?
- Read – DSM-5 Clinical Criteria for Bipolar Disorder; NIH Description of Bipolar Disorder
- Reading journal – **DUE Sunday, 10/30**. What were three things you learned from this reading? Was there anything that you need clarified?

### **Week 10: Bipolar Disorder (11/1)**

- View – *Mr. Jones*
- Write – **Film Reflection 7 (DUE Friday, 11/4)**. What did you think of this film? What Hollywood ‘tropes’ (as discussed previously) were portrayed? What was the movie’s message about people with bipolar disorder?
- Read – NAMI Fact Sheet about Borderline Personality Disorder; Bhatia et al. (2013). Appraisals of Daly Romantic Relationship Experiences in Individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder Features.
- Reading journal – **DUE Sunday, 11/6**. What were three things you learned from this reading? Was there anything that you need clarified?

### **Week 11: Borderline Personality Disorder (11/8)**

- View – *Fatal Attraction*
- Write – **Film Reflection 8 (DUE Friday, 11/11)**. Bipolar Disorder and Borderline Personality Disorder are often difficult to distinguish. Based on the two films we’ve viewed, why do you think this is so? What was the message that Glenn Close’s character was for viewers?
- Read – DSM-5 Clinical Criteria for Antisocial Personality Disorder; Patterson et al. (1989). A developmental perspective on antisocial behavior.
- Reading journal – **DUE Sunday, 11/13**. What were three things you learned from this reading? Was there anything that you need clarified?

### **Week 12: Antisocial Personality Disorder – development (11/15)**

- View – *We Need to Talk about Kevin*
- Write – **Film Reflection 9 (DUE Friday 11/18)**. What were your thoughts on this film? Did it support the Patterson et al. perspective?
- Read – (well watch) – Youtube video – Psychopathy vs Antisocial Personality
- Reading journal – **DUE Sunday, 11/20**. What were three things you learned from this reading? Was there anything that you need clarified?

### **Week 13: Antisocial Personality Disorder (11/22)**

- View – *The Apostle*

- Write – **Film Reflection 10 (DUE Friday 11/25)**. What was your reaction to this movie? Did it depict antisocial personality disorder in an accurate way? Why or why not?
- Read – DSM-5 Criteria for Substance Use Disorder; Koordeman et al. (2010). Effects of alcohol portrayals in movies on actual alcohol consumption: An observational experimental study.
- Reading journal – **DUE Sunday, 11/27**. What were three things you learned from this reading? Was there anything that you need clarified? Were you surprised by the findings in the study?

#### **Week 14: Substance Use Disorder – Alcohol (11/29)**

- View – *Flight*
- Write – **Film Reflection 11 (Due Friday, 12/2)**. What were your thoughts on this film? Did it portray what most people think of as an ‘alcoholic’? Why or why not?
- Read – Cape (2003). *Addiction, Stigma, and Movies*.
- Reading journal – **DUE Sunday 12/4**. What were three things you learned from this reading? Was there anything that you need clarified?

#### **Week 15: Substance Use Disorder – Multiple Substances (12/6)**

- View – *Requiem for a Dream*
- Reflect - **Course Reflection 3 (DUE Thurs 12/8)** See details above
- Write – **Film Reflection 12 (DUE Friday, 12/9)**. How did you respond to this movie? What do you think the average person’s reaction and takeaway message is from this film?

#### **Week 16: Finals week. We will meet individually to discuss your final Learning Portfolio and your final grade.**

- Compile final Learning Portfolio before individual meeting - template is posted on Moodle