

Psych 801 - 12: Addictions and Society

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Course Description/Goals:

Addictive behaviors are a major source of morbidity and mortality across the world. They can be found in almost every age group, gender, race, socioeconomic status and culture. This course provides a general overview of the biological, psychological, and social factors related to addiction with a focus on behavior. The course attempts to expose students to:

- 1) the current science of addiction
- 2) current theories and treatments of addictive behaviors
- 3) implications/effects of addictions on health/medicine, law, policy and society
- 4) relationship of addictions to special populations including the mentally ill, children/adolescents, and professional groups.

This course provides a broad overview of addictions and is meant to introduce students to the fields of biology, psychology, public health, public policy, pharmacology, addiction medicine, and law. Class format will include mini-lectures, discussions, video clips, guest speakers, and in-class debates. An emphasis will be placed on developing critical thinking skills in this area.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Date Due</u>
Attendance	27 points (+ 3 bonus potential)	
Participation	20 points	
In-Class Debate/Panel	20 points	Varies
Quizzes	30 points	9/23, 11/4, 12/2
Reflection #1 (1 page)	5 points	9/4
Reflection #2 (1-2 pages)	5 points	9/16
Critical Appraisal Exercise (3 pages)	10 points	9/30
Topic/Exploratory Paper		
First Draft (4-5 pages)	10 points	10/16
Final Draft	20 points	11/6
Peer Review	5 points	10/21
AA/NA/SA Observation (2 pages)	10 points	11/11
Final Paper (3-4 pages)	25 points	12/4
Final Reflection (3-4 pages)	10 points	Final Exam
TOTAL	200 points	

Attendance: This class depends upon active class participation and group work. Hence, attendance is required. Absences will be excused only if you notify me in advance and provide appropriate documentation of an emergency or special circumstances. Individuals who attend all classes will receive bonus points.

Papers: The writing assignments are a mixture of descriptive writing and argumentative writing as well as individual and group work. See topics, guidelines, and due dates below.

Debates: For selected topics, students will be broken into teams to debate controversial issues in substance abuse. Topics and guidelines will be distributed during class.

In-Class Quizzes: Throughout the term, I will provide 2 quizzes to ensure students are keeping up with reading. Quizzes will be short answer questions (multiple choice, matching, fill in the blanks, etc...) that test on content covered in readings.

Journal: These are NON-GRADED, but required, writing assignments. Journal assignments will take many forms. Sometimes, they will be in-class reflective writing pieces. Other times, they may take the form of a response to an online forum. Each assignment will be based upon a current event in the news related to addiction or a reflection of a topic covered that week in class. They are to be no longer than one page in length. I will review each journal assignment and provide feedback to assist students with their writing skills and idea formation. The goal is to use the feedback from these assignments in writing the graded papers for the class. In general, there will be one journal assignment a week. Journals will not be assigned on weeks when major assignments are due.

Special Accommodations: Any student who may have a special circumstance (religious, health, learning, personal, etc...) that requires accommodation is encouraged to contact me as early in the term as possible.

Feedback: I take my role of as your instructor very seriously. Your feedback and suggestions are vital to the course and I welcome them at anytime. An anonymous mid-course evaluation form will be provided to obtain your feedback, however, you should feel free to bring up concerns, suggestions (and compliments) at any point during the course.

A Final Note: The study of addictions and psychology is exciting. The topics we discuss in class, however, may touch some of you personally. You are never expected or required to share your own personal experience. Furthermore, if you find that you need an additional forum to discuss any issue that is raised by the class, guest speakers, or readings, I will be happy to confidentially provide you with a list of resources to assist you.

How to get in touch with me:

Papers:

Below are the topics for each of the papers in this class. I provide them ahead of time so you can plan your papers based on the discussions and readings in class. One paper requires a first-draft, which will be graded and returned to you in a writing conference. These topics are general outlines for your paper. They are not meant as rigid rules, but rather as a guideline of points you may want to consider. Grading is based both upon content and structure. More details will be provided in class.

All papers are to be written in no smaller than 11-point font, 1 inch margins, and double spacing. References must be included and follow the APA format. The honor code is in effect for all assignments and any suspected cases of plagiarism will be turned over to the University's judicial board. I grade papers both on content and structure.

Reflection#1 (1 page; Due 9/4): Most of us have some experiences with addictions, either in ourselves or among family/friends. Using examples from your life or current events, what are your thoughts on addiction? Are addictive behaviors a disease or a choice? Why do people engage in these behaviors? What effects (behavioral, health, economic, etc...) have you seen as a result of these behaviors? Please note, this is meant to be a reflective piece based on personal experience. You are not expected to consult outside resources for this assignment. You are also not expected to disclose personal information unless you are comfortable. While you may be asked to share general themes from your reflections in class, only I will read your paper.

Reflection #2 (1-2 pages; Due 9/16): Based on your first week in class (lectures, readings, patient interviews, and in-class exercises), has your position on addiction (disease vs. choice) been reaffirmed or changed? State what factors have influenced your position. State one counterargument to your position and why you disagree with that point.

Critical Appraisal Exercise (3 pages; Due 9/30): For this assignment, you will pick one addictive behavior that we are studying in class. I strongly recommend that you pick a very specific topic (e.g. college binge drinking). For this behavior you will need to find 3 types of resources.

- 1) Web article, blog, page, etc...
- 2) Book, Magazine or Newspaper
- 3) Peer Reviewed Journal Article

For each source, answer the following questions:

How did you conduct your search? (Provide an overview of your strategy – give specific search terms and any limits you placed.)

How did you select resources? (how good a match, why this resource over others, etc...)
Provide a citation for the resource in APA format
What audience are the resources found predominantly aimed for?
Do you find the information reliable? Understandable?
What are the advantages of this search method?
What are the disadvantages of this search method?
What did you learn from your search?

Reflection # 3: AA/NA/SA Observation (2 pages; Due 11/11) Students are to attend at least one meeting of Alcoholic Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous or Sexaholics Anonymous. I will provide a list of local meetings including times and locations. Based on your experience, write a 1-2-page paper that addresses the following:

Time, Date, Location of the Meeting
Composition of Group Members (Age, Race, Demographics)
Format of the Meeting
Issues Raised at the Meeting (General and Specific)
What did you learn from the meeting? How did what you observe relate to what we are studying/reading in class?
If you choose to use quotations or examples from your meeting, please make sure that you do not provide any personal identifying information.

Paper #1 -- Position Paper/Article Critique (4-5 pages; Draft Due 10/16, Final Due 11/6): Using the Taking Sides book, pick one article (one side only) that we have not read (or will not read) for class. Alternatively, you may choose a different source (editorial, news article, etc...) as long as you approve it with me ahead of time. Using the skills we have learned in class, you will write a critique of this article. Your paper should include:

Introduction -- Why is this topic important?
Summary of the author's main argument
Point by Point Critique of the article which includes comments on:
 How influential is the author's argument
 Types of sources/references used (how valid? methodology?)
 Counter points to author's argument
 Points that the author fails to consider
Your opinion (supported by at least 2 outside scientific references)
Conclusion

Final Reflection (3-4 pages; Due Final Exam Date): Based on your experience in this class, how have your views on addictions stayed the same or changed? What experiences, readings, etc... did you find most influential? How do you think you will use what you have learned in this class in your future studies and/or career?

Final Paper (2-3 pages: Due 12/4): Choose one policy, rule or law from the University (GWU), local (county), State, or national level that you find controversial. The topic should be related to some addictive (or potentially addictive) behavior. For that policy, rule or law, write an opinion piece as if you were writing a newspaper column as a “Letter to the Editor.” In your opinion piece consider the following:

- 1) State the policy, rule or law and place it in context
- 2) Give some historical background (when was it placed in to effect? Why?)
- 3) Take a Side – support or critique it! Provide biological, psychological and social evidence to support your view. You might want to compare the policy, law or rule to those at other universities, jurisdictions, states or nations.
- 4) Make sure you consider the implications to your arguments. What are the advantages? What are the counter-arguments? What are your counter-arguments to the counter-arguments?

Like all papers, your argument needs to be well formulated. You should have an introduction, body and conclusion. While I would prefer that you have a well developed thesis in your introduction, I recognize that op-ed pieces may have a different format. I will leave it to you to develop a format that allows for the most persuasive argument. I do expect that you will reference any idea, fact, opinion, etc... which is not yours. I expect that you will use 5 outside resources, 3 of which should be scientific (peer-reviewed). The paper should be no longer than 4 pages, double spaced, 11 point font, with one inch margins. It may be shorter... succinctness is important.

My Team Color is: _____

Name	Phone	Email/IM

Our Debate Topic is: _____

Our Debate is on: _____

_____ and _____ will argue "YES"

_____ and _____ will argue "NO"

Our First Meeting will be on: _____
at _____