

The Paradox of Mental Health—Biological or Cultural?

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: ARGN 3012

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: Rafael Groisman, MD, Psychiatry Specialist, Argentine Psychoanalytical Association full member, International Psychoanalytical Association full member, Master in Psychoneuropharmacology (U. Favaloro)

Course Description

This course looks at the biological basis for mental health, applying basic concepts of neurobiology. It explores the causal mechanisms of various mental health issues from autism to anxiety. The course will compare Argentina's and the United States' approaches to mental health, exploring the relationship between culture and mental health (e.g., "culture-bound syndromes") over time. In addition, the course will compare the use of therapy versus pharmacological approaches in treating mental illness, looking at the medicalization of mental health in Argentina as compared to the United States.

Course Objectives

- Describe the biologic mechanisms involved in the etiology and pathology of various brain disorders.
- Describe the basic concepts of neurotransmitter function
- Articulate the neurobiology of psychoses, mood, and anxiety disorders

- Explain the chemical bases of behavior
- Describe the psychotropic medications and the psychotherapeutic procedures that are used to treat mental illness, and how they work in the body, from the molecular mechanisms to the behavioral and social manifestations.
- Compare the approaches to diagnosis and treatment of mental illness in Argentina and the United States.
- Explain the concept of medicalization and the impact it has on mental health

Required Reading / Materials (h3)

- Charney & Nestler's Neurobiology of Mental Illness 5 th Edition . Oxford University Press. 2018 , Section 1 chapters 2 and 3. Section 8 , chapters 70 and 71
- Kirsten Weir, The roots of Mental Illness How much of mental illness can the biology of the brain explain?, American Psychological Association, June 2012, Vol 43, No. 6
<http://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/06/roots.aspx>
- Wolfgang G. JILEK, M.D.,M.Sc.,M.A.,Dipl.Psych.,FRCP(C) Cultural Factors in Psychiatric Disorders <http://www.mentalhealth.com/mag1/wolfgang.html>
- Module 7: Cultural Perspectives on Mental Health – Unite for Sight
<http://www.uniteforsight.org/mentalhealth/module7> COURSE DESIGNATOR: ARGN 3012 NUMBER OF CREDITS: 3 LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English CONTACT HOURS 45 PAGE 2
- Culture Counts: The Influence of Culture and Society on Mental Health, Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity: A Supplement to Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General.
- On the Medicalization of Our Culture, Harvard Magazine, July–August 2013.
- Peter Conrad and Caitlin Slodden, The Medicalization of Mental Disorder, Chapter 4
- Mark Solms and Oliver Turnbull, Brain and the Inner World: An Introduction to the Neuroscience of the Subjective Experience. Karnac 2002 . Chapters 1, 2, 9 and 10
- Eric Kandel , In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of Mind. WW Norton & Company 2006
- The Linked Self in Psychoanalysis: The Pioneering Work of Enrique Pichon Riviere. Editor : Roberto Losso, Editor : Lea S. de Setton, Editor : David E. Scharff. Karnac Books . Published : May 2017

Complementary Readings/Videos

- To illustrate the social construction of the brain
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7485618>
- To illustrate the Freudian Complementary Series Concept
<http://www.encyclopedia.com/psychology/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/complemental-series>
- Development of Anxiety: Normal and Pathological
<http://www.nature.com/nrn/journal/v5/n7/full/nrn1429.html>
<http://www.nature.com/npp/journal/v33/n1/abs/1301569a.html>
- Neurotransmission: Dale Phenomenon <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyfJwisRxvs>

- Emotional Processing in Everyday Life
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4N-7AlzK7s>
- To Get a Historical Perspective on Argentina's Mental Health System
http://www.wpanet.org/uploads/Newsletters/E-Bulletins/Latest/Transformation_psychiatry_Argentina_Cia.pdf
- Is Argentina a sort of heaven for therapy?
<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/04/28/health/argentina-psychology-therapists/index.html>
- Oxyana (documentary about prescription drug addiction)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrE1uxGd6OQ&has_verified=1

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Participation in class	20%
Short group presentations	15%
Assignments /Midterm exam	15%
Final exam	50%
Overall grade	100%

Course Content

Unit 1

Introduction

- Overview of Anatomical and Physiological Basic Information about the Central Nervous System.
- From Molecular to Macroscopic Structures
- The biological study of the brain is a multidisciplinary area that involves many levels of study; from the molecular level to the cognitive and behavioral level, including the cellular level (individual neurons), the little networks of neurons and the circuits that provide the scaffolding for the diverse functions (perception, motor behavior and thinking, among other functions).

Unit 2

The Central Nervous System (CNS) as a Complex, Dynamic, and Open System

- The CNS includes approximately 100 billion neurons which are constantly changing their connections (synapsis) in a constant interaction with the environment whose inputs are the capital importance for the neural development.
- Normal and pathological neural development.

Unit 3

The Etiology of Mental Illnesses

- The Concept of Complemental Series developed by Freud in 1916 and the contemporary GxE (genes by environment) equation.

- The concept of Chromatinic Epigenetics.

Unit 4

Neurotransmission

- Monoaminergic and Peptidergic Systems
- The Chemical Pathways of their synthesis and their anatomical circuits.

Unit 5

Neurobiology of Psychosis

- From Neurobiology to Social Interaction. The brain cortex and the Cognitive and Executive functions.
- The Argentine Biological Psychiatric School represented by Eugenio Fischer and the Psychosocial Pichon Riviere's Developments.

Unit 6

Neurobiology of Depressive Disorders

- The Role of the Amygdala and the hippocampus.

Unit 7

Neurobiology of Anxiety Disorders

- The Clinical Presentations of Panic Attacks, Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Disruptive and Traumatic Events
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Different theories (Psychodynamic, Behavioral, and Cognitive) to understand and work with this clinical problem.

Unit 8

Review

- The chemical basis of behavior and the way psychotropic medication exerts an influence on it

Unit 9

Antipsychotics: History, Uses, & Adverse Effects

- The Concept of Complementary Series developed by Freud in 1916 and the contemporary GxE (genes by environment) equation
- The concept of Chromatinic Epigenetics

Unit 10

Antidepressants and Anxiolytics

- History, Uses and Adverse Effects. The Pharmaceutical Industry and the controversy about Over Prescription.

Unit 11

Mood Stabilizers

- From Manic Depressive Psychosis to Bipolar Disorder. Psychiatry and the Medicalization of Everyday Life; or “Are all of us bipolar?”

Unit 12

Overview of Addiction

- The abuse of painkillers. The Reality of “Paco” in Argentina. The Reward System and the Social Environment.

Unit 13

The Different Approaches to Mental Health in the United States and Argentina

- A historical/social perspective. The biomedical and anthropological models of medicine.

Unit 14

The Different Approaches to Mental Health, part 2

- “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” vs “Hombre Mirando al Sudeste.” Film-making art shows that art is reality.

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).