PSY 611 DSM and Psychopharmacology
Fall 2025

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Course Dates: September 15-19, 2025
Course Delivery Method: Online

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a survey of clinical psychiatric nosology and its limits. The course also promotes an understanding of psychopathology and appropriate medication treatments. This course alone does not qualify a student for diagnostic or prescription privileges.

COURSE INTEGRATION

As counsellors we are often a frequent point of contact for our clients. They may share their medications, diagnoses, and side effects with us long before they have their next medical visit. This course prepares future counsellors to identify information that can be highlighted to pass along to their medical team, adds to our overall understanding of our client's experience and enables us walk alongside them without confusion or fear throughout their struggles.

COURSE TEXTS

American Psychiatric Association (2022). *Desk Reference to the Diagnostic Criteria from DSM-5-TR.* Arlington, VA. American Psychiatric Publishing.

Ingersoll, R. E., Rak, C. F. (2015). *Psychopharmacology for Mental Health Professionals: An Integrative Approach* (2nd Ed). Boston, MA. Centgage Learning.
  *Note: an ebook copy of this textbook [can be purchased here](#).

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers*, available as PDF documents here:* https://www.mybriercrest.ca/seminary/documents/*.*

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: http://briercrest.ca/bookstore*.*

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (https://briercrest.instructure.com*) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.*

SEMINARY-WIDE OUTCOMES
Students will graduate:
1. Describing and demonstrating evangelical faith and values.

2. Preparing to serve God's kingdom in its diversity. Describe God, God's kingdom, and your calling (vocational sensitivity) within it, including the types of contexts and people you feel best prepared to serve.
3. Participating in the action of our Triune God through formation of the soul (i.e., virtue and spiritual integrity), mind (academic rigour), and strength (vocation).

COURSE OUTCOMES
- Familiarity with DSM-5 diagnostic labels and their diagnostic criteria.
- Familiarity with DSM-5 limitations and criticisms.
- Familiarity with commonly prescribed psychopharmaceutical drug categories and the DSM-5 diagnostic labels they are used for.
- Introductory knowledge of common drug names in the event a client has been prescribed it.
- Introductory knowledge of basic psychopharmaceutical drug mechanisms and common side effects of commonly prescribed psychopharmaceuticals.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT
Lectures will be presented on the following topics in the following order:

1. **An introduction to psychopharmacology and neurotransmitters.**
2. **Anxiety Disorders,** clinical presentation, diagnostic criteria and commonly prescribed psychopharmaceuticals.
3. **Depressive Disorders,** clinical presentation, diagnostic criteria and commonly prescribed psychopharmaceuticals.
4. **Bipolar and Related Disorders,** clinical presentation, diagnostic criteria and commonly prescribed psychopharmaceuticals.
5. **Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders,** clinical presentation, diagnostic criteria and commonly prescribed psychopharmaceuticals.
6. **Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders,** clinical presentation, diagnostic criteria and commonly prescribed psychopharmaceuticals.
7. **Trauma and Stressor Related Disorders,** clinical presentation, diagnostic criteria and commonly prescribed psychopharmaceuticals.
8. **Feeding and Eating Disorders,** clinical presentation, diagnostic criteria and commonly prescribed psychopharmaceuticals.
9. **Personality Disorders,** clinical presentation, diagnostic criteria and commonly prescribed psychopharmaceuticals.

ASSIGNMENTS
Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

Pre-Course Assignments:

Case Example (20%): Due September 15th, 2025
https://www.apa.org/depression-guideline/case-examples
https://www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline/resources/case-examples

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Please choose one case example from the above links, either for depression or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and provide a brief summary (1-2 paragraphs) of the case. Please list the diagnostic criteria detailed in the case example for the case to meet the diagnosis of either depression or PTSD as per the DSM-5 Desk Reference. Please list any secondary diagnoses received and how the client met those criteria (as per the DSM-5-tr desk reference). Finally, using the Psychopharmacology for Mental Health Professionals (Ingersoll, R.E. & Rak, C.F., 2015) please list a commonly prescribed psychopharmaceutical drug (e.g., Fluoxetine) for a symptom or symptoms listed in the diagnostic criteria of the diagnosis in the case, what symptoms the drug will address and what are the common side effects of this drug. Please use APA formatting including in text citations and a reference page. Responses should be 2-3 pages in length.

Post-Course Assignments:

Pharmaceutical Paper (40%); 5-7 Pages; Due November 7th, 2025

Please choose a case study from the Ingersoll and Rak (2015) text. Outline the case and note which medication(s) have been prescribed. Pretend that the client in the case study is your client; write out an information packet about this drug classification (e.g., SSRI, MOA inhibitor) and specific drug for your client. Give them a brief history of the drug classification and its basic mechanism of action. Outline any possible side effects and which symptoms the drug is designed to help with; make sure to mention their diagnosis in this section. Include any information on possible drug/food interactions. Make sure to note any social, cultural or psychological factors that may be helpful for the client to know and let them know how soon they can expect to see results. Because this is your client feel free to make the message personal to them, including perhaps an encouraging note or acknowledging how hard this must be for them (e.g., You know that they also struggle with insomnia and one of the possible side effects of the drug is sleep disturbances. Empathize with the client by pointing out this may be upsetting for them since they already struggle with sleep). Please use APA formatting and support the information provided with a minimum of 5 outside reputable sources (such as the Food and Drug Administration, not Wikipedia). You may reference the textbook as well. Please provide a title page (no abstract) and a reference list.

Diagnosis Paper (40%); 5-7 pages; Due November 7th, 2025

Please choose one diagnosis in the DSM-5-tr to focus on, either a diagnosis covered in class or one that was not addressed. Pretend you have a client that has recently received a diagnosis for this disorder from their psychiatrist. Please write out an information packet for the client. Give them a brief overview of what symptoms they were experiencing (your choice) that lead to the psychiatrist's conclusions for their diagnosis. Let them know if this is a disorder that responds well to medications; if yes, which ones are commonly prescribed. If you choose a personality disorder, include information on co-morbid conditions (e.g., Depression with borderline personality disorder) and which medications may be prescribed for co-morbid conditions. Are there any lifestyle adjustments that may be helpful for them (e.g., Limiting caffeine if they suffer from sleep disturbances or anxiety)? What therapy modality might be a good choice for them and why (e.g., Dialectical Behavioural Therapy for Borderline Personality Disorder)? Note any psychological, cultural or social factors that may be helpful for them to know. Empathize with the client throughout and try to spark some hope in them as you outline different treatment options without making false promises.

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Please use APA formatting and 5 outside reputable sources. Please include a title page (no abstract) and a reference list.

SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar: https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/.

Attendance Policy
In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

Modular Courses
Students are expected to attend 100 per cent of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one (1) full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Online Courses
If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Semester-Based Courses
All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

Modular Course Schedules
Modular classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

Assignment Submission
All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the academic calendar.

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Return of Graded Assignments
Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

Academic Honesty
As members of the Briercrest learning community, students have a responsibility to conduct themselves with integrity and honour. Students who cheat on exams, plagiarize, inappropriately collaborate, or use generative AI without instructor authorization violate the trust placed in them by their instructors, fellow students, and the seminary. Any such actions constitute a breach of academic honesty and will result in serious consequences, such as failure of an assignment, failure of a course, or expulsion from the seminary.

> Plagiarism, whether intentional or involuntary, is the submission of the work of others, published or unpublished, in whole or in part without acknowledgment or proper documentation. All information, ideas and/or direct quotations taken from other primary or secondary sources must be documented appropriately.

> Generative AI is an umbrella term for a type of machine learning and a group of algorithms that can create new content, such as text, code, images, videos, music, or a combination of all these formats. Generative AI produces output in response to a query or prompt using generative models such as Large Language Models (LLMs) that rely on large datasets. Generative AI features are also often embedded within tools such as Grammarly, allowing these tools to generate new content, such as the rewriting, paraphrasing, or summarizing of existing text. The generated responses of these tools are probabilistic, which can result in errors and biases in responses.

The use of generative AI to create audio or visual media, to produce outlines, to generate partial or complete drafts of assignments, to answer questions on quizzes or exams, or to edit the grammar of assignment drafts is considered unauthorized unless it is explicitly permitted by the course instructor in writing. All use of generative AI tools must be properly documented.

Students are responsible for ensuring they are using their sources and completing their assignments with transparency and honesty. For more details, consult the [Seminary Calendar]() and the Briercrest Format Guide. In addition to being familiar with these pages, instructors assume that you have completed the Briercrest Academic Integrity course on [Canvas]() and understand the information contained in it.

Academic Accommodations
Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition (mental or physical) who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should contact the ARC Coordinator in person (L234 in the Library), by phone (1-306-801-6159), or by email (arc@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.). It is recommended that students meet with their professors to discuss the requirements of their accommodations (i.e., how the student will receive lecture notes, or how the professor wants to receive extension requests).

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