

**MIAMI-DADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**Social Science Discipline**

**CLP 2140 – ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**COURSE JUSTIFICATION**

Many students at Miami-Dade Community College have expressed an interest in taking a course in abnormal psychology. The chapter on abnormal behavior in the text we use in PSY 2012, Introduction to Psychology, is generally considered one of the most interesting chapters in the book. Students frequently select topics relating to abnormal behavior for required term projects. Knowledge of abnormal behavior is relevant to the chosen majors of many of our students. It is also a personally relevant area of study, as students often share their own struggles with mental health problems as well as those of friends and relatives.

There are local mental health jobs available for individuals with an associate degree or less. Focus groups involving mental health care providers revealed that these employers preferred applicants for mental health technician positions at private facilities have a college level course in abnormal psychology. One of the largest public employers of mental health technicians formally requires a course in abnormal psychology. Completion of an abnormal psychology course would allow psychology majors a better opportunity to be employed in a career related field while working towards their degrees. Work at a paraprofessional level in mental health care would not only strengthen the resumes of our psychology majors, but it would also give them the opportunity to confirm that they have made a sound career choice.

At least five other Florida community colleges offer a course in abnormal psychology. Four of these institutions use the common course number CLP 2140.

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

**CLP 2140 ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY 3 credits**

Prerequisite: PSY 2012 or permission of instructor. This course examines the major categories of mental disorders. Diagnostic criteria, treatment methods, cultural factors, public attitudes, community resources, ethical Issues and legislation applicable to individuals with mental disorders are studied. The impact of mental disorders on individuals, families and society are discussed.

**MIAMI-DADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**Social Science Discipline**  
**CLP 2140 – ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY**  
**Course Competencies**

**Competency 1: THE STUDENT WILL DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY BY:**

- a. defining the term abnormal behavior as used in the science of psychology.
- b. describing the major historical views of abnormal behavior from ancient times to the modern era.
- c. contrasting cultural beliefs and attitudes about abnormal behavior.

**Competency 2: THE STUDENT WILL EXPLAIN THE CLASSIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR BY:**

- a. explaining the purpose and structure of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.
- b. describing reliability, validity and sociocultural factors in the assessment of abnormal behavior.
- c. contrasting the relative merits of the standard modes of assessing abnormal behavior.
- d. explaining the effects of culture and language on the assessment of abnormal behavior.

**Competency 3: THE STUDENT WILL DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE PRIMARY, FORMAL CATEGORIES OF ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR BY:**

- a. listing the major disorders including: generalized anxiety disorders and phobias; panic disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, and stress disorders; mood disorders; psychosocial factors in physical disorders; eating disorders; substance-related disorders; sexual disorders and gender identity disorder; schizophrenia; disorders of memory and other cognitive functions; personality disorders; and disorders of childhood and old age.
- b. describing the defining characteristics of each listed disorder.

**Competency 4: THE STUDENT WILL REVIEW THE THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AS TO THE ORIGINS OF THE MAJOR CATEGORIES OF ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR BASED ON CURRENT RESEARCH BY:**

- a. explaining the psychodynamic perspective.
- b. explaining learning perspectives.
- c. explaining cognitive perspectives.
- d. explaining biological perspectives.
- e. explaining sociocultural perspectives.

**Competency 5: THE STUDENT WILL INVESTIGATE PRIMARY MODES OF TREATING ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR BY:**

- a. listing the common modalities used in treatment.
- b. describing the central premise behind each mode of treatment.
- c. contrasting the relative merits of the various treatment approaches..

**Competency 6: THE STUDENT WILL EXAMINE ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT BY:**

- a. discussing behavior that might constitute a danger to others.
- b. contrasting the rights of an individual and the protection of society.
- c. exploring an individual's right to treatment as well as a right to refuse treatment.
- d. describing the Baker Act, the Meyer's Act and the concept of deinstitutionalization.
- e. explaining the issues relating to the insanity defense.
- f. describing the impact of mental disorders on individuals, family and society.

**Competency 7: THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO APPLY KNOWLEDGE OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY BY:**

- a. relating course content to personal and family experience.
- b. demonstrating an understanding of the role the caregiver.
- c. relating the course content to the work place and employee assistance programs.
- d. explaining relevant current events from the perspective of abnormal psychology.
- e. examining relevant historical events and historical figures from the perspective of abnormal psychology.