

Adler Graduate School
Richfield, Minnesota

Course Syllabus #514

The Psychodynamics of Child, Adolescent,
and Adult Psychopathology

February-March 2008

1. Course Description

- 1.1 Adler Graduate School
- 1.2 Course number 514
- 1.3 The Psychodynamics of Child, Adolescent, and Adult Psychopathology
- 1.4 Three (3) credits

2. Course Overview

This course offers students an in-depth examination of the Adlerian view of psychopathology. Etiology typically begins during childhood. Based on Adler's explanation of the development of, in his words, neurotic behavior and neuroses, this course leads students through an Adlerian-based understanding of the psychodynamics of psychopathology as they relate to some of the most frequently diagnosed mental disorders (i.e., anxiety, substance abuse and dependence, depression, eating disorders). This course provides students with the information necessary to make a comprehensive Adlerian analysis of various forms of psychological distress in children, adolescents, and adults.

3. Texts, Materials, and Resources

3.1 Required readings:

Adler, A. (1935). The structure of neurosis. *The International Journal of Individual Psychology*, 2, 3-12.

Ansbacher, H., & Ansbacher, R. (Eds.) (1956). *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler*. HarperPerennial. ISBN 0-061-131154-5.

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV-TR. (2000). American Psychiatric Association. ISBN 0-890-42025-4.

Getzfeld, A. (2006). *Essentials of Abnormal Psychology*. Wiley Publishers. ISBN 978-0-0471-65623-4.

Honeyman, C. (2007). Recognizing mental health problems in children and young people. *Pediatric Nursing*, 19, 38-44.

4. Learning Objectives and Outcomes

Students in this course learn:

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- 4.1 The Adlerian theory about the various factors that contribute, individually and together, to the development of psychopathology in children, adolescents, and adults, viewed by Adlerian psychology as distortion in thinking and reasoning. (A1)
- 4.2 The Adlerian perspective on human growth and development and the variables that contribute to a healthy and productive lifestyle characterized by productivity, vibrant relationships, and strong social interest. (A6)
- 4.3 The Adlerian view of the etiology of neuroses and mental disorders, taking in particular a holistic, psychosocial point of view. (E1)
- 4.4 The interaction of psychological distress, hesitation in the face of challenges, and the demands of social living, each concept viewed as essential to an understanding of the Adlerian view of psychopathology. (E4)
- 4.5 Specific examination of certain, more frequently diagnosed neuroses and mental illnesses and their onset in children, adolescents, and adults (i.e., anxiety, chemical dependence, depression, eating disorders). (F1)

5. Course Outline

5.1 Unit 1 (Tuesday, February 19)

~ Introductions

~ Alfred Adler and his early views on neurosis

~ Critical variables in the development of psychological health

~ Investigation of essential Adlerian concepts relevant to an understanding of psychopathology and their applicability to neurosis:

- Inferiority feelings
- Compensation and overcompensation
- Social Interest
- Striving for significance
- A felt minus to a perceived plus
- Goal directedness
- Fictions
- Cognitive schema (apperceptive schema)
- Style of life (lifestyle)
- Socially embedded
- Neurotic (inferiority feelings, underdeveloped social interest, exaggerated objective of personal superiority)
- The creative self
- “Both picture and artist”

~ Presentation groups

~ What psychopathology is “not?” (The Case of Mahatma Gandhi)

5.2 Unit 2 (Saturday, February 23)

Reading due: Ansbacher & Ansbacher pages 281-298

Getzfeld pages 1-15

Honeyman pages 38-44

~ Investigation of essential Adlerian concepts relevant to an understanding of psychopathology and their applicability to neurosis (continued):

- Teleology
- Family atmosphere and parenting styles
- Pampered child
- Neglected child
- Striving for perfection
- Useless side of life (wasting behavior)
- Safeguarding
- Hesitating attitude (“yes, but . . .”)
- The three great problems of life
- Early recollections and dreams

~Child psychopathology

~The Case of Bill Clinton (Group 1)

5.3 Unit 3 (Tuesday, February 26)

Reading due: Ansbacher & Ansbacher pages 299-303 and 319-324

Getzfeld pages 50-83

~ The Adlerian view of psychopathology in terms of the following disorders (etiology and symptomatology):

The Affective (or Mood) Disorders

Suicide

~The Case of Jeffrey Dahmer (Group 2)

5.4 Unit 4 (Tuesday, March 4)

Reading due: Ansbacher & Ansbacher pages 423 and 314-318

Getzfeld pages 84-110 and 164-207

~ The Adlerian view of psychopathology in terms of the following disorders (etiology and symptomatology):

The Substance Abuse Disorders

~The Case of Betty Ford (Group 3)

5.5 Unit 5 (Saturday, March 8)

Reading due: Ansbacher & Ansbacher pages 303-308
Getzfeld pages 16-49 and 111-133

~ The Adlerian view of psychopathology in terms of the following disorder (etiology and symptomatology):

Schizophrenia

~The Case of Ted Kaczynski (Group 4)

5.6 Unit 6 (Tuesday, March 11)

Reading due: Ansbacher & Ansbacher pages 312-314 and 432-443
Getzfeld pages 134-163 and 208-242

~ The Adlerian view of psychopathology in terms of the following disorders (etiology and symptomatology):

The Anxiety Disorders

The Eating Disorders: Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa

~Group planning time

5.7 Unit 7 (Tuesday, March 18)

- ~ In-class examination (40 points)
- ~ In-class presentations (Groups 1-4, maximum 20 minutes each)
- ~ Revisiting the origins of psychopathology according to the Adlerian view
- ~ The place and use of the psychodynamics of psychopathology in the fields of study at the Adler Graduate School
- ~ Issues in psychopathology for Adlerian-trained counselors and psychotherapists
- ~ Course wrap-up

6. Primary Written Assignment

- 6.1 Develop a group paper on your subject's psychopathology. This paper should not exceed eight (8) pages, including title page and references. Do not include an abstract.

Consider such variables as your subject's medical history (physical and psychological), family constellation, birth order, description of early childhood, parents' parenting style, family atmosphere, early recollections, cognitive schema, courage, means of hesitating, safeguarding, symptoms, degree of social interest, and his or her hopes and dreams. In particular, what was your subject's approach to the three great problems of life?

This paper should be in APA format.

7. Assessment Plan

- 7.1 Score on in-class examination (March 18) (40 points).
- 7.2 Joint group paper on your subject's psychopathology (60 points, 50 for content and 10 for APA compliance).

8. Criteria for Writing Assignments and Learning Disabilities

- 8.1 Written work handed in for this class should be in APA format. It should be typed on 8½ x 11 inch white paper with one-inch margins. Pages should be numbered. All grammar and spelling should be checked carefully. Sexist terminology is not permitted. Specific concerns about charts, tables, etc. should be handled according to the APA publication manual.

Papers are due on Monday, March 31, at 4:30 p.m.

- 8.2 If a student in 514 has a documented learning disability and/or is in need of some direct form of assistance during the course, tell me during the first week of class. I need to know on the front end so I can work with you.

9. Grading Scale

- 9.1 A 90-100 points
- B 80-89 points
- C 70-79 points

Instructor Contact Information:

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