

Psychology of Addictive Behaviors

Psych 3300 – Section 002
Tuesdays 3:00 – 5:50 PM

Fall 2025
Gateway, Room 132

Instructor Information

Instructor: Alisa Garner (she/her)

Email: alisa.garner@unt.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30-1:30 PM (in-person) and 1:30-2:30 PM (Zoom) or by appointment (email me)

Office: Terrell Hall, Room 334

Zoom Link: TBA

Teaching Assistants Information

Name: Elizabeth Nuth

Email: ElizabethNuth@my.unt.edu

Office Hours: TBD

Office: TBD

Course Description, Structure, and Objectives

Course Description: Welcome to psychology of addictive behaviors! The overarching goal of this course is to introduce you to the field of substance use/misuse and behavioral addictions. This course will be in-person, meeting on Tuesdays at 3:00-5:50 PM for the full semester. The first portion of the course will focus on the language of addiction, how substances work in the body, and theories of addiction. The second portion will focus on specific substances, including exploration of substance-specific effects and addiction experiences. The third portion will focus on behaviors addictions and specific populations with high prevalence rates of addictive behaviors. The final fourth portion of this course will focus on a review of assessment/screening for addictive behaviors, treatment efforts, and current concerns in the addictions field.

Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the central concepts of substance use/misuse and behaviors addictions, as well as assessment and treatment of addictive behaviors.

By the end of this course, you should:

1. Understand the epidemiology (incident and prevalence rates), etiology (origin), and psychological, societal, and physiological effects of substances and behavioral addictions
2. Describe varied and diverse presentations of addictive behaviors
3. Understand the various methods of assessing, screening, preventing, and treating addictive behaviors
4. Contribute to the de-stigmatization of addiction through increased awareness and use of person-first language

Required Materials

Required Textbook:

- Doweiko, H. E. & Evans, A. (2024). *Concepts of Chemical Dependency* (11th ed.). Cengage.

There are several purchasing formats available, including eBook, rental, and used options. You can purchase the eBook directly through Cengage, the UNT Bookstore ([UNT Bookstore Link](#)) or other third-party sellers. You do NOT need to purchase any of the online supplemental materials for the course (e.g., MindTap).

Required Article and Website Readings:

- Links to Websites will be available on your syllabus and on Canvas
- Articles will be available on Canvas

Technology Requirements:

- Access to a computer
- Access to the internet
- Microsoft Word or another word processor such as Google Documents
- Adobe Reader or another .pdf document reader

This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, you will need internet access to reference content on Canvas. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere \(https://online.unt.edu/learn\)](https://online.unt.edu/learn).

Technical Support:

Student Helpdesk:

- UIT Helpdesk
- Sage Hall 130
- 940-565-2324
- helpdesk@unt.edu

Course Requirements

In-class Group Writing Assignments (8 out of 10, 15 points each, 120 points total + 30 extra credit points possible):

Throughout the course, there will be 10 in-class group discussion and writing assignments, each worth 15 points. You must complete (and thus, be present) ANY 8 of the 10 assignments. You will form your groups at the beginning of the semester and remain in those groups throughout the rest of the semester. All group members are expected to be prepared for the discussion by arriving to class with the assigned chapter fully read and/or any corresponding Canvas assignments completed. You will be able to use your textbook and lecture notes to assist with these group writing assignments. For each assignment completed above the required 8, you will earn 15 extra credit points (i.e., maximum of 30 extra points). Because only 8 of 10 are required, missed in-class assignments cannot be made-up for any reason.

Collaboration Performance Assessment (100 points):

The success of group discussion and writing assignment depends on all group members coming to class prepared by doing the readings and/or corresponding Canvas assignments, contributing to the discussions, and participating during class time. At the end of the semester, group members will assess one another on their performance as it relates to their contributions to the success of the group assignments. The average scores of the group members will then be used to calculate each student's grade out of 100 points.

Midpoint Survey (10 points):

Midterm Feedback Survey (10 points) - This is an opportunity to provide feedback for the instructor of the class, ask questions, and assess your own progress in the class. The Midterm Feedback Survey must be submitted on Canvas.

Canvas Assignments: (6 out of 7, 10 points each, 60 points total + up to 10 extra credit points possible): You will have assignments on Canvas that will be due before class and are designed to prepare you for that day's group discussion and writing assignment. These Canvas assignments will involve **other assigned materials and activities**. Please see Canvas for detailed information. Canvas assignments will be due on Tuesdays at 3:00 PM

and will typically be open two weeks prior to the due date. There are two exceptions to the two-week timeline. You will only have six (6) days for Canvas Assignment #4 (but I will make time in class for that assignment). Canvas Assignment #7 will open three (3) weeks early as that assignment requires you to take part in an addiction simulation exercise for 48 hours. Be sure to check the Canvas assignments early as many of them have requirements that will take some time such as listening to podcast or taking part in an addiction simulation exercise for 48 hours. You must complete ANY 6 of the 7 written assignments. Please note, if you decide to skip Canvas Assignment #7, the highest number of points you will be able to earn on the subsequent In-Class Group Writing Assignment #10 is half points. If you complete all 7, you can earn up to 10 extra credit points.

Exams (40 points per exam; 120 points total [4 exams but lowest score on 1 is dropped]):

There will be 4 exams for this course, with each exam worth 40 points. Each exam is expected to cover the following week's course content:

Exam 1	Weeks 1-4
Exam 2	Weeks 5-8
Exam 3	Weeks 9-12
Exam 4	Weeks 13-16

The exams are non-cumulative. The lowest grade of the 4 exams will be dropped, and the remaining 3 exam scores will count toward your final grade. Although your final grade is calculated based on your top 3 of 4 exam scores, this is not meant to be a pass to skip or show up unprepared to an exam; rather, this is to account for life's random circumstances (incapacitating sickness, family emergency, faulty alarm clock) that may result in you missing an exam or performing well below your capabilities.

Exam questions will consist of approximately 40 multiple choice questions. Questions will be shown one at a time and you will not have the ability to go back to previous questions. Material from the exams will come from topics covered by the readings (~66%) and materials presented in lectures (~34%). **In other words, to do well on exams, I encourage you to attend class and read the textbook.**

Students are required to take exams on Canvas at the location of your choosing. Exams 1-3 will open at 12:01 AM on Mondays and close at 4:05 PM on Tuesday. Exam 4 will open at 12:01 AM on Mondays and close at 11:59 PM on Tuesday. You will have a maximum of 50* minutes to complete the exam. All exams will be open note/Canvas/textbook/articles. Students are permitted to use any course materials to assist them in completing the exam. Students are NOT permitted to consult external websites or classmates during the exam. Such actions will be considered academic dishonesty. Any questions that are not completed on the exam will be marked as incorrect.

*Students with approved accommodations will be provided with extended exam time.

Assessing Your Work

You can earn a maximum of 410 points in the semester as outlined below:

Assignments, Surveys, Quizzes	Point Calculation	Total Points (% of total grade)
In-class Group Writing Assignments	8 of 10 required X 15 pts each	120 (~29%)
Collaboration Performance Assessment	100 pts	100 (~24%)
Mid-point survey	10 pts	10 (~2%)
Canvas assignments	6 of 7 required X 10 pts each	60 (~15%)

Exams	3 of 4 required with lowest score dropped X 40	120 (~29%)
	TOTAL	410

Grading Scale:

The grading scale for this course is A – F. The points I will use to calculate the final grade are below.

Grade	Points	Percentages
A	369 – 410	90-100%
B	328 – 368	80-89%
C	287 – 387	70-79%
D	246 – 286	60-69%
F	< 245	< 60%

Late Assignment Policy: You are expected to submit all assignments by the deadline. **Make-up work and extensions will only be allowed in unusual and unforeseen circumstances, and at my discretion.** Anything submitted late will incur a 15% reduction in grade per day. This means that the more days the assignment is submitted after the deadline, the lower the grade.

Makeup Exams: As mentioned above, dropping your lowest of the 4 exam scores is not intended to be a reason for you to skip an exam. Therefore, makeup exams will **NOT** be offered for unexcused absences. Makeup exams will only be offered for excused, documented reasons, and under the most unusual of circumstances. Student athletes or students excused for the observance of religious holidays must contact me at least two weeks before the intended absence. Students excused for medical and bereavement reasons must contact me within two days of the absence. If an unusual circumstance requires you to take an exam before the scheduled exam date, please note that the format may deviate (e.g., all essays, differing breakdown of multiple choice/short answer questions).

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism:

You are all expected to demonstrate the highest levels of academic integrity in all that they do. Forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

- Cheating (including copying from others' work)
- Plagiarism (representing another person's words or ideas as your own; failure to properly cite the source of your information, argument, or concepts)
- Falsification of documents
- Disclosure of test or other assignment content to another student
- Submission of the same paper or other assignment to more than one class without the explicit approval of all faculty members' involved
- Unauthorized academic collaboration with others
- Conspiracy to engage in academic misconduct
- Use of generative AI to complete assignments

In this course, I want you to engage deeply with the materials and develop your own critical thinking and writing skills. For this reason, the use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools like ChatGPT is not permitted. While these tools can be helpful in some contexts, they do not align with our goal of fostering the development of your independent thinking. Using GenAI to complete any part of an assignment, exam, or coursework will be considered a violation

of academic integrity, as it prevents the development of your own skills, and will be addressed *according to the Student Academic Integrity policy* (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>).

Engaging in any of these behaviors or supporting others who do so will result in academic penalties and/or other sanctions. If a faculty member determines that a student has violated our Academic Integrity Policy, sanctions ranging from resubmission of work to course failure may occur. For more details, please see the University's [Academic Integrity Policy \(PDF\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>).

Additional Warning about Writing Assignments: Writing assignments submitted through Canvas Turnitin are checked for both potential plagiarism (i.e., copying others' written work without proper citation or even one's own prior writing) and artificial intelligence (AI)-generated content (e.g., using ChatGPT). If a high percentage of prior written-content matching or probable AI-generated content is noted by Turnitin (35-40% or higher), then the amount of effort that the student devoted to completing the written assignment will come into question and ultimately may negatively affect your grade. You can receive resources for writing at the UNT Writing Center: [Undergraduate In-person Tutoring | UNT Writing Center](#).

Attendance and Participation

Although I will not take formal attendance, it is recommended that you attend each class to ensure your success. You must complete 8 of the 10 in-class group writing assignments throughout the semester. Material will be covered in lecture that is not in the text. Exams will be drawn from both readings and lectures, and new material will be covered in lectures. Lecture materials will provide important information to consider and discuss in your written response assignments.

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to approach another student about the material that you missed. Classes will not be recorded or made available virtually to protect the privacy of students in the course. If you know that you will have an extended absence (ex. student-athlete requirements, religious observations), please discuss this with me as soon as possible.

It is important to complete readings before class so that you can contribute to class discussion and engage with your classmates and me. As you are reading to prepare for each class, note any questions you have about the material, or any times that you disagree with the author(s).

Laptops and tablets are permitted in the classroom for educational purposes, but it is important to engage with the class discussions and not be using them for other purposes that may distract those around you.

How to Succeed in this Course

Attend all lectures and do all readings: Success in this course is directly related to keeping up with the content. Materials in this course build off one another. So, if you skip chapter/lecture 2, you will likely be very confused when we are using information learned in chapter/lecture 2 to learn new information in chapter/lecture 3. Doing the readings before class will result in a more meaningful understanding of the lecture material and will allow for opportunities to ask questions and engage in discussions.

Participate in discussions and ask questions: Your active participation is an important component of this class. After all, this is your class! The more you engage in the course the more you gain from the experience. Much of what is discussed in class compliments the topics addressed in the assigned readings. Asking questions helps ensure you are understanding the materials.

Study and practice concepts regularly throughout the semester: Research shows we learn more effectively with regular, spaced-out practice. In other words, studying in small doses consistently throughout the semester leads

to better understanding concepts as well as longer-lasting learning. You'll most likely do better on exams if you study a little bit consistently, using different methods (e.g., practice problems, flashcards, explaining to a friend) compared to if you study all at once using only one or two methods right before the exam.

Check Canvas and email daily: Assignment due dates, class announcements, supplemental materials, and more will be communicated via Canvas and email. Set up your Canvas notification settings to send alerts of announcements. Checking Canvas and email regularly will ensure you are in the loop with class happenings.

Complete all assignments ON TIME: Assignment deadlines are final. Per the late policy discussed later in this syllabus, late assignments will incur a 15% point deduction per day late.

Ask for help!: The best way to contact me and the TA(s) is via email using your official UNT email account. We are here to help you in any way we possibly can. We want you to be successful in this course and your future endeavors. Please reach out if you have questions about the content, become worried about certain assignments or exams, or if you simply want to talk more about psychology! We would love to help you – whether it's to develop better study skills, learn confusing material, or review content you feel less confident about. As much as we seek to help each of you, we CANNOT help after you fail the class – thus, ask for help early and often. I strongly encourage you to make ample use of office hours, as well as review the materials (e.g., syllabus) to see if your question has already been addressed.

Course Workload Statement: You are expected to invest considerable time outside of class in learning the material for this course. The expectation is that each week students should spend approximately 2-3 hours outside of class for every hour in class working on reading, assignments, studying, and other work for the course. We realize that most students work and have family or other obligations. Time management is thus critical for student success. Please feel free to reach out to me or the TA(s) about time management skills related to the course workload. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can be successful at UNT, go to unt.edu/success and explore unt.edu/wellness.

ADA Accommodations:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. To request accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) by completing an application for services and providing documentation to verify your eligibility each semester. Once your eligibility is confirmed, you may request your letter of accommodation. ODA will then email your faculty a letter of reasonable accommodation, initiating a private discussion about your specific needs in the course. You can request accommodations at any time, but it's important to provide ODA notice to your faculty as early as possible in the semester to avoid delays in implementation. Keep in mind that you must obtain a new letter of accommodation for each semester and meet with each faculty member before accommodations can be implemented in each class. You are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding your accommodations during office hours or by appointment. Faculty have the authority to ask you to discuss your letter during their designated office hours to protect your privacy. For more information and to access resources that can support your needs, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>).

Supporting Your Success and Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

Class expectations and responsibilities:

It is my goal to promote and maintain a comfortable, collaborative, and respectful learning environment. In this course, everyone is expected to:

- Communicate respectfully and professionally with all in the course.

- Respect others' information; only share personal information and comments outside this space with explicit consent.
- Assume someone in the room has the identity or experience we're discussing.
- Challenge ourselves to communicate in new ways.
- Allow time for reflection and processing. Make space for silence.
- Listen respectfully to unfamiliar perspectives, and let people finish sentences before responding.
- Speak only for ourselves — we will not generalize other people's experiences.
- Hold space for dialogue instead of debate.
- Expect and accept discomfort and non-closure.
- Carefully consider potential ramifications before telling personal stories or disclosing information about struggles with mental health or addiction problems (your own or someone you know)
- Keep an open mind

To support your success in this course, I and the TA(s) commit to:

- Communicating respectfully and professionally with everyone.
- Putting my best effort into explaining topics.
- Provide clear expectations for assignments.
- Providing thoughtful, timely feedback on your assignments.
- Responding to all email messages within 48 business hours.

Title IX Policy and Mandatory Reporting

Please be aware that UNT Title IX Policy - [Title IX Reporting \(unt.system.edu\)](https://unt.system.edu/title-ix-reporting) – requires all faculty and staff to be mandatory reporters. This means that if we learn about something that might be sex discrimination (e.g., sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, pregnancy discrimination, LGBTQ discrimination), then we must report what we know to the Title IX office. I am required to report this information as mandated by Texas state law. A report may result in an investigation. Mandatory reporters are expected to share information learned in all settings, including during class activities, assignments, office hours, and outside of class.

Mental Health Resources

Student Health and Wellness Center - [Student Health and Wellness Center | University of North Texas \(unt.edu\)](https://unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center)

Counseling and Testing Center - [Counseling and Testing Services | University of North Texas \(unt.edu\)](https://unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)

UNT CARE Team - [CARE Team | University of North Texas \(unt.edu\)](https://unt.edu/care-team)

UNT Psychiatric Services - [| University of North Texas \(unt.edu\)](https://unt.edu/psychiatric-services)

UNT Student Counseling - [Student Counseling Home | University of North Texas \(unt.edu\)](https://unt.edu/student-counseling-home)

Course Schedule

The schedule and syllabus are a “living document,” meaning that I may alter aspects of the schedule and syllabus at my discretion.

You will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class - [Campus Closures Policy \(https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006).

See following page for course schedule, assigned readings, and due dates:

Week	Date	Topic(s)	Readings	Assignment Due
1				
	08/19	Introduction, syllabus review, and language/stigma of addictive behaviors Prevalence and impact of addictive behaviors; continuum of behaviors Pharmacology of substances, neurological underpinnings of behaviors addictions	Chapters 1, 2, and 3	In-Class Group Writing Assignment #1 Due 8/19 by the end of class
				Canvas assignment #1 - Due Tuesday 8/26 at 3:00 PM
2				
	08/26	The Biopsychosocial Model of Addictions	Chapter 26 Podcast: Dr. John Kelly - Stigma in Addiction and Courses of Recovery - The Addiction Psychologist – first 37 minutes	In-Class Group Writing Assignment #2 - You need to have listened to the Dr. John Kelly - Stigma in Addiction and Courses of Recovery - The Addiction Psychologist podcast for this group writing assignment Due 8/26 by the end of class
3				
	09/02	Alcohol	Chapter 4 and 5	In-Class Group Writing Assignment #3 – You need to have read Chapters 4, 5, and 26 for this group writing assignment Due 09/02 by the end of class
				Canvas assignment #2 Due Tuesday 09/09 at 3:00 PM
4				
	09/09	Cannabis	Chapter 10 and Chapter 38 - Physical book pages 527-530, Online book pages 528-530 (Sections: The debate over “Medical Marijuana,” Cannabidiol (CBD) and Other	In-Class Group Writing Assignment #4 – You need to have completed Canvas assignment #2 for this group writing assignment Due 09/09 by the end of class

			Compounds in Cannabis, and Legalization of Cannabis)	
5				
	09/16	Exam 1 Class will start at 4:30 PM Tobacco	Chapter 15	Exam 1 – on Canvas Open Monday 9/15 at 12:01 AM Closes Tuesday 9/16 at 4:05 PM
				Canvas assignment #3 Due 09/23 at 3:00 PM
6				
	09/23	Opioids	Chapter 11 Podcast: America's Opioid Epidemic : Throughline : NPR	In-Class Group Writing Assignment #5 – You need to have read Chapter 11 and America's Opioid Epidemic : Throughline : NPR for this group writing assignment Due 09/23 by the end of class
7				
	09/30	Stimulants and Cocaine	Chapter 8 and 9	In-Class Group Writing Assignment #6 Due 09/30 by the end of class
8				
	10/07	Barbiturates, Benzodiazepines, and Hallucinogens	Chapter 7 and 12	Canvas assignment #4 – Will have the opportunity to do in class Due Monday 10/13 at 11:59 PM
				Mid-Semester Survey Due Monday 10/13 at 11:59 PM
9				
	10/14	Exam 2 Class will start at 4:30 PM Food	Article: Gordon et al. (2018). What is the evidence for “food addiction?” A systematic review.	Exam 2 – on Canvas Open Monday 10/13 at 12:01 AM Closes Tuesday 10/14 at 4:05 PM
				Canvas Assignment #5 Due 10/21 at 3:00 PM
10				

	10/21	Gambling, gaming, internet, and social media	<p>Article: Potenz et al. (2019). Gambling Disorder, pages 1-8 (stop at section Diagnosis, screening and prevention).</p> <p>Article: Rogier et al. (2020). Giving a voice to gambling addiction: Analysis of personal narratives</p> <p>Is Internet Addiction A Thing? : Shots - Health News : NPR</p>	<p>In-Class Group Writing Assignment #7 – You need to have completed Canvas Assignment #5 for this group writing assignment</p> <p>Due 10/21 by the end of class</p>
11				
	10/28	Sex and Porn	<p>Article: Kraus et al. (2016). Should compulsive sexual behavior be considered an addiction?</p> <p>Article: Antons & Brand. (2021). Diagnostic and classification considerations related to compulsive sexual behavior disorder and problematic pornography use</p>	<p>In-Class Group Writing Assignment #8 – Due 10/28 by the end of class</p>
				<p>Canvas Assignment #6 Due 11/4 at 3:00 PM</p> <p>Canvas Assignment #7 - Addiction simulation exercise for 48 hours Opens 10/28 at 3:00 PM Due 11/18 at 3:00 PM</p>
12				
	11/04	Special populations: Trauma, Gender, and College Students	Article: Reichert et al. (2021). Psychological Trauma: Biological and Psychosocial Aspects of	<p>In-Class Group Writing Assignment #9 – You need to have completed Canvas</p>

			<p>Substance Use Disorders, start on page 245 section “The concept of Psychological Trauma” to the end of the article.</p> <p>Chapter 18 Physical book pages 228-234, Online book pages 228-234 (Sections: Start at the beginning of the chapter and stop at “Amphetamine Use Disorders in Women”</p> <p>Chapter 21</p>	<p>Assignment #6 and read Chapter 21 for this group writing assignment Due 11/04 by the end of class</p>
13				
	11/11	<p>Exam 3</p> <p>Class will start at 4:30 PM</p> <p>The addictive disorders debate</p>	<p>Chapter 37 Physical book pages 497-504, Online book pages 497-504 (Start at beginning of chapter and stop at section Adulterants)</p> <p>Article: Heinz et al., 2020. Addiction theory matters – Why there is no dependance on caffeine or antidepressant medication</p>	<p>Exam 3 – on Canvas Open Monday 11/10 at 12:01 AM Closes Tuesday 11/11 at 4:05 PM</p>
				<p>Canvas Assignment #7 - Addiction simulation exercise for 48 hours Due 11/18 at 3:00 PM</p>
14				
	11/18	<p>Treatment of addictive behaviors and support groups</p>	<p>Chapter 31, 32, and 35</p>	<p>In-Class Group Writing Assignment #10 – You need to have completed Canvas Assignment #7 for this group writing assignment. Students will only get half points for the group writing assignment #9 if they did not complete Canvas Assignment #7 by the due date. Due 11/18 by the end of class</p>

15				
	11/25	NO CLASS – University holiday		
16				
	12/02	Screening and assessment of addictive disorders	Chapter 28 Article Carnes et al. (2012). PATHOS: a brief screening application for assessing sexual addiction	
				Collaboration Performance Assessment Due 12/05 at 11:59 PM
17				
	12/08 – 12/09	Exam 4		Exam 4 – on Canvas Open 12/08 at 12:01 AM Closes 12/09 at 11:59 PM