

SYLLABUS

BEHV 4900.012

CLEAR THINKING ABOUT WEIRD BEHAVIOR

PROFESSOR & CONTACT INFORMATION

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PURPOSE

- The purpose of this class is to teach students how to utilize scientific critical thinking to examine the causes of various strange phenomena, including alleged paranormal events, magic, superstition, mystery illness, bogus therapies, and pseudoscience. It is hoped that students will leave this course with an open mind but not so open that their brains fall out. As the second course in a two-course series, this course will focus more on the methods of critical thinking, so students leave the class more competent and capable of telling truth from fiction.

REQUEST FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

- The Department of Behavior Analysis in cooperation with the Office of Disability Accommodation, gladly complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodation for qualified students with disabilities. *You are required to present your written request for accommodation within 1 week of the first class.*

ATTENDANCE POLICY

- **Class attendance is mandatory.**
 - You must sign the attendance sheet to be counted as present in class.
 - Students who are late to class by more than 30 minutes may be counted as absent unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.
 - Students who sign the attendance sheet and then leave the class before the class is over may be counted as absent unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.
 - Students must sign the attendance sheet only for themselves.
 - It is considered cheating for one student to sign the attendance sheet for another.
 - Because your grade in this course is linked to your attendance, cheating in this way has grave consequences. Anyone caught doing this will suffer those consequences.

- Students are allowed 3 unexcused absences on this course.
 - An unexcused absence is one that has not been approved by the instructor.
 - Students do not need to tell the instructor that you are going to be absent to use one of your unexcused absences.
 - Each unexcused absence beyond the 3rd one will drop your final grade in this course by one letter grade.
 - After the 6th unexcused absence has been reached, the instructor reserves the right to drop you from the course.

- There is no limit to how many excused absences you can have on this course.
 - An excused absence is one that has been approved by the instructor.
 - For an absence to be approved by the instructor, the instructor must be notified before the absence is taken and there must be some form of evidence, other than your word, to justify the absence.
 - For example, I cannot just take your word for it that you were at your friend's wedding, I need a wedding announcement.
 - Even though there is no limit to how many excused absences you can have on this course, the instructor reserves the right to set a limit for students who are missing too many classes.

- Students are responsible for tracking their own absences.
 - Do not ask the instructor how many absences you have accumulated during the semester.
 - Total absences will be calculated and given to students at the end of the semester.

CLASS RULES

- Avoid being critical of the "person" speaking; instead, be critical of what that person "says".
- Do not intentionally insult others with whom you disagree.
- If you have a question that is relevant to the discussion, please ask it during class and avoid waiting until the class has ended to ask your question.
- If you have a personal experience relevant to a topic, please share it.
- If you are offended by something in this course, please come and talk to me about it.
- Debate is welcome in this course, and it is okay for students to disagree with what the instructor says during class. Spirited debate and argument during class is welcome and even encouraged if things remain civil and productive.

DISCLAIMER

- Topics discussed in this course will make some of you uncomfortable and some people may even find the content offensive.
- Any topic is fair game, including religion & politics and other hot button topics.
- We are going to question commonly held beliefs that some people think should not be questioned.
- This course promotes methodological naturalism (science & reason) as superior to all forms, methods, and perspectives for understanding nature and human experience.
- Colorful language, explicit topics, and materials may be presented in this course and may appear at any time.
- If you are not okay with this then I respectfully ask that you drop the course.

GRADING POLICY

- Missed Assignments
 - All assignments can be made up without penalty.
 - You must turn in all assignments before the last day of class to get credit.
- Graded Assignments
 - Reading Assignments = 50 points
 - There are 5 reading assignments worth 10 points each.
 - Unit Quizzes = 300 points
 - There are 3 unit quizzes worth 100 points each.
 - Bonus Questions on Unit Quizzes = 30 points
- **TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 380 points**

GRADE CALCULATION

- A = 342 - 380
- B = 304 - 341
- C = 266 - 303
- D = 228 - 265
- F = 190 or less

TEXTBOOK INFORMATION

- [Critical Thinking: Pseudoscience and the Paranormal](#)

