

PSYCHOLOGY OF ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS

PSYC 3300, Section 002

Fall 2026 Syllabus

University of North Texas

Tues 2:25-5:15 PM in Gateway 132

Instructor:	Dr. Casey Guillot	TA:	Bryer Holloway
Office:	Terrill Hall 382 or Zoom	Office:	Zoom
Hours:	By appointment only	Hours:	By appointment only

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Phone: 940-369-8480

CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR OR TEACHING ASSISTANT (TA)

Email is the best way to contact the instructor or TA. Sending messages through Canvas is also acceptable.

CONTACTING YOU

Please pay close attention to announcements posted to Canvas. If necessary, I or my TA will contact you through your UNT email address or Canvas messaging system.

COURSE BACKGROUND

This course gives an overview of the history, etiology, theories, cognitive neuroscience, and psychological and behavioral effects of addictive behaviors, primarily substance use but also gambling and other behaviors being considered as addictions (e.g., binge eating, hypersexuality, compulsive electronic media use).

Coverage of the history of substance use and other addictive behaviors is vital to being informed of their origins and development over time as well as being able to place addictive behaviors in a modern context. This includes discussion of historical abuses or prejudices (e.g., propaganda) in relation to substance use and more modern biases or disparities in relation to drug-related legal offenses and research/treatment.

Etiology refers to the study of the causes of addictive behaviors, with the understanding that there is no single cause of addiction, but rather a complex set of factors that combine to influence vulnerability to addiction. These include biological factors (e.g., genetic, physiological, sex- or race-related), psychological factors (e.g., beliefs, mood, personality, psychopathology), and contextual factors (e.g., cultural, ethnic, or national/regional differences and social, socioeconomic, and environmental influences). Based on these factors, a number of theories have been proposed in an attempt to explain the development of addiction.

Cognitive neuroscience encompasses the study of brain activity that underlies cognition (e.g., consciousness, thought processes, emotions) and is focused on the functionality of different brain regions, neural pathways in the brain, and other aspects of neuropsychopharmacology (e.g., neurotransmitter activity).

Psychological and behavioral effects refer to the mental and bodily effects of addictive behaviors, including acute and short- and long-term effects (i.e., effects that occur while actively engaged in addictive behaviors, soon after ceasing addictive behaviors, and from chronic engagement in addictive behaviors).

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK

Doweiko, H. E., & Evans, A. (2023). *Concepts of Chemical Dependency* (11th ed.). Boston: Cengage.

ASSIGNED READINGS AND SUGGESTED VIDEOS

A few other readings will be assigned and uploaded to Canvas during the semester, and some suggested videos or other media may be shared on occasion.

PRIMARY COURSE OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Increase knowledge concerning the history of addictive behaviors (including the “War on Drugs”).
- ☐ Be able to identify causal factors involved in the development of addictive behaviors.
- ☐ Have broad knowledge of the theories that have been proposed to explain addiction.
- ☐ Develop a fundamental understanding of the cognitive neuroscience of addictive behaviors, including a basic understanding of the neuropsychopharmacology of addictive behaviors.
- ☐ Become more familiar with the psychological and behavioral effects of addictive behaviors.
- ☐ Be able to critically analyze research on and controversies related to addictive behaviors.
- ☐ Become more familiar with how diversity and development relate to addictive behaviors.

Exams and Grading Procedures

Grade Breakdown

Introductory Assignment (1): 5 points for just introducing yourself to the instructor and TA

Online Discussions (6): 45 points (up to 9 points each, and lowest score dropped; Discussions are scored according to the Discussion Post Grading Rubric, to be made available in Canvas)

Online Exams (5): 200 points (up to 50 points for each, and lowest score dropped; if you miss only one exam, this will count as your lowest score; NO FINAL EXAM IN THIS COURSE)

Journal Article Review (1): 20 points (approximate 2-page summary/critical analysis of a journal article)

Reaction Paper (1): 30 points (approximate 2-3 page response with your thoughts on an assigned reading)

300 Total Possible Points

A = 90-100% (270-300 points)

B = 80-89% (240-269 points)

C = 70-79% (210-239 points)

D = 60-69% (180-209 points)

F = 0-59% (179 points or less)

***NOTE:** There will be no rounding up of final grades!

Discussions: Discussions will involve responding with 5-10 sentences in response to posted Discussion topics in Canvas. Students are expected to submit complete sentences that are thoughtful, accurate (if any information is presented as factual), and well-written (e.g., few/no typos). **Discussion assignments will be due on selected days, as noted in the schedule (see the last page of the syllabus).** Discussion assignments will be announced through Canvas approximately one week ahead of each due date. Discussion responses will be scored from 0-9 according to the criteria shown in the Discussion Post Grading Rubric available in Canvas. If approved by the instructor ahead of time, in rare instances some additional days may be allowed for completing a Discussion assignment.

Exams: Exams will consist of 50 multiple choice items and will be administered in Canvas on 3 consecutive days starting on selected days, as noted in the schedule (see the last page of the syllabus). The standard amount of time that will be allowed for completing an exam is 60 minutes. **Because the lowest or missing exam score will be dropped, no make-up exams will be allowed for missed exams without advance notice or justification.** If approved by the instructor, however, an exam may be scheduled for a different date range than originally scheduled.

Journal Article Review: The journal article review will involve summarizing and critically analyzing a preselected journal article. This review should consist of a document with approximately 2 double-spaced typed pages of content using Times New Roman font size 12. The Article Review document must be uploaded and submitted as a file, which then will be checked by Turnitin and graded with a rubric.

Reaction Paper: The reaction paper will involve responding to an assigned reading. This reaction paper should consist of a document with approximately 2-3 double-spaced typed pages of content using Times New Roman font size 12. Your reaction can include thoughts such as if you found parts of the reading to be particularly interesting, if you agreed or disagreed with points made, whether you were surprised, etc. (which of course should involve elaborating on your reactions, e.g., thoughts or feelings). The Reaction Paper must be uploaded and submitted as a file, which then will be checked by Turnitin and graded with a rubric.

Student Perceptions of Teaching Effectiveness (SPOT): Student feedback is an important part of participating in this course. The SPOT survey will be made available toward the end of the semester to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey, they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional info, please visit the SPOT website at www.spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences: According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, forgery, and plagiarism. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions (possibly even expulsion). For more info: <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 Turnitin evidences a high percentage of prior written-content matching or probable AI-generated content (e.g., 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 the student's grade. So please paraphrase when possible and complete writing assignments largely on your own (with little or no assistance from AI).

Acceptable Student Behavior: Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be directed to leave the classroom, and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students office to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct (see <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>).

ADA Accommodation Statement: UNT strives to make reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify eligibility. If a disability is verified, ODA will provide a student with an accommodation notice that will be emailed to instructors. Students may request accommodation at any time; however, notices of accommodation should be given as early as possible to avoid delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new notice of accommodation each semester. For more info, see the [ODA website](#). You can visit the ODA office in Chestnut Hall 102, call 940-565-4323, or email disability@unt.edu

Emergency Notification & Procedures: UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of university closure, please refer to Canvas or your UNT email address for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Grade Appeals: Any final grade appeals will be addressed per UNT Policy 06.040, Grade Appeals Policy. For more info: <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-040>

*****Some words of advice: You cannot expect to do well in this course if you are often absent from class, and if you do miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from a fellow student. DO NOT ASK ME FOR NOTES FROM CLASS.**

SEMESTER DROP DATES

November 6th	Last day to drop a course or all courses with a grade of W through my.unt.edu
November 7th	Can begin request for a grade of I (Incomplete)

***Note:** The course schedule may be subject to change as the class develops.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE*

Date	Day	Class Topic(s)	Readings	Assignments/Activities
8/18	Tues	NO CLASS	None	
8/25	Tues	Intro to course and Instructor's Background Intro to substance use/addictive behaviors	Chapters 1-2	
9/1	Tues	Intro to pharmacology of addiction Alcohol (ethanol) use and misuse	Chapter 3 Chapters 4-5	Intro Assignment Due
9/8	Tues	Nicotine use and misuse Benzodiazepine use and misuse	Chapter 15 Chapter 7	Discussion #1 Due EXAM 1 (Wed-Fri)
9/15	Tues	Stimulant use other than nicotine use	Chapters 8-9	Discussion #2 Due
9/22	Tues	Cannabis use and misuse Opioid use and misuse	Chapter 10 Chapter 11	EXAM 2 (Wed-Fri)
9/29	Tues	Psychedelic use and misuse	Chapter 12	Discussion #3 Due
10/6	Tues	Inhalant, steroid, and other drug use Gambling/gaming/behavioral addictions	Chapters 13-14 No chapter	Discussion #4 Due EXAM 3 (Wed-Fri)
10/13	Tues	Women/pregnancy and drug use Disadvantaged/minority groups and drug use	Chapters 17-18 Chapter 19	Discussion #5 Due
10/20	Tues	Drug use from a developmental perspective Addiction-related comorbidity	Chapters 20-22 Chapter 25	Discussion #6 Due EXAM 4 (Wed-Fri)
10/27	Tues	Biopsychosocial theories of addiction	Chapter 26	
11/3	Tues	Treatment of addictive behaviors	Chapters 29-35	
11/10	Tues	The drug use/legalization debate	Chapters 37-38	EXAM 5 (Wed-Fri)
11/17	Tues	IN-CLASS FILM: Traffic (2000)		Article Review Due
11/24	Tues	THANKSGIVING BREAK		
12/1	Tues	NO CLASS		Reaction Paper Due
12/8	Tues	NO FINAL EXAM		