

**Ambedkar University Delhi**

**Course Outline**

**Monsoon Semester (July-December 2017)**

<b>School:</b>	Undergraduate Studies			
<b>Programme with title:</b>	BA (Honours)			
<b>Semester to which offered: (I/ III/ V)</b>	V semester			
<b>Course Title:</b>	Understanding Abnormality			
<b>Credits:</b>	4 Credits			
<b>Course Code (new):</b>	SUS1PS710			
<b>Course Code (old):</b>	P12			
<b>Type of Course:</b>	Compulsory	yes	Cohort	BA (H) Psychology
	Elective	yes	Cohort	BA (H) other than Psychology

**For SUS only** (Mark an X for as many as appropriate):

1. Foundation (Compulsory)
2. Foundation (Elective)
3. Discipline (Compulsory) X
4. Discipline (Elective)
5. Elective

**Course Coordinator and Team:** - (Adjunct Faculty)

**Email of course coordinator:**

**Pre-requisites:** Students should have done Understanding personality and History of Psychology

**Aim:**

Inviting a critical reflection on the category of ‘the abnormal’, the course opens with an attempt to engage the student in a dialogue with dual emphases: language of psychopathology and stories of human suffering. Can what appear as mutually exclusive categories - normal-abnormal, sane-insane - have something in common? The course, with honest reflection, hopes to address this question and

acknowledge the continuity in between them. A person with a mental illness shares the world of the normal in large measure. Yet, students will also learn to recognize when distress reaches levels that require special attention. Debates on the conceptualization, classification and diagnosis of abnormality will be taken up, followed by a detailed look at the clinical picture of some common disorders. Case studies, short stories, films become important resources to ground theoretical gleanings as well as to deepen the existential realities of these life stories. As a final note, the course will take up therapies commonly deployed to alleviate the distress of the mentally ill.

### **Brief description of modules/ Main modules:**

#### **1: Defining ‘Madness’**

What is abnormal? Where is the abnormal? What is normal? Can what appear as mutually exclusive categories - normal-abnormal, sane-insane - have something in common? What is health? Through questions such as these, the introductory unit hopes to start a dialogue with the student about the notion of abnormality.

#### **2: What causes Abnormality?**

Does psychopathology originate ‘in the body or in the mind, in the individual or in his society’? What have been the changing conceptualizations of the notion of Abnormality. The unit emphasizes both causes underlying abnormal behaviour (ranging from biology and genetics, parental relationships, socio-historical milieu, learned behaviours and distortions in thinking) - taken up under major perspectives that allow one to understand abnormality and historicize thinking about abnormal behaviour.

#### **3: Diagnosing Psychopathology**

To facilitate an entry into the complex world of mental illness, nomenclature and classification become necessary to be able to describe as well as structure our thinking about different psychological disorders. Axes of such classifications and disorders clubbed under them will be taken up. We begin learning the language of psychopathology.

#### **4: Disorders (Anxiety, Mood and Schizophrenia): A Clinical Picture**

The unit takes a close look at more frequent disorders: schizophrenia, mood disorders, anxiety to enable a deeper understanding of the same. Theory will be supplemented with narrative to open up ‘the person in the case’.

#### **5: Conceptualizing Help: Psychotherapeutic Interventions**

Major approaches in psychotherapy that alleviate suffering in distressed states shall be the focus.

### **References:**

#### **Textbook:**

- Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life, Carson, Butcher & Mineka, Allyn & Bacon, 2000

**Supplementary Material:**

- Abnormal Psychology, Davison and Neale, J. Wiley & Sons, New York, 2001
- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (4<sup>th</sup> edition, text revision)/ DSM – IV –TR , 2000
- The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness, R. D. Laing, Penguin, 1965
- Plea for a Measure of Abnormality, Joyce McDougall, Brunner/Mazel, 1992
- Diary of a Madman, Nikolai Gogol, Penguin, 1972
- The House of Asterion, Jorge Louis Borges, Labyrinths, Penguin, 1965
- 15 Park Avenue, Film, Aparna Sen, 2005
- A Drop of Sunshine, Documentary, Aparna Sanyal, 2011

**Tentative Assessment schedule with details of weightage:**

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Date/period in which Assessment will take place</b>	<b>Weightage</b>
1	In class presentations	On-going across the semester	20
2	Mid Semester Exam	Sept 15-30	40
3	End Term review (Movie/Book)	Nov 24-30	40