

Term Paper Step-by-Step

As explained in the Syllabus, each student will submit an 8-10 page (1500-2000 word) paper that examines and discusses current thinking in psychology about explanations and treatments relating to one specific area of psychopathology that you select from an approved list, with an emphasis on what current research tells us, including a summary and analysis of one published research study.

Select the area of psychopathology from the approved list below

- ❖ Alcohol use disorder
- ❖ Anorexia nervosa
- ❖ Antisocial personality disorder
- ❖ Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
- ❖ Autism spectrum disorder
- ❖ Bipolar disorder
- ❖ Borderline personality disorder
- ❖ Bulimia nervosa
- ❖ Drug use disorder (must also choose a specific drug)
- ❖ Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- ❖ Panic disorder
- ❖ Persistent depressive disorder (dysthymia) and/or Major depressive disorder (or just “depression”)
- ❖ Posttraumatic stress disorder
- ❖ Schizophrenia
- ❖ Social anxiety disorder

[If you really want to focus on some other form of mental disorder, please consult with me immediately to see whether I am willing to allow it.]

To help you do the best possible job with this requirement, I am dividing it into a series of steps. Due dates shown are the dates to have the chance for full credit; submissions are permitted up to 2 class days late, but with a reduction of up to 10%. No step may be submitted beyond the 2nd class day following the due date unless a personal or medical emergency can be documented.

Step 1: Writing the draft of the Introduction—due Thursday, October 8 (late: Oct 13/15)

Prepare a draft of your **Introduction** (4-5 pages), *entirely in your own words—no quotations*

- Locate 3-4 good quality sources (*not including our own required readings*) that provide information about the particular area of psychopathology you have chosen; be sure to cite your sources as you present any of the information you draw from them, in proper APA style. Note that “good quality” means using scholarly sources rather than material taken from popular and general interest websites.
- Using those sources and our required readings, provide an overview of what this particular area of psychopathology “looks like”: describe typical characteristics and diagnostic criteria. Use your own words, and do not simply copy DSM. Include what a “typical” case might look like. Also include discussion of any important specifiers or sub-types that have been identified.
- Again, using those sources, provide some statistics and results of studies: how common is this form of psychopathology, whom is it most likely to affect (gender, race, age, etc.), at what age is it most likely to first appear, how long does it tend to last and/or how often does it tend to

recur, how severe is it and what impact does it have on a person's daily living, and does it tend to be co-morbid with other forms of psychopathology?

- Provide a brief summary of current thinking in psychology and related fields about possible causes and risk factors that have been examined and thought to be important, as well as possible treatments that have been investigated and found to be potentially effective. Be sure that in this summary you include thinking that reflects at least two of the three major perspectives (biological, psychological, social, as presented in Part III of our text) and that you clearly identify the perspectives.
- Include a References list at the end, with full information, in correct APA style, for each of the sources that you used and cited in the Introduction.

Step 2: Choosing a research study—due Thursday, October 29

Among your sources for this paper, there must be one quantitative **Research Study** published in an academic journal, and Step 2 requires you to locate and identify it for me. The study must be focused on the area of psychopathology you have chosen and must be a study of one specific possible factor in causation OR one specific method of treatment. Your best sources for such studies will be PsycInfo or Google Scholar—consult my guide to locating references.

- The study must be a complete original study, with introduction, method, results, and discussion sections
- It must be “current,” by which I mean published in the past 15 years
- It must entail the collection of quantitative data
- It may not be a brief report, a meta-analysis, a case study, a theoretical or policy paper, or simply a summary of research conducted by others or a summary of current thinking
- It must be available to you in full-text, PDF format
- Submit a single page that has your name on it and that presents the full APA-style citation for this study, including DOI number, then copy and paste the abstract directly from the published study.

Step 3: Writing the draft of your Review of Research—due Thursday, November 19 (late: Nov 24/Dec 1)

Note that you may not submit Step 3 until you have received my approval for Step 2.

Prepare a draft of our **Review of Research** (4-5 pages), *entirely in your own words—no quotations*

- Use any of the sources you used for your Introduction, and if necessary 1 or 2 other good quality sources; be sure to cite your sources as you present any of the information you draw from them.
- Drawing on the research article you chose in Step 2, as well as other sources, provide a brief summary of the one specific theory about possible causes of the disorder OR of the one specific method of treatment of the disorder. Be sure to identify the perspective that this theory reflects, which might be the biological or psychological or social perspective.
- Then write a summary of the published study you chose in Step 2: what was its purpose, how was the study conducted, what did the study find, and what did the authors believe their results meant with regard to the validity of the theory OR the value of the treatment?
- Recognizing that no study is ever perfect, offer your own analysis of the study: what problems if any do you see? For example, what about the participants used, the methods of data collection, the research procedure followed, the conclusions reached by the authors?
- Again recognizing that no study is ever perfect, if you were to conduct a study designed for the same purpose, describe one aspect of the research method that you would do differently and explain why.

- Again, attach a References list for the sources you used and cited in this step, in correct APA style

Step 4: Writing the final Term Paper—due Tuesday, December 8 (late: date of final exam)

Edit and rewrite Steps 1 and 3 as needed and combine them into your final **Term Paper** (8-10 pages), *entirely in your own words—no quotations*. Include a complete References list at the end, in proper APA style, listing all the sources cited in both Steps 1 and 3.

Your grades on each step are weighted toward your final course grade as follows:

Step 1: 5% of grade

Step 3: 5% of grade

Step 4: 15% of grade

Step 2 is not graded, but it must be submitted (and if necessary resubmitted) to obtain my approval before you can move to Step 3.

NOTES ABOUT CITING SOURCES:

General Principle: Correctly citing sources in the text of a paper is very important for at least two reasons. First, citing sources lets your instructor appreciate the amount of work you have done to locate and use good sources.

Second, it is a matter of academic honesty. Every time you make reference to an idea, opinion, fact, theory, argument, research study, finding, etc., that you have found in some source, you must clearly indicate that source to show that it is the work of another. This applies not just to direct quotes; every single time you are drawing from, or paraphrasing, one of your sources, you must cite it as your reference. To present the material without citing the source is dishonest because it suggests that the material is your own. Such dishonesty constitutes what is known as plagiarism, one of the most serious of academic offenses, and one which can lead to charges being brought against a student and/or a failing grade for this paper.

Rules for Citing Sources in APA style (look at your texts to see how it is done, and consult my Guide to APA Style here in Supplementary Materials):

1. What to cite: A reference is cited by giving the last name of the author(s) or organization and the year of publication. The name(s) and year should correspond exactly to the listing on the References list at the end of the paper. When using a direct quote, use quotation marks, and also include the page number(s) where the quote appeared in the source.
2. When to cite: The citation should occur as soon in the sentence or paragraph as possible, to immediately draw the attention of your reader to the fact that you are drawing material from an outside source. If you continue over the course of several sentences or even several paragraphs to draw from the same source, it is not necessary to continue to cite it. The general rule is that whenever your reader may not be sure of the source of your information, you should cite the source.

3. Where to cite: Right in the text of the paper. Do not use footnotes or endnotes. References should be cited as part of the natural flow of text. Do not just stick a citation at the end of a paragraph.

NOTE: You can only cite as a reference the book or article that you yourself read. If that book or article contains a reference to some other work, you may not cite that other work as a reference. Thus, if you are reading a book by Smith (1996), and Smith describes a study by Jones (1992), and you want to also mention Jones's study, your reference is Smith. You could say, "In a 1992 study by Jones (Smith, 1996)..." or, "According to Smith (1996), Jones conducted a study..." but you cannot simply cite Jones. In similar fashion, your References page at the end of your paper will list only the actual works that you located and used.

Formatting and Submitting: Please adhere to the following guidelines when writing and submitting any Step of the paper:

- Use 12-point font, with no colors, oversized or fancy fonts
- Insert title and your name on the first page of text; do not use a separate title page
- Do not provide an abstract or use running heads, and do not include any page breaks or significant blank space—even the References section should begin right after the text of the paper ends
- Titles and headings should be bolded, with proper use of upper-case and lower-case first letters of each word
- Double-space (except for References, where each reference should be single-spaced with double-spacing between references)
- Use 1" margins all around
- Indent each paragraph one tab (except no indent for very first paragraph, or any first paragraph under a heading/subheading)
- Align all text as well as all headings/subheadings to the left; do not center any text or right justify the margins
- Insert page numbers
- Please write the paper entirely *in your own words*; do not use any direct quotations from any of your sources (and do not take words verbatim without quotation marks and citing the source because that constitutes plagiarism, a serious form of academic dishonesty).
- Note that the Title and References sections are *not* counted as part of the text in counting words or pages.
- Please make use of the 'Guide to Common Writing Errors' to help you with your writing, and be sure to proofread your paper carefully
- Submit all Steps as hard copy; no electronic submissions.