

AMBERTON UNIVERSITY
SYLLABUS FOR LECTURE/CLASSROOM COURSE

CSL6796.01 Adult & Geriatric Psychopathology & Treatment
Fall 2026

Location: Student Center, Garland Campus

PROFESSOR INFORMATION:

Professor: Levi Armstrong, PsyD, MSCP
Amberton Extension: 972-279-6511 ext. 149
Amberton Email: **LArmstrong@amberton.edu**

COURSE INFORMATION:

CSL6796.01 Adult & Geriatric Psychopathology & Treatment
Level: Graduate
Beginning Date of Session: Saturday, September 12, 2026
Ending Date of Session: Thursday, November 19, 2026

The first class meeting is Thursday 09/17/2026 in the Student Center at the Garland Campus.

All Monday-Thursday lecture classes begin promptly at 6:30 p.m.

PREREQUISITES:

CSL6801

TEXTBOOK(S) AND REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Title: DSM-5-TRt
Author: APA
Publisher: APA
Year Published: 2022
Edition: 5th Edition Text Revision
ISBN: 13: 9780890425763
Price: Available at <http://amberton.ecampus.com>

Students should verify enrollment in course before purchasing textbooks. Textbook information and ordering options are available through the Amberton Virtual Bookstore. Since no books are sold on campus, students should plan accordingly and purchase their books in advance of the first day of class, allowing time for shipping.

LINKS TO COUNSELING HANDBOOKS

MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

https://amberton.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/LPC_Handbook_2023_2024.pdf

MA in Marriage and Family Therapy

https://amberton.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/MFT_Handbook_2023_2024.pdf

MA in School Counseling

https://amberton.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/School_Counseling_Handbook_2425.pdf

APA REQUIREMENT:

APA (American Psychological Association) style is most commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences. This resource, revised according to the 7th edition, offers examples for the general format of APA research papers, in-text citations, endnotes/footnotes, and the reference page. For more information, please consult the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (7th ed.). All coursework at Amberton University will comply with the standards contained in the APA Publication Manual.

COURSE COMPETENCIES:

This course presents the cognitive, affective, biological, and systemic bases of psychopathology and abnormal behavior in adults and older adults as specifically defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th Edition – Text Revision (DSM-5-TR). Students develop skills for psychiatric diagnostic interviewing, appropriate use of psychodiagnostic tests and assessments, conducting mental status exams, developing theoretically congruent treatment plans, and providing evidenced bases psychotherapy for adults and older adults.

The course will also examine the common medical etiologies of psychopathology, normal versus abnormal aging as it relates to emotional/behavioral and personality functioning, neurocognitive decline, and the unique ethical and clinical considerations for diagnosing and treating mental illness in adults from diverse cultural backgrounds. Practical fundamentals of clinical psychopharmacology for professional counselors, and the role of professional counselors as clinical collaborators with prescribers of psychotropic medication will also be presented.

Additionally, students will gain foundational knowledge in emerging technologies and artificial intelligence applications in adult and geriatric counseling. The course examines technology-enhanced differential diagnosis of mental disorders and therapeutic interventions while maintaining ethical practice standards in the treatment of aging populations. Students will explore AI-assisted assessment techniques and evidence-based treatment planning, with special emphasis on aging and end of life issues certification requirements in the context of contemporary professional counseling.

This course in adult and geriatric psychopathology will satisfy the Texas State Board of Professional Counselors board rule §681.83 (c) (3). It is both ethically and clinically essential that students at Amberton University, who are pursuing a master's degree in professional counseling, and who wish to obtain licensure as an LPC in the state of Texas, possess knowledge and skills in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of adult and geriatric clients suffering from mental illnesses.

UPON COMPLETION OF THE COURSE, THE STUDENT WILL BE COMPETENT IN:

1. Understanding the role of systematic scientific, clinical experience, and consultative input in making treatment decisions.
2. Understanding the importance of self-examination and critiquing self as an effective change agent in counseling relationships.
3. Understanding basic psychopharmacological intervention with regard to the treatment of mental disorders in adult and geriatric clients.
4. Understanding fundamental normal and abnormal central nervous system function and brain neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, and development in adults and older adults.
5. Evidencing practical skills and integration of evidence-based research in psychiatric diagnostics and treatment in adults and older adults within forensic and other non-clinical settings.
6. Demonstrating proficiency in utilizing the DSM-5-TR to apply accurate diagnostic labels to mental disorders.
7. Performing a differential diagnosis while integrating an advanced understanding for psychopathology in adulthood as it relates to potential medical etiologies vs. psychiatric illness, and commonly encountered general medical, psychiatric, and neurological comorbidities.
8. Conceptualizing adult psychopathology using both DSM-5-TR diagnostic criteria and counseling theory(ies) to formulate evidenced-based treatment plans.
9. Understanding the ethical, legal, and clinical application of various psychological assessment instruments available for both diagnostic and treatment outcome measurement purposes.
10. Understanding ethical, legal, and cultural factors related to psychiatric diagnostics, use of evidenced-bases therapeutic interventions, and treatment outcomes.
11. Comprehending and examining the role of physical aging in adulthood as it pertains to general physical, neurological, and neuropsychological factors associated with the clinical presentation and treatment of mental illness in adults and older adults.
12. Integrating and conceptualizing the psychosocial and physical effects of end-of-life issues in adults and older adults suffering from mental illness.

13. Developing agility in the clinical application of evidence-based assessment and treatment modalities of psychiatric disorders in adults and older adults within the context of rapidly evolving and devolving micro- and macro-systems, cultural norms, laws, and access to information, technologies, and mental health treatment.
14. Understanding and ethically implementing AI-assisted assessment tools and therapeutic interventions in adult and geriatric counseling while maintaining appropriate clinical boundaries and professional judgment in technology-enhanced differential diagnoses for mental disorders, treatment planning and delivery, with particular attention to age-related considerations and limitations.

ACQUIRED SKILLS

1. Proficiency in utilizing AI-enhanced assessment tools for adult and geriatric diagnostic evaluation.
2. Integration of AI-assisted treatment planning while maintaining clinical expertise and ethical boundaries in aging populations.
3. Critical evaluation of AI applications in adult and geriatric counseling contexts with emphasis on age-appropriate interventions.

COURSE POLICIES:

***IMPORTANT: STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SEEKING ACCOMMODATIONS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SPEAK WITH DR. ARMSTRONG BEFORE ANY ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE. DR. ARMSTRONG IS PASSIONATE ABOUT ENSURING THE PROVISION OF EVIDENCED-BASED ACCOMMODATIONS TO STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES AND WILL BE HAPPY TO ASSIST STUDENTS WHO NEED HELP NAVIGATING THAT PROCESS.**

Attendance is required and will be assessed at 5 points per class (8 total classes in person since week 5 and 10 are reserved for students to take their mid-term and final exams at home those weeks). All assignments are due by the due dates outlined in Moodle. Requests for deadline extensions to complete online tests are considered on a case-by-case basis and are not guaranteed. Dr. Armstrong reserves the right to modify any of the course assignments and will provide an updated syllabus if applicable.

STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES:

This syllabus contains information, policies, and procedures for a specific course. By enrolling, the student agrees to read, understand, and abide by the policies, rules, regulations, and ethical standards of Amberton University as contained in the current university catalog and schedule of classes.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Regular and punctual class attendance and engagement is expected at Amberton University. In case of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the professor as soon as possible. If a student intends on withdrawing from a course, it is the student's responsibility to follow the university's policy on formally withdrawing from a course. **Ceasing to attend classes does not constitute an official withdrawal.**

Attendance in a lecture course is defined as punctual arrival to, and engagement in, a full lecture session. A Student in a lecture course missing more than 20% (two class periods for weekday classes or one class period for Saturday classes) of the class meetings may be assigned a grade of an "F" or withdrawn at the discretion of Amberton University.

Attendance in a distance learning course is defined as active participation in the weekly online class sessions. "Active participation" can be defined as: submitting an academic assignment, taking an exam, engaging in an interactive tutorial, participating in an online discussion forum (or chat session), or initiating (or responding to) a communication with a faculty member about an academic assignment or the subject matter of the course. A student not meeting these requirements may be assigned a grade of an "F" or withdrawn at the discretion of Amberton University.

PLAGIARISM POLICY:

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as though it were your own. If you use another person's words, ideas, or information; or if you use material from an outside source – whether a book, magazine,

newspaper, business publication, broadcast, speech, or electronic media – you must acknowledge that source. Plagiarism is a violation of the University's code of student ethical conduct and is one that is taken seriously. Amberton University operates on an honor system; therefore, honesty and integrity are essential characteristics of all who are associated with the institution. All Amberton students are expected to abide by the honor system and maintain academic integrity in all their work. Amberton University and its instructors monitor student work for plagiarism and reserve the right to submit such work to technology-based plagiarism detection services and applications at any time.

Self-plagiarism means reusing work that you have already published or submitted for a class. It can involve:

- Resubmitting an entire paper
- Copying or paraphrasing passages from your previous work

Self-plagiarism misleads your readers by presenting previous work as completely new and original. Students may not submit the same paper in substance in two or more classes without prior written permission of the instructors involved.

Amberton University students who use Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated content must adhere to the following policies:

Originality: Students must avoid presenting AI generated content as their own original work. It is essential to acknowledge the involvement of AI in the content creation process in order to maintain academic and ethical standards.

Paraphrasing: When using AI generated content, students must rephrase and/or modify the generated text. Paraphrased AI generated content should also be properly cited.

Acknowledgement: When using AI generated content in any assignment, proper credit must be given to the AI system that generated the content. <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

Students agree that by taking this course, all required assignments may be subject to submission for a textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism and self-plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in future papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com website.

Turnitin is a writing improvement and plagiarism prevention tool which uses special algorithms, to compare text-based student submissions to the Turnitin database and other online sources. Turnitin produces a detailed **similarity report** that can be customized and viewed by instructors and students.

Turnitin "Draft Coach" is a Google based add-on to Turnitin which supports students in developing high-quality academic writing; and serves as an integrity coach. Draft Coach helps address errors and improve the quality of student's writing by highlighting grammar mistakes, identifying incorrectly cited sources, and scanning for similarity across several databases. By providing formative feedback on how to address citation issues, incorrect grammar, and matches with the Turnitin database, Draft Coach provides explanations to help students become more confident writers, capable of producing higher quality work both in academics and in the workplace.

COURSE DELIVERY METHODOLOGY:

This course is offered as a Lecture/Classroom course. This course requires that students meet at a designated time in the classroom.

In-class lectures/presentations, small group discussions, and interactive AI-assisted educational materials and skill building.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR:

Week	Topic	Assignment	Competencies Covered	Due Date
1	Introduction to Psychiatric Diagnostics & Conducting Psychiatric Diagnostic Interviews / Performing Differential Diagnoses Review of Fundamental DSM-5-TR Nosology DSM-5 vs. DSM-5-TR: A Review of What Has Changed Introduction to Fundamental Neuroscience & Neuropsychology of Psychopathology in Adults and Older Adults	Complete Week 1 Quiz Begin Reading DSM-5-TR Introductory Chapters (i.e., all sections prior to Neurodevelopmental Disorders in the DSM)	1, 3, 6, 8, 10	WEEK 1 QUIZ MUST BE COMPLETED BY 09/24/2026 12PM NOON IN ORDER FOR STUDENTS TO BE COUNTED AS PRESENT FOR THE COURSE. ALL OTHER QUIZZES AND EXAMS ARE ADMINISTERED ONLINE IN MOODLE AND DUE NO LATER THAN THE LAST DAY OF CLASS 11/19/2026 12PM NOON AS NOTED ON PAGE 1 OF THIS SYLLABUS.
2	Contemporary Diagnostics & Treatment of: Intellectual Developmental Disorder (IDD), Autism, & Learning Disabilities in Adults & Older Adults	Complete Week 2 Quiz Read DSM-5-TR Chapter: Neurodevelopmental Disorders	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10	
3	Contemporary Diagnostics & Psychotherapeutic Treatment of: ADHD in Adulthood Fundamentals of Psychopharmacological Theory & Treatment of ADHD in Adults and Older Adults	Complete Week 3 Quiz Finish Reading DSM-5-TR: Neurodevelopmental Disorders Begin Reading DSM-5-TR: Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders Bipolar and Related Disorders Depressive Disorders	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10	
4	Contemporary Diagnostics and Psychotherapeutic Treatment of: Mood Dysregulation in Adults and Older Adults Fundamentals of	Complete Week 4 Quiz Finish Reading DSM-5-TR: Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10	

	Psychopharmacological Theory & Treatment of Mood Dysregulation in Adults and Older Adults The Neurobehavioral Sequelae of Neurocognitive Disorders / Dementia	Bipolar and Related Disorders Depressive Disorders		
5	MID-TERM EXAM	MID-TERM EXAM ADMINISTERED IN MOODLE	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10	MID-TERM EXAM IS DUE NO LATER THAN THE LAST DAY OF CLASS 11/19/2026 12PM NOON AS NOTED ON PAGE 1 OF THIS SYLLABUS.
6	Contemporary Diagnostics and Psychotherapeutic Treatment of: Anxiety, Trauma, and Compulsive Disorders in Adults and Older Adults Fundamentals of Psychopharmacological Theory & Treatment of Anxiety/Stressor-Based Symptoms in Adults and Older Adults The Neuropathophysiology of Chronic Stress in Adults and Older Adults	Complete Week 6 Quiz READ DSM-5-TR: Anxiety Disorders Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders Feeding and Eating Disorders Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10	
7	Contemporary Diagnostics and Psychotherapeutic Treatment of: Addiction & Substance-Related Disorders Differential Diagnosis of Substance-Related vs. Primary Etiologies of Mental Disorders in Adults and Older Adults Fundamentals of Psychopharmacological Theory & Treatment of Addiction in Adults and Older Adults	Complete Week 7 Quiz READ DSM-5-TR: Substance-Related Disorders	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10	
8	Contemporary Diagnostics and Psychotherapeutic Treatment of:	Complete Week 8 Quiz READ DSM-5-TR:	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10	

	Dissociative Disorders Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders Sleep-Wake Disorders Fundamentals of Psychopharmacological Theory & Treatment of Sleep/Wake Disorders in Adults and Older Adults The Neurobiological Bases of Dysfunctional Personality Traits in Adults and Older Adults	Dissociative Disorders Somatic Symptom Disorders Sleep-Wake Disorders Begin Reading DSM-5-TR: Personality Disorders Neurocognitive Disorders		
9	Contemporary Diagnostics and Psychotherapeutic Treatment of: Personality Disorders Sexual Dysfunctions in Adults and Older Adults Gender Dysphoria in Adults and Older Adults Dementia & Neurocognitive Disorders Fundamentals of Psychopharmacological Theory & Treatment of Neurocognitive Decline & Dementia	Complete Week 9 Quiz Read DSM-5-TR: Sexual Dysfunctions Gender Dysphoria Neurocognitive Disorders	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10	
10	FINAL EXAM	FINAL EXAM ADMINISTERED IN MOODLE	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10	FINAL EXAM DUE BY THE LAST DAY OF CLASS 11/19/2026 12PM NOON AS NOTED ON PAGE 1 OF THIS SYLLABUS.

GRADING CRITERIA:

MID-TERM EXAM = 30 POINTS

FINAL EXAM = 30 POINTS

WEEKLY QUIZZES (TOTAL) = 40 POINTS (5 POINTS X 8 WEEKLY QUIZZES)

Graduate

92 – 100 A

82 – 91 B

72 – 81 C

62 – 71 D

Below 62 F

GRADE NOTIFICATION AND INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK:

Students should review instructor feedback provided through Moodle or Amberton CampusWeb Portal. Final grades are processed approximately one week after the session and may be viewed through the student portal. Grades will not be released by phone or through unsecured channels. University instructors will not leave a message with comments or grades in any type of media that is not secure.

For questions regarding grades after the semester has ended, students should use their university email account and contact the instructor at the faculty email address as provided above in Professor Information area.

INCOMPLETE GRADES:

An "I" (Incomplete) grade is granted only at the professor's discretion for emergencies or illness.

Students have 30 days from the end of the session to complete the course requirements. If the conditions are not met within this 30-day window, the "I" automatically converts to an "F".

HOW TO WITHDRAW FROM A COURSE:

To be official, the class withdrawal must be in writing and signed by the student requesting the withdrawal; no withdrawal is accepted verbally. Please review the "Schedule of Classes" (online or in-print) for procedures for class changes or withdrawals and the refund policy and schedule.

COURSE DELIVERY METHODOLOGY:

This course is delivered through Moodle. Students are expected to have reliable internet access, basic computer skills, the ability to upload/download files, use Amberton email, and submit assignments in the required format. Students needing assistance should use the Amberton SSO support/ticket process.

HOW TO ACCESS YOUR COURSE:**SINGLE SIGN-ON (SSO) INSTRUCTIONS FOR AMBERTON UNIVERSITY:**

Students should access Amberton systems through the Single Sign-On portal at <https://sso.amberton.edu>. After logging in, students can access Moodle, Amberton email, CampusWeb, and other assigned applications. Students who need help accessing SSO should submit a support request through the SSO support option or contact support@amberton.edu.

MOODLE TUTORIAL:

Upon successful log in and access to the Moodle learning platform, there is a Student Moodle Tutorial course available, to learn about the basics of Moodle. Simply click on the link for the Student Moodle Tutorial and read through the various learning topics: Navigating; Communicating; Assignments & Exams; Grades; and Student Resources.

COURSE COMMUNICATIONS:

Students will communicate with faculty through the Moodle Learning Platform or the Amberton University email system.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION:

Students are expected to use their Amberton email account and Moodle for course communications. Students must use their official university email account for all university related communication and should check their Amberton emails regularly for course and university notices.

Upon completion of a session, all communication and course specific information is removed from the Moodle system. If a student needs to maintain a record of communications or assignments, the student is strongly encouraged to print out or download these items to a disk for their own records.

FORMAT AND SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments must be submitted through the appropriate Moodle assignment link unless otherwise directed by the instructor. Students are responsible for submitting files in the format required by the instructor.

INSTRUCTOR/COURSE EVALUATION:

Students will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous course and instructor evaluation near the end of the session. Instructions and dates will be provided through Moodle and/or Amberton email.

RESEARCH RESOURCES:

The Amberton Library provides access to full-text articles, peer-reviewed databases, and research tools, with options like Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and TexShare for items outside its collection. For research assistance, students can connect with library staff during operating hours via email (library@amberton.edu), phone (972-279-6511 ext. 185), "How-to" videos, live online chat, or in person at the Garland campus. The online library is available through Single Sign On (SSO).

MICROSOFT OFFICE 365 EDUCATION:

Amberton University students may access Microsoft 365 Education resources as provided by the university.

GOOGLE WORKSPACE FOR EDUCATION:

Amberton students are assigned a Google Workspace for Education account, including Amberton Gmail, Google Drive, Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides. Students should use their Amberton Google account for course-related work when required.