



PSY 507.0XW: Pharmaco-therapy
COURSE SYLLABUS: Summer I TEN 2025
Web-Based

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Kendra Saunders

Office Location: Virtual

Office Hours: By appointment

University Email Address: kendra.saunders@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: Email

Communication Response Time: Within 48 hours (excluding weekends). If you have not heard back after 48 hours, feel free to send another email.

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required:

Stahl, S. (2021). *Stahl's Essential Psychopharmacology: Neuroscientific Basis and Practical Applications, 5th Edition*. Cambridge University Press; 5th edition. ISBN: 978-1108971638

Pliszka, S. R. (2016). *Neuroscience for the Mental Health Clinician*, Second Edition. The Guilford Press. ISBN: 978-1462527113

Preston, J. D., O'Neal, J. H., Talaga, M. C. & Moore, B. A. (2021). *Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychopharmacology Made Simple*. New Harbinger Publications; Fourth edition. ISBN: 978-1684035120

Recommended Textbook

Preston, J., Moore, B. A., & Johnson, J. (2024). *Clinical Psychopharmacology Made Ridiculously Simple: An Incredibly Easy Way to Learn for Physicians, Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, PAs, Psychologists, And Social Workers* (MedMaster Medical Books) 10th Edition. ISBN: 978-1935660743

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Course Description

Pharmaco-therapy. This course provides an examination of psychoactive medications and their use in the treatment of mental and behavioral disorders. The efficacy and safety of medications will be discussed. The course presents basic principles of pharmaco-therapy that are the rationales behind the pharmacological treatment of psychological disorders. Applied components will relate to the aspects of the course material to mental health service delivery. The class also examines the historical psychopharmacological perspective, basic pharmacology underlying the use of medication, and recent research in the field. Prerequisite: Admission to a Psychology Graduate program.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Student will learn basic neuroscience relevant to psychopharmacology.
- Students will understand how to think about pharmaco-therapy as a treatment intervention.
- Students will demonstrate ability to identify appropriate psychopharmacological interventions in treatment planning
- Identify basic pharmacological principles and convey understanding in a research paper.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed:

Students will the ability to use word processing programs to complete course successfully.

Instructional Methods:

This is an online-only course, and it is highly dependent on your diligence in completing your work. You will work with classmates on group projects and individually on quizzes and research papers.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Regularly sign-in to D2L.
2. Read the textbooks.
3. Thoroughly complete assignments in a timely manner.
4. Be an active participant in group projects.
5. Ask for assistance...

GRADING AND ASSESSMENTS

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 100-90
B = 89-80
C = 79-70

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D = 69-60

F = > 59

Assignment	Percentage of Grade
Quizzes	30%
Group Projects (4)	40%
Research Paper (Individual)	15%
Case Conceptualization Presentation	15%

Important Note:

Once you open the exams or the quizzes you cannot close them and re-enter. You must complete them in the allotted time.

Quizzes 1-6 = 30% of your grade

Quizzes: There are six (6) quizzes. Each quiz consists of 25 questions, worth 4 points each (100 points per quiz). The quizzes will have true/false and multiple-choice questions. You will have 45 minutes to complete each quiz. Each quiz is worth 5% of your grade (30% of your overall grade).

Group Projects 1-4 = 40% of your grade

Group Projects: *Group Projects (There are 4 Group Projects, each worth 10% of your grade for a Total of 40% of your grade)*

Group projects will be an integral portion of this class. During 4 weeks of this course, you will be randomly assigned groupmates to work together to discuss a case study or cover topics from our textbooks. The group will: a) cover topics of the group's choice for some of the papers, and 2) summarize a case and present a pharmaco-therapeutic treatment plan for the patient identified in a case study. All papers will be processed through TurnItIn.

This variation in group distribution will cultivate group dynamics and assist in clinical micro skills acquisition in addition to mimicking real life clinical experiences working with other clinicians. Your group assignments will be due by 11:59PM on each Sunday (of the weeks it is due), so use your group time wisely. Each group paper will be 4-6 pages in APA format with references. Please note that APA highly discourages the use of quotes, and excessive quotes will result in a grade reduction. This will require groups to be succinct yet thorough.

90% of your grade will be based on the paper submitted by the group. The final 10% of your grade will be based on your self-evaluation and the averaged evaluation of your group mates about your performance/contribution. Only one member of the group needs to submit the final group paper into the assignment link in D2L, while all group members need to submit the evaluations. If there are concerns during the group's assignment process, please email those concerns to the professor. This should only be done after the group has done everything possible to resolve any group conflicts or concerns. The rubric for this project, as well as the self/peer evaluations for this assignment are listed in Appendix A.

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The following steps may help to facilitate optimal communication and success for these projects:

1. As a group, you will figure out the best way to communicate and write your paper (i.e. through D2L or another means, and using GoogleDocs or OneDrive, etc.)
2. Decide as a group the topics that will be addressed, and assign portions that everyone will complete
3. Select the person who will submit the final version of the paper
4. Set a firm deadline for the first draft of the paper (e.g. Friday by 5pm)
5. Set a deadline for final edits (e.g. Sunday by 5pm)
6. The selected group member will submit the final paper, and communicate the paper submission.
7. Each member submits the self and group evaluation

Research Paper (15% of grade): Using the structure in Appendix B, complete a research paper covering a medicinal treatment of your choice using your textbooks and at least 4 primary sources. You may select your drug from the content we discuss or another source with permission from the instructor. Research papers must follow American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines (see Appendix B) and should be 3-5 pages (not including cover and reference page; no abstract or running head is necessary). You will be graded according to APA style, writing and organization, content, and references (rubric is in Appendix B). A primary source is defined as a peer-reviewed journal article or book. This paper must be submitted in Microsoft Word format. All papers will be processed through TurnItIn.

Case Conceptualization Presentation (15% of grade): Either in a small group (maximum 3 members) or individually (your choice), you will present a clinical case vignette. You will create a case vignette that includes client demographics (age, gender, race/ethnicity, psychosocial background, medical background, etc.), the presenting problem, referral source, and areas of concern. Students are required to write a case vignette that includes the following: 1) a diagnosis, 2) justification for the diagnosis (the diagnosis must be one for which common medications are prescribed; substance use disorders will not be accepted), 3) information about the most commonly prescribed medications/classes of medications for the diagnosed condition, and 4) a treatment plan. The justification for the diagnosis must include a discussion of each point of the diagnostic criteria for the chosen disorder, explaining how the client meets each criterion. All information provided by students must be evidence-based and sourced from primary materials, such as drug prescribing guides or peer-reviewed print/electronic journals. You are encouraged to be creative yet professional in your presentations. Use of technology is required, and your own voice/video must be included in the presentation (for example, not just a PowerPoint). The final presentation will be posted on a discussion board, and your peers will provide feedback on your video/case.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

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LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

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University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

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Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

AI Use in Course

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East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week	Topic	Read	Assignment
Week 1 (6/2-6/8)	Introduction and Course Overview	Review Course and Syllabus Carefully	
Week 2 (6/9-6/15)	Neuroscience	Pliszka, Chapters 1-4; Chapters 6-8 Stahl, Chapters 1-3	Group Project 1
Week 3 (6/16-6/22)	Depression	Preston, O'Neal, Talaga, & Moore (Child and Adolescent), Chapters 1 and 2 <i>Optional:</i> Preston, Moore, & Johnson (Clinical Psychopharmacology), Chapter 2	Quiz 1
Week 4 (6/23-6/29)	Mood Disorders and Bipolar	Stahl, Chapters 5-7 Preston, O'Neal, Talaga, & Moore (Child and Adolescent), Chapter 3 <i>Optional:</i> Preston, Moore, & Johnson (Clinical	Group Project 2 Quiz 2

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		Psychopharmacology), Chapter 3	
Week 5 (6/30-7/6)	Anxiety Disorders	Preston, O'Neal, Talaga, & Moore (Child and Adolescent), Chapter 4 Stahl, Chapter 8 Pliszka, Chapter 11 <i>Optional:</i> Preston, Moore, & Johnson (Clinical Psychopharmacology), Chapter 4	Group Project 3 (Case Conceptualization) Quiz 3
Week 6 (7/7-7/13)	Psychosis, Schizophrenia, and Others	Stahl, Chapter 4 Child and Adolescent, Chapters 5 and 9 Pliszka, Chapter 12 <i>Optional:</i> Preston, Moore, & Johnson (Clinical Psychopharmacology), Chapter 5	Quiz 4 Research Presentation (Case Conceptualization)
Week 7 (7/14-7/20)	Attention- Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder	Stahl, Chapter 11 Pliszka, Chapters 7 and 9 Child and Adolescent, Chapter 6 <i>Optional:</i> Preston, Moore, & Johnson (Clinical Psychopharmacology), Chapter 6	Quiz 5
Week 8 (7/21-7/27)	Impulsivity and Addiction	Stahl, Chapter 13 Pliszka, Chapter 10	Quiz 6 Research Paper (Medication Review)
Week 9 (7/28-8/3)	Autism Spectrum	Child and Adolescent, Chapter 7 Pliszka, Chapter 13	Group Project 4

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Appendix A: Self and Peer Evaluation Group Project Paper Rubric

Please evaluate your work and that of your colleagues using the following criteria. This will be used to assign the final 10% of your overall grade for the group projects, cumulatively.

Please try to be as honest and fair as possible in your assessment.

- 5 = Excellent work; was crucial component to group's success
- 4 = Very strong work; contributed significantly to group
- 3 = Sufficient effort; contributed adequately to group
- 2 = Insufficient effort; met minimal standards of group
- 1 = Little or weak effort; was detrimental to group*

Scores of 1 will require a written explanation.

SELF Evaluation (Name: _____):

- _____ Participation in developing ideas and planning the paper
- _____ Willingness to discuss the ideas of others
- _____ Cooperation with other group members
- _____ Interest and enthusiasm in paper formulation
- _____ Consistent Communication with team members
- _____ Openness to Feedback

PEER Evaluation (Partner 1: _____):

- _____ Participation in developing ideas and planning the paper
- _____ Willingness to discuss the ideas of others
- _____ Cooperation with other group members
- _____ Interest and enthusiasm in paper formulation
- _____ Consistent Communication with team members
- _____ Openness to Feedback

Group Project Paper Rubric

	1 – Does Not Meet Expectations	2- Meets Expectations	3 – Exceeds Expectations
The paper begins with an introduction stating the selected book chapter and three chosen topics. (5 points)	The paper does not include an introduction with the selected book chapter.	The paper includes an introduction with the selected book chapter, but does not include the three chosen topics.	The paper includes an introduction with the selected book chapter and/or three chosen topics.
Topic 1 (25 points)	Did not properly explore topic. Writing is shallow and lacks in-depth exploration. Not representative of graduate-level work.	Discussed all topics at basic level. There is evidence of possessing knowledge about the topic, but missing one or two key points. Representative of graduate-level work.	In-depth discussion of topic. There is a synthesis across sources. Representative of graduate-level work.
Topic 2 (25 points)	Did not properly explore topic. Writing is shallow and lacks in-depth exploration. Not representative of graduate-level work.	Discussed all topic at basic level. There is evidence of possessing knowledge about the topic, but missing one or two key points. Representative of graduate-level work.	In-depth discussion of topic. There is a synthesis across sources. Representative of graduate-level work.
Topic 3 (25 points)	Did not properly explore topic. Writing is shallow and lacks in-depth exploration. Not representative of graduate-level work.	Discussed all topics at basic level. There is evidence of possessing knowledge about the topic, but missing one or two key points. Representative of graduate-level work.	In-depth discussion of topic. There is a synthesis across sources. Representative of graduate-level work.
References: Students must briefly summarize the topic, then integrate the topic with references.	Did not use six primary sources plus textbook. Sources are not related to the topic of paper	Used six primary sources plus the textbook. Sources are related to the selected topic.	Used six primary sources plus the textbook. Sources are related to the selected

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(10 points)			topic. Additionally, all sources are from the past 5 years.
APA 7th Edition Style (10 points)	<p>Did not follow APA format in cover page, body of the paper and the reference page.</p> <p>Paper includes more than 10% direct quotes.</p>	<p>APA format was followed with one or two minor errors. Paper includes less than 10% of direct quotes.</p>	<p>APA format was followed with no errors on cover page, in body of the paper or reference page.</p> <p>Paper includes less than 10% of direct quotes.</p>

**Appendix B:
Research Paper Outline
Research Paper Rubric
Case Conceptualization Presentation Rubric**

Students are required to submit a 3–5-page research paper (not including title and reference pages) about a psychiatric drug (e.g., Adderall, Zoloft, Prozac, Ativan, Wellbutrin, etc.). This paper must be submitted according to APA 7th edition style and formatting and will have a minimum of four (4) references *in addition* to any textbooks that you use for your paper.

Here is an outline for this paper:

Title Page (Name, Course Information, University)

Introduction to the Drug

History of the Drug

Clinical Use of the Drug

Diagnosis

Dosage

Administration

Physical/Behavioral Effects of the Drug

Pharmacokinetics and/or Pharmacodynamics

Tolerance, Dependence, Addiction Risks, and Withdrawal Aspects

Critiques and Concerns with the Medication

Benefits of the Medication

Importance of the Medication to Psychological Professionals

Conclusion

References

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Research Paper Rubric

	1 – Does Not Meet Expectations	2- Meets Expectations	3 – Exceeds Expectations
History, clinical use, behavioral effects, pharmacokinetics/ pharmacodynamics, tolerance/ dependence/ withdrawal. (40 points)	Did not explore all topics. Writing is shallow and lacks in-depth exploration of medication. Not representative of graduate level work	Discussed all topics at basic level, evidence of possessing knowledge about the medication, but missing one or two key points; representative of graduate level work	In-depth discussion of all topics; synthesis across sources; representative of graduate level work
Critique, benefits, importance to counselor/psychologist, and conclusion (40 points)	Did not address several topics. Writing is shallow and lacks in-depth exploration. No evidence of synthesis across multiple sources; did not write conclusion; not representative of graduate level work	Discussed all topics at basic level, evidence of possessing knowledge about the benefits, but missing one or two key points; conclusion present; representative of graduate level work	In-depth discussion of critique, benefits, and importance for clinicians; conclusion ties paper together; representative of graduate level work
APA 7th Edition Style and Formatting References (20 points)	Did not follow APA format in cover page, body of the paper and the reference page. Did not use four primary sources plus textbook. Sources are not related to the topic of paper	APA format was followed with one or two minor errors. Mostly original sources were used. Sources are related to the selected theories	APA format was followed with no errors on cover page, in body of the paper or reference page. All four original sources were used. All sources are from the last 5 years.

Case Conceptualization Presentation Rubric

	1 – Does Not Meet Expectation	2 – Meets Expectation	3 – Exceeds Expectation
Vignette & Diagnosis: a demonstrated knowledge of the DSM and its application to the client in the case vignette (25 points)	No Vignette; Diagnosis was not accurately identified, or information was only copied/pasted from DSM with no explanation	Vignette was missing information. Diagnosis was accurately identified but the discussion of the criterion met was not adequately addressed. The discussion needs more elaboration	Vignette was specific and detailed. Diagnosis was accurately identified and the discussion on the met criterion was fully discussed
Medication Identification (30 points)	Medications or classes of medications were not accurately identified, or only a few were listed with no psychopharmacological information	Part of the common medications or medication classes were accurately identified, but were missing others	All of the common medications or medication classes were accurately identified
Treatment Plan (30 points)	Student provides an inadequate treatment plan for the character with many missing details; Provides at least 1 thoughtful objective (or does not provide); Does not identify appropriate interventions	Student provides an adequate treatment plan for the character with some missing details; Provides at least 2 thoughtful objectives; Identifies appropriate interventions	Student provides a thoughtful and thorough treatment plan for the character with a detailed format; Provides at least 3 thoughtful objectives; Identifies interventions
Use of digital media (15 points)	No video or audio used. Only used a word/ pdf/ slideshow, or media only reads what is on the document	Media use is at a basic graduate level. Presenters provide useful information via media that is not found in the document	Media (video, audio, etc.) greatly enhances the presentation