



PSY 507.0XW: Pharmaco-therapy
COURSE SYLLABUS: Summer I TEN 2026
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 received a response after 48 hours, please send a follow-up email.*

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required (Inclusive Access):

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

Finney, K. (2025). *Basic Psychopharmacology Principles, Revised First Edition*. Cognella Academic Publishing. ISBN: 979-8-8233-8055-3

Recommended Textbook

DSM-V-TR (Available through the Library)

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

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use of medication, and recent research in the field. Prerequisite: Admission to a Psychology Graduate program.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will learn basic neuroscience relevant to psychopharmacology.
- Students will identify basic pharmacological principles and convey understanding in a research paper.
- Students will identify basic pharmacological principles and convey understanding in a research presentation.
- Students will demonstrate understanding of psychotropic medications that are used in the clinical treatment of commonly diagnosed psychological conditions of clients and describe the impact on symptoms
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the ethical parameters of non-medical mental health professionals.
- Students will gain knowledge in NASP Domain 6 *Services to Promote Safe and Supportive Schools*: Understand principles and research related to social–emotional well-being, resilience, and risk factors in learning, mental and behavioral health, services in schools and communities to support multitiered prevention and health promotion, and evidence- based strategies for creating safe and supportive schools.

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 depends heavily on your diligence in completing your work. You will work with classmates in group discussions and individually on quizzes and the research paper/presentation.

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 discussions
5. Prepare for quizzes
6. Ask for assistance, as needed

GRADING AND ASSESSMENTS

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

A = 100-90

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B = 89-80

C = 79-70

D = 69-60

F = > 59

Assignment	# of Assignments	Total Points for Category
Quizzes	6	150
Discussion Posts	5	50
Research Paper	1	100
Research Presentation	1	50
TOTAL		350

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 (150 POINTS): There will be graded quizzes to assess your understanding of the main topics covered in weekly readings and other course materials. Students are required to complete each quiz on their own, but may use any course materials within the time limit allotted. The quizzes may include multiple-choice, short-answer, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and true/false questions. There will be a total of six (6) quizzes worth twenty-five (25) points each (150 points total). All quizzes must be submitted by 11:59pm CT on Sundays, during the weeks the quizzes are due. You may refer to your readings as you take your quiz, but it is best to have read and taken notes on the assigned readings before starting.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS/POSTS (50 points): Each student will be responsible for responding to 5 discussion boards during the semester. Discussion responses should be thoughtful and elicit critical thinking among peers. Your comments should be substantive and civil, as different viewpoints will be expected and encouraged. The purpose of the discussion post is to help you focus on the content and engage with your classmates. Your posts will be graded for depth of understanding/thought, detail, and references cited. For each discussion, you will create a thread to answer the discussion question, and you must respond to at least TWO separate classmates' discussion threads. There will be a total of five (5) discussions, each worth ten (10) points (50 points total). All discussions and responses must be submitted by 11:59pm CT on Sundays. The rubric for discussion posts is listed in Appendix D.

RESEARCH PAPER (100 POINTS): Using the structure in Appendix A, complete a research paper covering a medicinal treatment of your choice using your textbooks and at least 5 primary/scholarly sources from the past 3 years. You may select your drug from the content we discuss or from another source, with the instructor's permission. Research papers must follow American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines (see Appendix A) and should be 5-7 pages (not including cover and reference page; no abstract or running head is necessary). You will be graded on APA style, writing and organization, content, and references (the rubric is in

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Appendix A). 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.

RESEARCH PRESENTATION (50 points): Using your research paper as a basis, you will complete a 10-15-minute recorded visual presentation, which will be uploaded to a D2L Discussion Board. You will use slides and visual aids to summarize the research paper and provide an activity. Additionally, each student will watch the presentations of two classmates and respond with questions and comments. Please watch a presentation on a different topic from your own paper. The rubric is available in Appendix C.

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

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, an 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:

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<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.

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](#)

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<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:

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/>

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>

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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

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

***Subject to Change**

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignment
Week 1 (6/1-6/7)	Introduction and Course Overview	Review the Course Shell and Syllabus Carefully	Discussion 1 (Introduction)
Week 2 (6/8-6/14)	Neuroscience	Stahl, Chapters 1-3 Finney, Chapters 1-4	Discussion 2

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Week 3 (6/15-6/21)	Patient Diagnosis & Treatment Biomarkers & Diagnostic Testing	Finney, Chapters 5 & 6	Quiz 1
Week 4 (6/22-6/28)	Depression, Mood, & Bipolar Disorders	Finney, Chapter 7 Stahl, Chapters 5-7	Quiz 2 Discussion 3
Week 5 (6/29-7/5)	Anxiety Disorders	Stahl, Chapter 8 Finney, Chapter 9	Quiz 3 Discussion 4
Week 6 (7/6-7/12)	Psychosis, Schizophrenia, and Others	Stahl, Chapter 4 Finney, Chapter 8	Quiz 4 Research Paper Due
Week 7 (7/13-7/19)	Attention- Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder	Stahl, Chapter 11 Finney, Chapter 10	Quiz 5 Discussion 5
Week 8 (7/20-7/26)	Impulsivity and Addiction Pregnancy & Psychopharmacology	Stahl, Chapter 13 Finney, Chapter 12	Quiz 6 Research Presentation Due
Week 9 (7/27-8/2)	Trauma & Biopsychosocial Assessment	Finney, Chapters 11 & 13	Research Presentation Peer Review Due

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Appendix A:

Research Paper Outline

Students are required to submit a 5–7-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/formatting. Additionally, the paper must have a minimum of five (5) scholarly references from the last 3 years *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

Any Additional Information you would like to provide/address

Conclusion

References

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Appendix B

Research Paper Rubric

Component	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Needs Improvement (2)	Poor (1)
Introduction & History (10 Points)	Clear intro and well-researched history	Mostly clear; minor details missing	Basic overview; lacks depth	Weak intro or history	Missing or unclear
Clinical Use & Diagnosis (10 Points)	Strong summary of indications & diagnosis	Minor gaps in details	General info provided	Minimal or unclear info	Inaccurate or missing
Dosage & Administration (10 Points)	Accurate and detailed dosing/admin info	Mostly complete	Some inaccuracies or missing details	Limited detail	Incorrect or not addressed
Effects & Pharmacology (15 Points)	Clear explanation of effects	Mostly clear, minor issues	Some gaps in pharmacology of effects	Minimal explanation	Lacks clarity or has incorrect information
Dependence & Withdrawal (15 Points)	Well-developed and evidence-based discussion	Some areas are under-developed	General overview with gaps	Incomplete or unclear	Not addressed or inaccurate
Benefit & Critiques (15 Points)	Balanced view of pros and cons	Mostly balanced; some vague areas	One-sided or limited	Weak analysis	Missing
Professional Relevance (5 Points)	Clear importance to psychology or counseling field	Mostly clear; lacking specifics	Some relevance shown	Minimal or unclear relevance	Not addressed
APA Format & References	APA 7 Style Followed; 5+	Few APA style errors;	APA or source errors	Poor formatting or	Missing APA style

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(10 Points)	scholarly sources all within the last 3 years	5+ scholarly sources all within the last 3 years		fewer than 5 scholarly sources	or few sources utilized
Writing Quality (10 Points)	Clear, organized error-free writing	Minor grammar or organization issues	Some clarity or grammar problems	Many errors; difficult to follow	Disorganized or unclear
Total Points: 100					

Appendix C

Research Project Presentation Rubric

Component	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Needs Improvement (2)	Poor (1)
Content Summary (10 Points)	Covers all major paper points clearly	Minor info gaps	Key points covered, but shallow	Limited or unclear summary	Incomplete or confusing
Mechanism & Indications (5 Points)	Accurately explains mechanism & use	Mostly accurate	Basic or general explanation	Unclear or lacks depth	Incorrect or missing
Dosing & Safety (5 Points)	Accurate dosing & safety info	Some minor omissions	General info with gaps	Weak detail or lacks clarity	Missing or inaccurate
Visual Aids (5 Points)	Well-designed slides aid understanding	Mostly clear; helpful	Basic slides; limited enhancement	Cluttered or unhelpful visuals	Missing or ineffective
Presentation Delivery (15 Points)	Confident, well-paced, engaging. Includes discussion questions or activity. Presentation is less than 20 minutes.	Mostly confident, minor delivery issues; Includes discussion questions or activity	Adequate; lacks polish	Rushed, hesitant or flat	Difficult to follow
Peer Review Participation (10 Points)	Thoughtful comments or questions on the work of 2 peers	Thoughtful comments or questions on the work of only 1 peer.	Participated, but gave basic feedback.	Minimal engagement	Did not participate
Total Points: 50					

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Appendix D

Discussion Post Rubric

Criteria	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Initial Post: Content & Quality (4 points)	Thoughtful, relevant, and clearly connected to the topic; demonstrates understanding and critical thinking. Information discussed is cited using APA formatting. Post is at least 500 words.	The post is not clearly connected to the topic. Information discussed is not cited. Post is less than 500 words.
Initial Post: Grammar & Clarity (2 points)	Well-written with correct grammar, spelling, and clear communication.	The post has errors in grammar and spelling, or lacks clear communication.
Peer Responses {2 required} (4 points)	Responds meaningfully to at least two peers; adds value (e.g., asks questions, builds on ideas, provides feedback).	Does not respond meaningfully to at least two peers.
Total Points Available: 10		