The Talking Cure: Podcasts as Exploration of Disordered Experiences

Professor Justin Dainer-Best ("Justin"; he/him)

Spring 2020

Course Number	Time	Location	Office Hours
PSY 375	M, 4:40–7pm	RKC 200	Wednesdays, 10:30–11:30

1 Overview

Despite the history of the term "talking cure", we often focus almost entirely on the written word in courses that introduce the basics of psychological disorders. In the rise of podcasts, however, we have an increased ability to learn about mental illness and treatment directly from people who are willing to share their experiences. In this seminar, each class meeting will revolve around a podcast episode that provides insight into some aspect of mental illness, accompanied by reading primary source research articles and theory. Topics will include cognitive processing therapy, gender identity, major depression, couples therapy, and opiate addiction.

This course will discuss topics that are sensitive to or personal for many students. If something discussed in class leaves you feeling upset, please speak to a trusted person about your experience. Further, if you find that you are struggling to cope with some of the topics discussed in class, you may contact Bard Counseling Services

You will be graded through your active participation, submitting discussion questions, leading class discussion, and on a semester-long project focused on integrating research with a podcast.

Pre-requisites: Introduction to Psychology, and a course in either Adult or Child Abnormal Psychology (PSY 210 or PSY 211). **Cross-listed**: Experimental humanities.

2 Readings

There is no primary text for this course. Each week's discussion will be centered on one or two podcast episodes, and associated articles/readings, detailed below. You should

come to class prepared to discuss both the podcast and the readings. If you are unable or uninterested in listening to one (or occasionally two) podcast[s] each week, you should not take this course.

Although it is not required, you may choose to purchase a copy of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Illness* (5th Ed.; ISBN-13: 978-0890425558). The *DSM-5* is the primary manual for diagnosis, and you will likely want to refer to it throughout the course. At least one copy will be on reserve in the library during the semester, and you can borrow a copy from me during my office hours. Besides looking great on your bookshelf, you'll find the DSM to be a useful reference throughout the semester.

Readings will be posted on Google Classroom and are arranged in sequential order. Readings described below are referred to by the author's surname.

You are expected to come to each class prepared to discuss the assigned reading. Laptops are discouraged. A pad of paper or a notebook are preferred. (Digital copies of readings may, at times, be appropriate.)

3 Grading

Your grades in this course will come from participation in class, leading discussions, response papers, and a semester-long project. You may earn a total of 500 points in this class, broken down as follows:

Points	Assignment	
50	Class participation	
60	Response papers (20 each)	
40	Discussion questions	
80	Leading discussion	
130	Midterm essay	
140	Final project	

3.1 Response papers and discussion questions

Three 1–2 page response papers are due during the semester. Each response paper will respond to one or more of that week's readings. You get to choose what topics you would like to respond to. However, two responses (at a minimum) are due before spring break, as indicated on the schedule below. You are responsible for turning your response papers in without prompting.

Additionally, during **eight** or more of the semester's weeks, you should also publish **two** discussion questions on the Google Classroom discussion board. These questions will be used during class to lead discussion, as described below. Discussion questions count as a separate grade from response papers. You will receive full credit for your discussion questions if they are novel (i.e., not repeating someone else's previously-submitted questions) and add something beyond the questions raised by that week's readings. One discussion question should be based on that week's podcast episode[s], and one on the readings/articles.

Questions are intended to provoke class discussion, and to give everyone a sense of how the class approaches the material. Your questions shouldn't be too specific or too general—they should help stimulate your own thinking. Occasionally, you may spend the first fifteen minutes of class writing a response to one of the questions posed by you or your classmates. Questions that engage in a thoughtful way with (ideally) multiple readings, and bring them into conversation with one another, will earn full credit.

Response papers and discussion questions are all **due by** *noon* on the day of class for which those materials are assigned.

3.2 Discussion leaders

Each week, two students will lead discussion. When you lead discussion, you will compile any discussion questions written by others, and develop your own. You may not write a response paper when you lead discussion. On weeks in which you lead discussion, you should plan to meet with your partner in advance to discuss the materials and identify key topics. In class, you will lay out the major arguments of that week's materials, guide the conversation, and ask relevant questions. (I will, of course, also guide and contribute.) You may also choose to bring in outside research as you see fit.

You will lead discussion twice over the course of the semester.

3.2.1 Auction

On the first day of class, you will be given 100 points to bid on the topics for which you would like to lead discussion. You may choose to spend those points however you choose—e.g., giving ten points each to ten topics, or using all 100 on a single topic. The two students who bid the highest for any topic will lead discussion that day. If you cannot lead discussion on a given day (e.g., because of athletics-related travel or another college-approved absence), you may let me know that explicitly. Ties will result in random assignment to topics.

3.3 Course project

The primary output of this course is a project that will be developed over the course of the semester. You will choose a topic related to mental health, design and develop a research study in your mid-semester paper, and then work in a small group to create a podcast fleshing out the idea of one or more different research papers.

3.3.1 Midterm essay

The midterm essay is a 6–8 page (strict cut-off at 8) paper designed to elicit critical thought about the bases of mental illness and treatment. This should be written as a research proposal following the APA style guide. You will ask a question about either why a treatment works or what symptom of a mental illness is causal/central. You should include the following: an abstract (350 words maximum, on 1 page); an introduction (literature review—2–3 pages, terminating with a hypothesis); the methods (2 pages, including sub-sections of

participants, measures, and procedure); a predicted results section (1–2 pages, including one table or figure, describing what would you hope to see based on the measures), and a discussion (1 paragraph discussing what this study would help you to learn). A references section must follow but is not included in the page count. You should cite peer-reviewed, empirical research, which has been published in reputable journals. Citing a minimum of five empirical articles would be appropriate; although more may be relevant. You may also cite peer-reviewed meta-analyses, theory, or review articles. A title page is fine but not required. No outline should be included.

The final document should begin with a one-page cover letter summarizing your thesis, describing your response to peer review (see below), and highlighting what you believe to be the strengths of the paper.

This research proposal should be an **experiment**—you must manipulate an independent variable.

There are three due dates for this essay:

- 1. The topic should be submitted by February 24th via email, including 3–5 sentences describing the research question and proposed study—20 points for submitting this.
- 2. Two copies of a rough draft (including a minimum of three empirical sources) should be brought to class on March 9th for peer review; I will read one of these copies. Participating in peer review and turning in the rough draft are worth 30 points. This will also be an opportunity to begin discussing ideas for the group project, described in section 3.3.2 below.
- 3. The final essay is due March 30th, and is worth 80 points.

The paper will be scored based in part on the following criteria: clarity of argument and writing, use of evidence from past research, coherence of argument, clarity and relevance of hypothesis/hypotheses, relevance of methods, utility of methods, plausibility of results, inclusion of relevant figure, and coherence of brief discussion. A rubric will be provided for peer review of the rough draft, which I will also use to score your essay.

3.3.2 Podcast

As you explore your research topics, you will identify commonalities with other students in the class. In groups of two or three students, you will design and create an audio recording that highlights a different perspective on some aspect of your research project. This recording may be based around interviews, scripted dialogue, narrative story-telling, or any other idea that creatively explores a component of mental health.

There are four due dates for this project:

1. A project proposal is due in class on April 6th. This will explicitly present your plan for the project, including what you will be creating, how you aim to connect it to research, and the roles of each group member. You will receive 20 points for submitting this, and I will give you feedback.

- 2. A project status update will be due in class on April 20th. Your group should plan to present a summary of your project to the class, and submit a 2-page co-written report to me that links the podcast to research articles, with citations. The in-class presentation and written report are worth 40 points.
- 3. During psychology board week (May 4–8), all groups will meet with me to discuss their projects; you should plan to schedule a time for all members to meet with me for 30 minutes.
- 4. The final recording—as an MP3 or other playable audio file—is due on May 18th. It should be 15–30 minutes long. Resources, including equipment, will be available through the Center for Experimental Humanities to help you record and edit a podcast.

The final recording is worth 80 points. It will be scored in part on the following criteria: connection to research, clarity of argument, coherence of the presented work, effective execution of the project proposal, creativity, sound quality, and narrative structure.

4 Class Policies

4.1 Accommodations & Accessibility

Bard College is committed to providing equal access to all students. If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please contact me so that we can discuss and find ways to ensure your full participation in the course. Together, we can plan how best to support your learning and coordinate your accommodations. Students who have already been approved to receive academic accommodations through disability services should share their accommodation letter with me and make arrangements to meet as soon as possible.

If you have a learning difference or disability that may relate to your ability to fully participate in this class, but have not yet met with the Disability Support Coordinator at Bard, you can contact their office by emailing disabilityservices@bard.edu; the Coordinator will confidentially discuss the process to establish reasonable accommodations. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and thus you should begin this process at the beginning of the semester if you believe you will need them. Additionally, as my office in Preston Hall may be physically difficult to access, you may always request to meet with me in another location.

It is important to me that we have an open, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for all students in this course. Please speak with me if you have any concerns or questions regarding issues of diversity, equity, or inclusion in the classroom.

4.2 Late assignments

Discussion questions will not be accepted late. Response papers turned in after the deadline but before class will lose 5 points. (They may not be turned in after class.) Final projects turned in after the deadline will lose 20 points, but may not be turned in after the final day of the semester.

4.3 Attendance

I expect you to attend class and participate in discussions. If you must miss a class, please let me know by sending me an email explaining your absence. Your grade in this class depends in part on class participation—and, further, your participation is also a part of your classmates' learning. As such, I do expect you to be in class, prepared, and able to participate (i.e., attentive and having read the readings). I do not, however, want you to come to class if you are sick.

4.4 Plagiarism

I expect you to be familiar with what plagiarism is and is not. You may not present someone else's work as your own without proper citation. You may not copy someone else's work. You may not simply reword text from another source without giving credit. Please cite others' work where relevant, and use your own writing. If you are not sure about the definition of plagiarism, or whether something constitutes plagiarism, please consult with me or with someone at Bard's Learning Commons. Students found to be plagiarizing will be reported to the Academic Judiciary Board, will get no credit for the assignment, and may fail the course.

Google Classroom has an "originality reports" feature which identifies missing citations and non-unique writing. This tool is available for you to use on your midterm essay, and I encourage you to make use of it if you have any concerns.

5 Schedule

The schedule may change over the course of the semester. Changes to assignment dates will be announced via email or Google Classroom. You are responsible for following the readings, showing up to class prepared for discussion, and turning in assignments on-time.

January 27: Why podcasts?

Discussion: Semester planning

February 3: Cognitive Processing Therapy

Podcast:

• This American Life: Ten Sessions (Lowe & Glass, 2019)

Readings:

- CPT manual (Resick, Monson, & Chard, 2017)
- Research on CPT (Resick et al., 2008)

February 10: Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Podcast:

• Invisibilia: The Secret History of Thoughts (Rosin & Spiegel, 2015)

Readings:

- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for OCD (Twohig et al., 2015)
- Intolerance of uncertainty in OCD (Grayson, 2010)

February 17: Mental health in Black communities (with Dr. Kwame Holmes)

Podcasts:

- Clip: The Read (clip from 15:55 to 25:52) (Fury & West, 2016)
- With Friends Like These with Bassey Ikpi (Cox, 2019)

Reading:

- Perception of mental health services (Gaston, Earl, Nisanci, & Glomb, 2016)
- Desegregation in mental health (Nuriddin, 2019)

February 24: Dissociative Identity Disorder

Podcasts:

- Here Be Monsters (Emtman & Denton, 2016)
- Reply All: Making friends (Vogt et al., 2016)

Readings:

- Arguments against DID as a diagnosis (Piper & Merskey, 2004a, 2004b)
- Arguments for the diagnosis (Brand et al., 2016)

Due: Paper topic

March 2: Couples Therapy

Podcast:

• This American Life: Esther Perel (Glass, 2017)—and you may also listen to a Fresh Air interview (Gross, 2017)

Readings:

- Introduction to the Gottman method of couples therapy (Gottman & Gottman, 2008)
- Dealing with infidelity (n.b.: follows the first reading; Coop Gordon, Baucom, Snyder, & Dixon, 2008)

March 9: Resistance in therapy

Podcast:

• In Therapy: Jo (Orbach, 2016)

Readings:

- Ambivalence and resistance (Urmanche, Oliveira, Gonçalves, Eubanks, & Muran, 2019)
- Therapeutic alliance (Falkenström, Granström, & Holmqvist, 2013)

Due: Draft

March 16: Gender identity

Podcast:

• Here Be Monsters: Deep Stealth Mode (Mack, 2015)

Readings:

- Trends in gender dysphoria treatment and presentation (Wiepjes et al., 2018)
- Parenting gender variant children (Gray, Sweeney, Randazzo, & Levitt, 2016)

Due: 2^{nd} response paper

(March 23): Spring Break

No Class

March 30: Removing homosexuality from the DSM

Podcast:

• This American Life: 81 words (Glass, 2002)

Readings:

- Twenty years after the decision to remove (Rubinstein, 1995)
- Differences in healthcare access for LGBTQ populations (Macapagal, Bhatia, & Greene, 2016)

Due: Midterm essay; groups (in class)

April 6: Addiction

Podcasts:

- Finding Fixes: Medicine that melts under your tongue (Boiko-Weyrauch & Norris, 2018)
- Throughline: America's opioid epidemic (Abdelfatah & Arablouei, 2019)

Readings:

- Neurobiology of opioid addiction (Koob, 2019)
- Ten steps to reverse the epidemic (Kolodny & Frieden, 2017)

Due: Project proposal

(April 9): Colloquium

Colloquium: Professor Maria Galano, "Investigating Childhood PTSD: Disparities, Developmental Trajectories, and Intervention". Preston Auditorium, 4:45pm

April 13: Physical Discipline in Parenting

Podcast:

• Latinx Therapy: When La Chancla crosses the line (Alejandre, 2018)

Readings:

• What results from spanking? (Gershoff, Lansford, Sexton, Davis-Kean, & Sameroff, 2012)

- Meta-analysis on spanking (skim only; Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016)
- Intervention relating to physical discipline (Grogan-Kaylor, Galano, Howell, Miller-Graff, & Graham-Bermann, 2019)

April 20: Young adults and major depressive disorder

Podcast:

• Reply All: What it looks like (Vogt & Goldman, 2015)

Readings:

- How to screen youth for MDD (Siu, A. L., on behalf of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, 2016)
- Instagram use and depression (Sherlock & Wagstaff, 2018)

Due: Project status updates

(April 27): Advising Day

No Class

(May 4): Psychology board week

No Class

Due: Group meetings with Professor Dainer-Best

May 11: Depression and anxiety

Podcast:

• Radiotopia Showcase: The Great God of Depression (Chapters 1–3 [although you can listen to all 5]; Brown & Kennedy, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c)

Readings:

- Rumination and stress (Ruscio et al., 2015)
- Personalized treatment for MDD and anxiety (Fisher et al., 2019)

(May 18): Makeup class day

No Class unless needed

Due: Final project

6 References

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