

## College of Education and Human Development

### Department of Psychology

## PSY 456: Psychology of Movies

Online Asynchronous | Credits: 3 | Section: #456-90-9 | Term: Fall 2026 | 8/17/2026 – 12/11/2026

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### Instructor Information

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| <b>Instructor</b>           | Dr. Abby Halston, Ed.D, NCC, LMFT-S                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Brief Intro</b>          | Dr. Halston is an Associate Professor and Undergraduate Chair of Psychology at Chaminade University of Honolulu, where she also serves as Clinical Director of the MSCP Marriage and Family Therapy Emphasis. She is a licensed marriage and family therapist supervisor with extensive experience in behavioral health, clinical assessment, and educational psychology. |
| <b>Email</b>                | abby.halston@chaminade.edu                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Phone</b>                | 808-739-4641                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Office Location</b>      | Behavioral Sciences 111A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Virtual Office Hours</b> | Mondays 8am to 10am                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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### Communication

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I will respond to Canvas Inbox messages and emails within 24 hours Monday through Friday. If you leave a question in an assignment comment in Canvas, please allow up to 48 hours for a response, as Canvas sends me a notification once per day. For urgent matters, email is best.

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### School & Department

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|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>School</b>     | College of Education and Human Development                            |
| <b>Location</b>   | Behavioral Sciences Building                                          |
| <b>Phone</b>      | (808) 739-4641                                                        |
| <b>Questions?</b> | Contact Dr. Halston or the College of Education and Human Development |

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### Course Description & Materials

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#### Catalog Description

This course examines how motion pictures depict mental illness, relationships, and other psychologically relevant issues, as well as how films portray the field of psychology. Topics include universal themes, the psychological value of filmmaking and viewing, application of psychological theories and concepts, accuracy in the depiction of psychological variables, and the psychological impact of popular film. Character analyses address personality, mental illness, developmental issues, conflict, and motivation.

Prerequisites: PSY 101 or instructor consent.

#### Course Snapshot

|                 |                            |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Modality</b> | Online Asynchronous (Flex) |
|-----------------|----------------------------|

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Length</b>          | 15 weeks — Fall 2026 (8/17/2026 – 12/11/2026)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Time Commitment</b> | This three-credit course requires a minimum of 135 hours of student engagement, including textbook reading, film viewing, movie reflections, online discussions, and the final movie review. See the Credit Hour Allocation table below.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Required Text</b>   | Wedding, D., Boyd, M. A., & Niemiec, R. M. (2024). Movies and Mental Illness. Hogrefe. ISBN-13: 978-0-88937-553-6                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Required Films</b>  | Temple Grandin (2010); A Beautiful Mind (2001); The Beaver (2011); The Aviator (2004); Fearless (1993); Psycho (1960); Insomnia (2002); Boys Don't Cry (1999); We Need to Talk About Kevin (2012); Flight (2012); Raging Bull (1980); No Country for Old Men (2007); Kill Bill: Vol. 1 (2003); One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975). Final project (choose one): A Clockwork Orange (1971); The Prince of Tides (1991); Thelma & Louise (1991). |
| <b>Canvas</b>          | This course is delivered through Canvas (chaminade.instructure.com). All assignments, discussions, announcements, course materials, and grades are accessible through Canvas. Log in regularly and check announcements each week.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Technology</b>      | Reliable internet access; ability to stream video, play audio, and open PDF files. For technical assistance: helpdesk@chaminade.edu or 808-735-4855. Canvas Hotline: 1-833-209-6111.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

### Credit Hour and Time Allocation

| Course Activity                                    | Estimated Hours |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Textbook reading and supplemental course materials | 30              |
| Viewing assigned films                             | 32              |
| Movie reflection questions                         | 42              |
| Online discussions and peer interaction            | 12              |
| Final movie review research and writing            | 15              |
| Canvas activities and instructor interaction       | 4               |
| <b>Total</b>                                       | <b>135</b>      |

### Learning Outcomes

#### Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Upon completion of the Psychology program, the student will be able to:

1. Identify key concepts, principles, and overarching themes in psychology.
2. Demonstrate adaptation and change through critical interpretation, design, and evaluation of psychological research.
3. Demonstrate effective written and oral communication within the field of psychology.
4. Explain the dynamic interaction among mind, body, and social influences as part of educating the whole person.

#### Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of PSY 456, students will be able to:

1. Apply basic psychological principles and theories to the analysis of human behavior depicted in film. (PLO 1)
2. Evaluate the accuracy of film portrayals of psychological topics, diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes. (PLO 1)

3. Identify film techniques used to communicate psychological concepts and influence audience interpretation. (PLO 4)
4. Analyze ethical and social issues related to the psychological impact of popular film. (PLO 2)

### Marianist Values

This class represents one component of your education at Chaminade University of Honolulu. An education in the Marianist Tradition is marked by five principles, and you should take every opportunity possible to reflect upon the role of these characteristics in your education and development:

1. Education for formation in faith.
2. Provide an integral, quality education.
3. Educate in family spirit.
4. Educate for service, justice and peace, and integrity of creation.
5. Educate for adaptation and change.

PSY 456 is especially guided by Educate for Adaptation and Change. The course develops flexible thinking, respect for differences, critical analysis, and open-mindedness as students evaluate changing cultural portrayals of psychology, mental health, gender, identity, and social justice across decades of American film. Film is itself a medium of change — and learning to analyze it critically prepares students to think adaptively about the psychological dimensions of human experience.

### Native Hawaiian Values

Education is central to both Marianist and Native Hawaiian culture — both seek transformative, value-centered learning that serves the marginalized. This is reflected in the 'Ōlelo No'eau (Hawaiian proverbs) below:

1. Educate for Formation in Faith (Mana): E ola au i ke akua ('Ōlelo No'eau 364) — May I live by God.
2. Provide an Integral, Quality Education (Na'auao): Lawe i ka ma'alea a kū'ono'ono ('Ōlelo No'eau 1957) — Acquire skill and make it deep.
3. Educate in Family Spirit ('Ohana): 'Ike aku, 'ike mai, kōkua aku kōkua mai ('Ōlelo No'eau 1200) — Recognize others, be recognized, help others, be helped.
4. Educate for Service, Justice and Peace (Aloha): Ka lama kū o ka no'eau ('Ōlelo No'eau 1430) — Education is the standing torch of wisdom.
5. Educate for Adaptation and Change ('Āina): 'A'ohe pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okahi ('Ōlelo No'eau 203) — All knowledge is not taught in the same school.

### Alignment of Course Learning Outcomes

| Alignment              | CLO 1 | CLO 2 | CLO 3 | CLO 4 |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Marianist Values       | 5     | 5     | 4     | 5     |
| PLOs                   | 1     | 1     | 4     | 2     |
| Native Hawaiian Values | 5     | 5     | 4     | 5     |

### Assessment and Grading

#### Assessment Summary

| Assessment                                    | Quantity / Value              | Points |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| Milestone One: Welcome — Let's Get Acquainted | 1 × required                  | —      |
| Online Discussions                            | 6 discussions × 6 points each | 36     |

|                              |                                 |            |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| Movie Reflection Questions   | 14 reflections × 20 points each | 280        |
| Final Movie Review           | 1 project × 40 points           | 40         |
| <b>Total Possible Points</b> |                                 | <b>356</b> |

## Grading Scale

| Grade | Range         |
|-------|---------------|
| A     | 90% and above |
| B     | 80–89%        |
| C     | 70–79%        |
| D     | 60–69%        |
| F     | 59% and below |

**Total possible points = 356 points**

## Assignment Descriptions

### Milestone One: Welcome — Let's Get Acquainted (required)

Complete the introductory milestone during Week 1 to establish your presence in the course and become familiar with course expectations. Completion within the first seven days of the course is required to remain enrolled — see Course Policies below.

### Online Discussions (36 points — 6 × 6 points)

Students will participate in six online discussions examining how films portray mental illness, relationships, treatment, stereotypes, emotion, personality, violence, and psychotherapy. Contributions should demonstrate engagement with the readings, assigned films, and classmates' ideas. Discussions are listed in the course schedule below.

### Movie Reflection Questions (280 points — 14 × 20 points)

Students will complete fourteen movie-reflection assignments across the course. Each reflection requires students to read the corresponding chapter, view the assigned film, and respond to analytical questions about psychological concepts, diagnosis, treatment, film technique, ethics, and social impact. Reflections are due according to the weekly schedule posted in Canvas.

### Final Movie Review (40 points)

Students will select one approved final-project film and apply psychological theory to the film's depiction of psychological variables. The review will evaluate psychological impact and include a character analysis focused on personality, motivation, development, conflict, and/or mental health concerns.

#### Approved final-project films (choose one):

- A Clockwork Orange (1971)
- The Prince of Tides (1991)
- Thelma & Louise (1991)

## Participation & Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)

### Student Participation Expectations

This asynchronous course requires consistent, meaningful engagement with content, peers, and the instructor each week. Logging in without completing activities does not count as participation.

**Students are expected to:**

- Complete assigned readings and film viewings within designated timeframes.
- Log in regularly to review module instructions, announcements, deadlines, feedback, and grades.
- Contribute substantively to discussions — post original responses and engage thoughtfully with peers within the required window. Note: discussion reply deadlines are firm.
- Demonstrate preparation, critical analysis, and engagement with both psychological theory and film content in all written work.
- Meet established deadlines to support collaborative learning and remain on track with the weekly sequence.

**Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) — Instructor Commitments**

- **Weekly Communication:** Weekly announcements and/or module overviews clarifying objectives, key concepts, and assignment expectations.
- **Substantive Engagement:** Instructor-facilitated discussion engagement — prompting analysis, clarifying misunderstandings, connecting posts to course concepts, and summarizing takeaways.
- **Timely Feedback:** Clear grading criteria and substantive feedback on all graded work. Email inquiries: within 24 hours (M–F). Weekly graded work: within 5 school days of the due date. Major assessments: within 7 school days of the due date.
- **Monitoring & Outreach:** Active monitoring of Canvas engagement with proactive outreach and referrals for students who miss deadlines or fall behind.

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**Course Policies**

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|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Late Work</b>        | Because of the flexibility of the Flex online course design, all Movie Reflection Questions and the Final Movie Review are accepted through the last day of the course — no late penalty applies. Online discussion responses may be submitted up to one week late with a 50% point deduction; because discussions depend on timely peer interaction, discussion participation replies will not be accepted after the posted deadline. If you are falling behind or have a concern, reach out to Dr. Halston as early as possible. |
| <b>Milestone #1</b>     | Milestone One must be completed within the first seven days of the course. Failure to complete Milestone One by this deadline will result in disenrollment from the course in accordance with Flex attendance policy. This is a non-negotiable registration requirement — please complete it as soon as the course opens.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Extra Credit</b>     | No extra credit is available in this course. Please plan accordingly and reach out early if you are struggling.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Incomplete Grade</b> | An Incomplete may be granted only when extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control prevent course completion and the student has completed a substantial portion of the coursework with a passing grade. A written completion plan identifying remaining work and a deadline is required, per University policy.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Syllabus Changes</b> | The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus. Changes will be communicated via Canvas announcements.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

## Final Grades

Final grades are submitted to Self-Service ([selfservice.chaminade.edu](http://selfservice.chaminade.edu)):

| Grade | Range         |
|-------|---------------|
| A     | 90% and above |
| B     | 80–89%        |
| C     | 70–79%        |
| D     | 60–69%        |
| F     | 59% and below |

**Total possible points = 356 points**

## 10-Week Course Schedule

All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on the dates posted in Canvas. Specific due dates are listed in Canvas. Note: The instructor reserves the right to modify this schedule. Changes will be communicated through Canvas announcements.

| Week | Topic                                                      | Readings & Viewing                                                                                    | Assignments Due                                                                                            |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | <b>Foundations: Film and Psychopathology</b>               | Read Chapter 1; Read Chapter 2; Watch Temple Grandin (2010)                                           | Milestone One; Discussion 1: Films and Psychopathology; Temple Grandin Movie Reflection                    |
| 2    | <b>Psychosis and Emotion</b>                               | Read Chapter 3; Watch A Beautiful Mind (2001)                                                         | Discussion 2: Film and Emotion; A Beautiful Mind Movie Reflection                                          |
| 3    | <b>Mood and Anxiety-Related Portrayals</b>                 | Read Chapter 4; Watch The Beaver (2011). Read Chapter 5; Watch The Aviator (2004)                     | The Beaver Movie Reflection; The Aviator Movie Reflection                                                  |
| 4    | <b>Trauma, Dissociation, and Somatic Experience</b>        | Read Chapter 6; Watch Fearless (1993)                                                                 | Discussion 3: Films and Dissociative/Somatic Links; Fearless Movie Reflection                              |
| 5    | <b>Personality, Sleep, and Identity</b>                    | Read Chapter 7; Watch Psycho (1960). Read Chapter 8; Watch Insomnia (2002)                            | Psycho Movie Reflection; Insomnia Movie Reflection                                                         |
| 6    | <b>Gender, Identity, and Stereotypes</b>                   | Read Chapter 9; Watch Boys Don't Cry (1999)                                                           | Discussion 4: Film and Stereotypes; Boys Don't Cry Movie Reflection                                        |
| 7    | <b>Youth, Substance Use, and Social Context</b>            | Read Chapter 10; Watch We Need to Talk About Kevin (2012). Read Chapter 11; Watch Flight (2012)       | We Need to Talk About Kevin Movie Reflection; Flight Movie Reflection                                      |
| 8    | <b>Personality and Violence</b>                            | Read Chapter 12; Watch Raging Bull (1980)                                                             | Discussion 5: Film, Personality, and Violence; Raging Bull Movie Reflection                                |
| 9    | <b>Antisocial Behavior and Violence</b>                    | Read Chapter 13; Watch No Country for Old Men (2007). Read Chapter 15; Watch Kill Bill: Vol. 1 (2003) | No Country for Old Men Movie Reflection; Kill Bill: Vol. 1 Movie Reflection                                |
| 10   | <b>Psychotherapy, Institutions, and Course Integration</b> | Read Chapter 16; Watch One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975). View one approved final-project film.  | Discussion 6: Film and Psychotherapy; One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest Movie Reflection; Final Movie Review |

## Important Information

### Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is an essential aspect of all learning, scholarship, and research. It is one of the values regarded most highly by academic communities throughout the world. Violations of the principle of academic honesty are extremely serious and will not be tolerated.

Students are responsible for promoting academic honesty at Chaminade by not participating in any act of dishonesty and by reporting any incidence of academic dishonesty to an instructor or University official. Academic dishonesty may include theft of records or examinations, alteration of grades, plagiarism, and unauthorized and/or undisclosed AI usage, in addition to more obvious dishonesty. See catalog section Student Use of Artificial Intelligence in Academic Work for further information.

Questions of academic dishonesty are first reviewed by the instructor, who must make a report with recommendations to the Director of the Academic College. Punishment may include an "F" grade for the work in question, an "F" grade for the course, academic notice, or dismissal from the University.

### **AI (Artificial Intelligence) Statement**

Chaminade University recognizes the increasing role of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in academic and professional environments. AI encompasses, but is not limited to, generative AI platforms, automated writing or content generation software, coding assistants, and similar tools. Students must ensure all submitted work genuinely reflects their knowledge and effort. Using AI to produce or significantly complete graded assignments, exams, or other academic tasks — defined as use that substitutes for or substantially replaces a student's own analysis, reasoning, or written expression — without explicit instructor approval is considered academic misconduct and will be handled according to the University's Academic Honesty Policy.

If an instructor has reasonable grounds to question whether submitted work genuinely reflects a student's own knowledge, authorship, or mastery of course material, the instructor may require additional or alternative evidence. A student's refusal or inability to provide such evidence may be considered in evaluating whether the work meets course requirements. See the catalog section Student Use of Artificial Intelligence in Academic Work for further information.

### **Title IX and Nondiscrimination**

Chaminade University of Honolulu is committed to providing a learning, working, and living environment that promotes the dignity of all people, inclusivity, and mutual respect, and is free of all forms of sex discrimination and gender-based violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. As a member of the University faculty, I am required to immediately report any incident of sex discrimination or gender-based violence to the campus Title IX Coordinator.

Contact information and reporting options: [chaminade.edu/titleix/nondiscrimination/](https://chaminade.edu/titleix/nondiscrimination/). File a report via the Campus Incident Report Form at [cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?ChaminadeUniv&layout\\_id=0](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?ChaminadeUniv&layout_id=0).

### **Nondiscrimination Policy and Notice of Nondiscrimination**

The university is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender identity and expression, age, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, disability, genetic information, marital status, breastfeeding, arrest and court record (except as permissible under State law), sexual orientation, or status as a covered veteran. Inquiries about Title IX or general Civil Rights concerns may be referred to the University's Title IX Coordinator or the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. The University's Nondiscrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures can be found at: [chaminade.edu/compliance/title-ix-nondiscrimination-policies-procedures/](https://chaminade.edu/compliance/title-ix-nondiscrimination-policies-procedures/).

## Student with Disabilities Statement

Kōkua 'Ike Accessibility Services recognizes disability as a valued aspect of diversity and ensures equal access to the educational environment in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (as amended), and the principles of the Association on Higher Education and Disability.

Students seeking support must meet with the Accessibility Services Coordinator as early as possible. Appointments are available through Stellic at [chaminade.stellic.com](https://chaminade.stellic.com) and may be held virtually or in person. Drop-in appointments are also welcome. Learn more at [chaminade.edu/ada-accommodations](https://chaminade.edu/ada-accommodations). Students are responsible for notifying Kōkua 'Ike via email at [ada@chaminade.edu](mailto:ada@chaminade.edu) each semester if changes or notifications are needed.

## Assessment of Student Work

Chaminade University may use student work anonymously to assess achievement of course, program, and institutional learning outcomes as part of ongoing quality improvement efforts.

## Campus Resources & Support Services

The following resources are available to all Chaminade students. Reach out early — these services exist to support your success.

| Resource                                             | Description                                                                                               | Contact / Website                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Accessibility Services (Kōkua 'Ike)</b>           | Accommodations under Section 504 and ADA. Contact early — appointments via Stellic, virtual or in person. | <a href="mailto:ada@chaminade.edu">ada@chaminade.edu</a><br><a href="https://chaminade.edu/ada-accommodations">chaminade.edu/ada-accommodations</a>                                                             |
| <b>Tutoring &amp; Academic Coaching (Kōkua 'Ike)</b> | Individualized support in English, writing, and social sciences; goal-setting and study strategies.       | <a href="mailto:tutoring@chaminade.edu">tutoring@chaminade.edu</a><br>808-739-8305<br><a href="https://chaminade.edu/tutoring-academic-coaching-services">chaminade.edu/tutoring-academic-coaching-services</a> |
| <b>Career Services</b>                               | Job search coaching, resume reviews, interview coaching, and career resources.                            | <a href="https://chaminade.edu/career-services">chaminade.edu/career-services</a>                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Basic Needs Resources</b>                         | Support for food insecurity, housing instability, and other basic needs.                                  | <a href="https://chaminade.edu/basic-needs/">chaminade.edu/basic-needs/</a>                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Title IX / Nondiscrimination</b>                  | Reporting and support for sex discrimination and gender-based violence.                                   | <a href="https://chaminade.edu/titleix/resources-and-support/">chaminade.edu/titleix/resources-and-support/</a>                                                                                                 |
| <b>Sullivan Family Library</b>                       | Tools to efficiently identify and access literature about research topics of your choosing.               | Lyneee Teruya, Librarian<br><a href="mailto:lyneee.teruya@chaminade.edu">lyneee.teruya@chaminade.edu</a><br>808-739-4680                                                                                        |
| <b>CUH Alert Emergency Notification</b>              | Emergency text system. Register your cell number via the Chaminade portal.                                | <a href="https://chaminade.edu">chaminade.edu</a>                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Chaminade IT Help Desk</b>                        | Technical assistance for Canvas and course technology.                                                    | <a href="mailto:helpdesk@chaminade.edu">helpdesk@chaminade.edu</a><br>808-735-4855<br>Canvas Hotline: 1-833-209-6111                                                                                            |